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Tuesday at the Port of Umatilla office and the City Council meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Umatilla City Hall.

Umatilla City Manager Bob Ward said in the manager's report in the council agenda that, if the council members concur the resolution should be considered, a public hearing and adoption of the agreement could be scheduled for the next meeting, Jan. 20.

"There is a possibility that the (Jan. 20) meeting could be a joint meeting with the Port Commission for final approval, although this is not critical to the final adoption," Ward said in the report. "Having worked with the Port on this negotiation over the past few months, I am confident that this is in the best interest of both the City and the Port of Umatilla and will foster a better working relationship in the future. It also addresses the concerns expressed by the adjoining and neighboring property owners."

The dispute originated when the Umatilla Planning Commission denied the port's site review plan for an industrial warehouse on a parcel of land west of Bud Draper Road adjacent to Big River Golf Course because the commission believed the land was originally planned for residential use despite a city map indicating it was in an industrial zone. City officials had claimed a consultant erred years ago, inadvertently changing the zone on the map, but the proper zone-change process was not followed. The port appealed to the City Council, which upheld the Planning Commission decision, and the port subsequently appealed to LUBA, the hearing for which is currently on hold pending a local resolution.

At the Planning Commission meeting Tuesday, Chairman Boyd Sharp said he was concerned that, if the agreement had already been made, the commission may have a difficult time offering a recommendation about it to the council, but Ward said the agreement would not be difficult for the commission.

"Let me put your fears to rest, Boyd," Ward said. "Without divulging what the agreement is, it will not be putting the Planning Commission in a bind."

HOMELESS:

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some homeless people live in homeless camps by choice, some by necessity. Of the homeless people who do not stay at the camps, Rossell said many have had a bit of bad luck and are desperately trying to gain their footing again in life.

"People who come to the station are in a different category," she said. "They've fallen on hard times and have nowhere else to turn. Largely, they do want employment and permanent housing."

Those with health-related issues may face additional challenges.

"When someone is living paycheck to paycheck, an illness or injury can be the final blow," Rossell said. "They miss a week of work and can't pay rent."

Rossell said other homeless residents have mental illness-

es but may not have a support system in place or be able to maintain steady employment. She said managing their mental illness may also be a challenge if they require medication.

"An emergency room can bring the person out of crisis, but without a stable home environment and support, staying on the correct medications is an uphill battle," she said.

NEEDED RESOURCES

Rossell said even with the local services offered, there are gaps in the services available, and it is easy for homeless people to fall through the cracks and go unnoticed.

"It's pretty easy to go from working poor to homeless," Rossell said. "Many of our vulnerable population go unnoticed because they couch surf, sleep in their car or they camp."

Rossell said one service that she feels is greatly needed is a consistent "day program,"

ZONING:

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Searles said the current zones are not distinguished from each other, so the uses allowed in each are basically the same.

"Right now, if you look at each of our commercial zones, they all say, 'commercial uses conducted wholly within an enclosed building' or 'commercial uses not conducted wholly within an enclosed building' — that's the only distinction between the zones," he said. "When you say, 'commercial uses conducted wholly within a building,' you know that could include anything and everything as long as it's within a building."

The proposed zoning changes will specify the uses permitted in each zone — from cosmetics stores to adult entertainment businesses — and whether the uses will be allowed outright, with standards or conditionally. Searles said outright uses could be approved administratively by city staff through a site review plan, as could uses allowed with standards if the business complied with additional specifications, such as size restrictions. He said uses allowed conditionally would require a conditional use permit to

be approved by the Planning Commission.

By stating what and how each use is allowed in the certain zones, different businesses can be restricted to specific zones, but officials have previously said the changes would not affect businesses already open. In the latest version of the proposed changes, adult entertainment businesses would not be allowed in the downtown commercial and downtown transitional zones, but they could open in the general commercial zone with a conditional use permit and in a proposed new zone, highway commercial, if they meet certain standards.

"I think we really have a bigger picture of how we want to see the downtown compared to areas out towards (Highway) 730 and the intersection of (Highway 395)," Searles said.

While the areas farther from the heart of town will accommodate larger commercial uses oriented for vehicular traffic, he said the downtown area is intended to contain pedestrian-friendly businesses.

Planning Commission member and Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said she recommends that bars and liquor stores not be allowed out-

right but, instead, be permitted with standards that stipulate the businesses must be a certain distance from schools.

"If there is a bar right next door to a school, and if someone has potentially been over-served, my kids are walking right past there — that's an issue," she said. "If there's people that are out for a bachelor party at a strip club and my high school cheerleaders are walking by at the same point, then they are potentially going to be exposed to things that I don't want kids to be exposed to. That's it. It's not any type of morality issue. I'm worried about protecting them from potential harm."

Sipe said she is not concerned with any current businesses but wants to prevent any potential future problems.

"We have had zero issues with what's here now," she said. "That's not my concern. My concern is that, if we don't be careful as we're doing this planning, we're going to end up with a downtown area that's exclusively that type of business instead of it being thoughtful. I'm not trying to eliminate anything. I'm just trying to make sure that we have everything placed in a careful spot."

"Starting this Tuesday, that computer will be available for everyone that comes in," she said.

HOW TO HELP

Rossell said community members who want to help can do so in different ways.

"The warming station needs funding, always," Rossell said. "None of our people are paid, so every dollar goes directly to serve the people who need it. Paying rent, electricity, training volunteers, buying cleaning supplies — that takes money."

Rossell said people can check the program's Facebook page to see a current list of things the warming station needs. To learn more about Martha's House and its needs, people can visit <http://marthas-househermiston.org>. People can also call the Agape House, 541-567-8774, or CAPECO, 541-276-1926, for information on the needs of those organizations or how to help.

She said, although the process is going slowly, she thinks the zoning changes will be beneficial for the future of the city.

"It would be good for any city to do something like this every so often," she said. "Life isn't stagnant. You always have to change and revise and make sure we're being reflective of the current status and trying to plan for future needs."

Searles said, once the commission determines the uses to be allowed in each zone and specifies any additional standards required for certain uses, the public will have a chance to comment before the Planning Commission delivers a recommendation to the City Council, which will make the ultimate decision on the adoption of the new codes.

"The City Council has the only authority to make the changes because it is a legislative process, and each one of those requires their own public hearing," Searles said.

Searles said he hopes the Planning Commission will conclude its part in the process in time to hold a public hearing in March at the latest, so the City Council has something to consider by April.

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