

Minutes
Public Forum
July 22, 2014

Present: Mayor Kenneth F. Neilson, Councilmen Garth Nisson Thad Seegmiller, Kress Staheli, Jeff Turek, Deputy Recorder Tara Pentz, Audience: Sherrie Staheli, Matt Clark, George Staheli, William Riesbeck, Braden Hancock

Meeting commenced at 6:00 P.M.

1. Comments from the Public.

Sherrie Staheli stated the Covington Home is beautiful, and she receives several requests per month for wedding receptions. She feels if they were to allow outdoor receptions, it would help to bring in some additional funds for the restoration of the building.

Councilman Seegmiller asked what the rental fee would be for a home like this.

Ms. Staheli stated she believes it would rent for around \$350 to \$400 per event.

Councilman Staheli asked how she feels about the competition with private businesses.

Councilman Turek indicated his biggest concern would be competition with private enterprise as well. He also does not see this being conducive to any type of event indoors.

George Staheli stated he would personally not have any concerns. He would like to see the home get more use. The Youth Council could be in attendance to give tours, and to keep people from running through the home.

Councilman Staheli asked what the time frame would be to have the home ready for weddings.

Ms. Staheli stated she would like to see the home be ready by September. Obviously, someone would have to be at the home if there were a wedding, which is going to cost additional, but she would be willing to be there initially until a policy could be established.

Councilman Nisson stated he would be in favor of the weddings, but we should be cautious about promoting use of the home.

Ms. Staheli expressed her concerns for Veterans Park. The equipment is very and she would like

to see a facelift to the property.

Councilman Seegmiller stated they plan to redo the park, which includes the restroom facilities, and a splash pad, and playground equipment.

Ms. Staheli stated she visited a park up north, which is located in their downtown area. This is an area where the residents congregate and hangout. There is a water show every hour, and they gather to watch, and stay to converse with their neighbors. She would like to see focus come to the downtown area and possibly have food trucks once a month. This would give residents and neighbors a place to gather.

Councilman Seegmiller commented unfortunately we have a shortage of parking for usage to the this extent. Parking and expansion of this size would need to be considered in the revitalizing of the downtown.

Councilman Turek noted one of the issues would be water. Additionally, this park is already crammed without adding water features.

Ms. Staheli continued with her concerns. The Community Clean-up is pointless if there is not appropriate advertising. There was nothing on the calendar or in the newsletter. There were three huge dumpsters, which stayed empty. When people come in to get information they do not know who to go to, and there is not a direct line of communication. The weeds around the City look horrible. They are in the sidewalks and extremely tall. She also commented there is nothing advertised on the Washington City calendar for the 24th of July Celebration. There are fireworks put on by the City, and this is not even on the calendar.

Councilman Turek stated the 24th of July is not put on by the City, so we do not advertise the event.

Ms. Staheli stated if the event is in Washington City, it should be on the calendar to help bring people to our City.

Councilman Seegmiller stated if someone would like to put something on the Community Calendar, and it is appropriate for the City, then he does not feel it would be an issue.

Ms. Staheli stated people do not know who they should contact. Nobody knows where to go if they want something advertised. Ultimately the City has the right to say yes or no to what is advertised, and if it would be appropriate for private businesses. However, all holiday celebrations should be on the calendar.

George Staheli noted in his opinion, community spirit lost because so many residents are mad at the Council. Residents feel shafted by the City because they get lied to by the Staff. You will never have community spirit as long as you have this type of feeling toward the Administration and the Staff.

Mayor Neilson asked if this is his item he wants to discuss.

Mr. Staheli stated he wants to let the Council know, it is nearly impossible to have small businesses in Washington City because of the impact fees and the commercial fees. He has had meetings with Kelly Carlson, who was supposed to do a study on small business power rates. He has never hear back about the study. There was a study done in the water department, which reduced rates minimally, but anything helps. There was someone who wanted to put in a daycare in a commercial building, and they were told it would be \$34,000 for impact fees to hook up a sprinkling system. These are the things keeping businesses out Washington City.

Councilman Seegmiller stated he agrees the power is an issue. However, the downtown should be prime retail, but nobody wants to pay to build something nice for the prime space. They go in industrial where they can put up a square building, which we do not want in our downtown.

Mr. Staheli stated there are some people employed by Washington City who make a significant amount of money, and some who do not make much at all. He would like the lower end employees to get more money and the upper end employees to not get as much.

Councilman Turek stated we have a consultant who reviews the wage scale and the pay is right on where we are supposed to be. In fact, there was a straight across the board raise this past year. There are an insurance package provided to the employees along with retirement.

Mr. Staheli stated the upper management are getting the same benefits.

Councilman Seegmiller stated he is of the opinion the wages are too high. They are several dollars higher an hour for entry level positions, which do not require much skill.

Mr. Staheli it is important for the residents to feel good about the City Employees.

Ms. Staheli commented in her experience, everything she asks of Council, she is told no.

Matt Clark stated he is a metal sculptor. He uses older discarded objects to make art. He would like to put some art in the City. He has constructed a train, which is nearly completed, and if he had a gallery it would go for \$90K to \$120K. His cost alone would be around \$60K to build once the third car completed.

Councilman Turek stated he loves the sculptures in the park, and around the community. He feels this brings a downtown feel, and a feeling of home.

Mayor Neilson asked where he would envision seeing this art located.

Mr. Clark stated he would like to see it at the Nissan Park. He also would like to encourage a public sculpture program through Washington City.

Braden Hancock stated the had a huge turnout for the boilers clean-up. People care about Washington City. He spoke of some venues he has attended recently, which have volunteer staff, and provide revenue to the communities. They achieved their non-profit statues from the IRS.

Councilman Nisson asked if he feels this is a done deal.

Mr. Hancock stated this is not a done deal. However, they are showing an opportunity to create a community gathering place. They feel this will be a place like Tuacahn, and Best Friends of Animals, and will become like the Denver Botanical Gardens. They have the most cutting edge technology in the world.

Councilman Turek stated they were told things had changed dramatically with their plans, which would not including the boilers.

Mr. Hancock stated the original proposal was to enclose the boilers. However, the new plan would not cover the boilers. It would be restored to its original state, and the buildings would surround the water to provide a shelter.

Councilman Turek asked if the access to the boilers would be controlled through the Ecoseum.

Mr. Hancock stated it would be through the public / private partnership with the City. Someone from the Council could serve on their board.

Councilman Turek stated he envisions this is a public park. However, they are proposing a private ownership.

Mr. Hancock stated the land would be owned by the City.

Councilman Turek asked if people would be able to come and have a picnic around the boilers.

Mr. Hancock explained there would be portions of the land, which could be accessed.

Councilman Turek commented he envisions this area as a public park. He would like it to be owned and maintained by the City. He wants the City to be able to access the property as public owned land.

Mr. Hancock stated there would be a portion of the land as non-fee based.

Councilman Nisson stated many of these volunteers do not realize this is not a done deal. They are under the impression the land is going to be public and free.

Councilman Turek stated the individuals he has talked with do not understand this is not going to be a public park. He wants this to be a public area, and public park.

Mr. Hancock stated these are things they can work around.

Councilman Staheli asked if Council would be in favor if the residents of Washington City can visit for free.

Councilman Turek stated he does not want to restrict to only Washington City. This should be a public park. Otherwise, this should be put on the mark for sale. This should be retained as

public land, because eventually this water may have to be piped and used for drinking.

Mr. Hancock stated they are using the funds they have raised at this point to help with the clean-up. Residents are interested in preserving green spaces.

Councilman Turek stated there needs to be discussions with property issues. However, he does want this to remain a public park.

Mr. Hancock stated this can be a community gathering space if they are able to move forward.

Snow Slade stated he moved to the area approximately two years ago. One of the reasons he moved here was for the lifestyle, and it is sad the boilers has gotten to this state.

Councilman Turek stated this area has been master planned for years as a park. There have been other items, which have had to take precedence. However, it is still in the plan.

Mr. Slade stated he feels the Ecoiseum is a great idea, and he is in favor. He is happy to help in any way he can.

Bryce Ferguson stated he moved here about two years ago as well. He has been excited about the idea since he heard about it. He had a botanical garden in Cincinnati where he is from. This would be an asset to Washington City.

2. Adjournment

Mayor Neilson adjourned the meeting at 7:53 P.M.

Passed and approved this 13th day of August 2014.

Attest by:

Danice B. Bulloch

Danice B. Bulloch, CMC
City Recorder



Washington City

Kenneth F. Neilson
Kenneth F. Neilson, Mayor



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