

**ST. GEORGE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WORK MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 4:00 P.M.
RIVERWALK VILLAGE APARTMENTS /
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT:

**Mayor Jon Pike
Councilmember Jimmie Hughes
Councilmember Michele Randall
Councilmember Gregg McArthur
Councilmember Dannielle Larkin
City Manager Adam Lenhard
City Attorney Shawn Guzman
City Recorder Christina Fernandez**

EXCUSED:

Councilmember Bryan Smethurst

**SITE VISIT AT RIVERWALK VILLAGE APARTMENTS LOCATED AT 2333 EAST
DINOSAUR CROSSING:**

The Mayor and Council toured the Riverwalk Village Apartments after which they returned to the City Offices for the remainder of the meeting. Mayor Pike and the Council provided a brief history of SwitchPoint and how the Riverwalk Village Apartments came to be.

OPENING:

Mayor Pike called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. The invocation was offered by Father David Bittmenn with the St. George Catholic Church and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Councilmember Hughes.

UPDATE FROM ST. GEORGE MUSICAL THEATER:

Tony Allen with the St. George Musical Theater stated that Dimon McFerson has volunteered to be the Chair of the Theater. Mr. Allen provided a history of Mr. McPhersons' accomplishments.

Mr. McFerson provided a PowerPoint presentation covering the following topics: Brief History; 2014-2020; Community Impact; SGMT Financial Results; City Allocations; Feasibility Study; SGMT New Theater Proposal; New Theater Objectives; Financial Plan; and SGMT Timeline.

Councilmember Randall noted she has watched the theater grow to what it is today. The downtown area is ideal for a theater like what is being proposed.

Mr. McFerson explained the \$400 per square foot cost.

Bruce Bennett stated they were approached by an architect from Salt Lake City; although the Board is not bound to them, they would be excited to work with them. They have built some of the most beautiful buildings in the United States.

After being asked by Councilmember Hughes, Mr. Bennett commented that he believes a facility with 325 seats is perfect and will allow for growth. In 2019, they were at 84% capacity; about 90% in 2020. Mr. Bennett spoke about some of the professional actors they are working with.

Councilmember Larkin inquired about who is paid and what the relationships are with the performers.

Mr. Bennett stated they always hope to be a community theater and a non-profit organization. They do not precast, all performers audition, even the professionals. All adult performers are paid a small stipend for performances. He noted that performers sign contracts.

Mr. McPherson noted he would like the proposed facility to be located on 200 West, between 100 South and Tabernacle. They would like the City to lease the property to SGMT for two (2) years. During that time, they will commit to do all of the architectural drawings; at the end of the 2-year time frame, they will turn the site back over to the City with construction ready plans.

Mr. Bennett stated they are concerned about public perception. Their anticipated costs are approximately 96% less than the estimated cost from the Duncan Webb consultants. They have never wanted a handout but have asked for help from the City and County.

Mayor Pike commented about the recommendation to treat community theaters as they would not coexist well in the performing arts center. Additionally, he pointed out there is a potential price tag of \$60-80 million for a performing arts center. He anticipates he will be asked why SGMT is favored; he would say this is the next phase in a process of hopefully building a bigger, broader performing arts center that would meet the needs of the other organizations, but not at \$80 million. The Duncan Webb study says community theater should be separate. He would like to identify a next step for the other organizations.

Mr. McPherson added the Heritage Choir and the Southwest Symphony; however, they only need about 15-17 nights a year; SGMT has seven (7) shows annually and are open about 210 nights a year.

Mr. Bennett noted this project was funded mainly by private donors and foundations.

DISCUSSION REGARDING MURALS AT THE ART MUSEUM:

Michele Graves with Leisure Services commented that many people do not know the City has an Art Museum. She noted that murals are trending and stated that there is a possibility of having two (2) murals at this time. An idea she has is to rename the district to either Hope Hill or Mount Hope. She outlined what a mural can do for a community. The murals which will be placed on the two (2) lower panels on the Art Museum, can be done for the cost of the supplies.

The consensus of the Council is to move forward.

Mayor Pike called for a short recess.

DISCUSSION REGARDING A PROPOSED ST. GEORGE TO ZION TRANSIT ROUTE:

Public Works Director Cameron Cutler noted there have been several conversations regarding a proposed St. George to Zion transit route. Zion Public Financing put together a spreadsheet to outline financial estimates. If the route is approved, starting at the Dixie Center is preferred. He outlined the spreadsheet.

City Manager Adam Lenhard explained the hot spot funding is administered through UDOT; however, it comes from the state's tourism department and is meant to ease congestion at national parks. Fred Davies, the former Transit Manager, applied for this grant prior to his retirement. The City was awarded \$3 million. The \$15 million funding is available, if the City does not use the funds, it will be reprogrammed.

Mr. Cutler noted the only caveat to using the \$15 million is that the City would be obligated to run a transit service for (10) years. He spoke about fees for the proposed route.

City Manager Adam Lenhard stated that eventually, the City's fleet will be moved to electric buses. This funding will help in purchasing the infrastructure needed to charge the buses.

After being asked by Councilmember McArthur, Mr. Cutler explained there is no penalty for accepting the hot spot grant funding and Mayor Pike outlined how funding from the transportation tax works with transit.

City Manager Adam Lenhard stated he is concerned with ridership. Another concern is that the park is going in the opposite direction on visitorship.

Mayor Pike noted he met with Steve Neeleman today; his business is on the east side of Zion. He and other business owners are directing people to contact the parks service to encourage them not to change the reservations system.

A discussion took place regarding concerns with ridership.

Mr. Cutler explained there are two types of bus routes proposed; one route with several stops and another route as an express bus.

Councilmember McArthur suggested testing the route.

Mayor Pike noted he does not know if testing the route will work; however, a survey may be a good idea.

The consensus of the Council is to see if the route can be done on a trial basis and see if UDOT will buy off on a ramped-up version.

Mayor Pike commented after being involved in discussions regarding this topic over the past few years, he was very skeptical initially; his is now more supportive. He wants everything researched prior to starting the process.

Councilmember Hughes noted he is in favor of the proposal if there is a benefit. He is concerned with ridership as the others have noted.

REPORTS FROM MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, AND CITY MANAGER:

Public Works Director Cameron Cutler provided an update on Valley View Drive and SunRiver Parkway projects that will be starting soon.

Mayor Pike asked the Council if they would like the residents to weigh in on the plans.

A discussion took place regarding bike lanes.

City Attorney Shawn Guzman explained the City can allow golf carts on certain roadways. Sun River has asked the City to expand the area.

The consensus is to have sharrows on Sun River Parkway.

Councilmember Larkin inquired about the BluCan recycling campaign; she asked why there is not much information on social media. Currently, the messages she is seeing are encouraging people to opt out. She then reported on the clean up campaign meeting she attended earlier in the day.

The Council discussed the St. George Streetfest; it is not what it was supposed to be originally.

Councilmember Hughes spoke about suicide awareness and the pandemic that suicide is. In order to get the Police Department to accomplish all that they are asked to do, the Council needs to increase funding, not decrease it.

Chief Whitehead explained how mental health calls are handled.

Mayor Pike spoke about Teresa Willie and the Reach for Hope organization who assist in suicide prevention and awareness.

Councilmember Randall mentioned the need for volunteers to help at the rodeo. She noted that she and Councilmember Smethurst met with Jenny Taylor regarding the Gold Star Memorial.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Christina Fernandez, City Recorder