

Oak Harbor City Council
Workshop Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2023

This was both a physical meeting location and a virtual meeting The meeting was viewable via YouTube www.youtube.com/cityofoakharbor and Facebook or could be viewed on Channel 10/HD 1090 following the meeting. Public Comments are not normally taken or included for Council Workshops, although the Council may allow or request participation.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

City Council Present:

Mayor Robert Severns - absent
Mayor Pro Tem Tara Hizon
Councilmember Beth Munns
Councilmember Jim Woessner
Councilmember Bryan Stucky
Councilmember Shane Hoffmire
Councilmember Eric Marshall

Staff Present: In-person or Videoconference

City Administrator Blaine Oborn
Public Works Director Steve Schuller
Development Services Director David Kuhl
Parks and Recreation Director Brian Smith
City Engineer Alex Warner
Fire Chief Ray Merrill
Principal Planner Cac Kamak
Senior Services Administrator Liz Lange
Finance & Performance Analyst Chas Webster
Communications & IT Manager Sabrina Combs
City Administrator Executive Assistant Macalle Finkle
City Clerk Julie Nester

Also in attendance: City Attorney
Hillary Evans of Kenyon Disend, PLLC

MAYOR

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon called the workshop to order and welcomed those in attendance. She noted she was presiding at the request of Mayor Severns.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

- a. Parks & Recreation Staffing Support - In order to expedite the meeting process, this item was moved to a later spot in the meeting.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

a. Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program Presentation

Development Services Director David Kuhl noted this agenda item was to provide an introduction to the Multi-family Tax Exemption Program (MFTE) prior to developing Oak Harbor's program, and to explain how programs were designed and implemented in other jurisdictions and highlight the trade-offs for local governments.

Director Kuhl introduced consultants Anthony Hemstad and Cheryl Swab of Hemstad Consulting, noting their firm has developed particular expertise with MFTE and project finance. Anthony Hemstad is a former City Manager and works on several MFTE related projects currently. Cheryl Swab spent a 20-year career with the City of Seattle and has deep legislative, policy, and research and development skills.

Mr. Hemstad provided a presentation outlining MFTE, and overview of legislative changes, and a review of potential tax shift, as well as information from the 2018 North Whidbey Housing Task Force study and Oak Harbor Housing Needs Assessment that determined Oak Harbor has a lack of affordable housing to meet the needs of population growth, a fact that was also noted in the City's adopted Housing Action Plan strategies. Fifty-five communities in Washington use the MFTE program. Mr. Hemstad reviewed the types of MFTE programs, which can be implemented as 8-year, 12-year, or 20-year programs. Oak Harbor is the only eligible city on Whidbey Island with a population of just over 25,000.

City Administrator Oborn noted staff envisions dovetailing a potential MTFE program with the City's Comprehensive Plan update.

Councilmembers Hoffmire, Woessner, and Munns provided their respective questions and comments.

Staff will bring this item to the Council for possible action at a later date.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

a. Parks & Recreation Staffing Support

Parks and Recreation Director Smith provided an overview for the restructuring of the Parks & Recreation Department and staffing needs. He reviewed that the Department was created in 2022 by combining Marina, Senior Services, and Parks and repurposing the Parks Manager as a Director role overseeing the three areas.

Director Smith noted there is a need for recreational programming for all ages, a need to renovate and revitalize end of useful life facilities, a need for additional and higher standard of services and amenities, and to create revenue sources for improvements and growth. He presented a structure for the future to support the vision of expanded services and reviewed the changes proposed:

Senior Services:

Change the name of the Division to "Community Recreation"

Recreation programs for all ages

Arts programming

Sports field reservations

Special events
Community Special events permitting assistance
Therapeutic Recreation for Special Needs and Adaptive Programs

Senior Services Position Changes

Senior Services Administrator (Re-Class to Community Recreation Manager: adding \$12,902 in salary). This position will oversee
Recreation Coordinator (New: \$98,700)
2 PT Senior Travel Drivers (New: \$18,610)
PT/Seasonal Sports Officials & Instructors (New: \$46,524)

Parks Position Changes

Parks Coordinator (Re-class to Supervisor: adding \$11,710)
Parks Specialist I (New, Replacing Temp position ending June :\$76,306)
Part-time Specialist (New: \$9,305)
Parks Maintenance Lead (Re-class to Working Lead/Specialist III)

Marina Position Change

Assistant Harbor Master (Re-Class: adding \$19,555)

Director Smith reviewed funding options and projected recreation program revenues. Total staffing costs are projected at \$293,611 and after phasing in, the funding from revenues is projected to cover the reorganization expenses and potentially provide additional revenue.

Councilmembers Munns, Hoffmire, Woessner, Stuck, Marshall, and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon provided their respective questions and comments. Further discussion will continue at a future workshop.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

b. Active Transportation Plan Update

Principal Planner Kamak provided the information for updates regarding the Active Transportation Plan. He explained the City Council approved the hiring of Toole Design, a consultant group, to help with creating its first Active Transportation Plan, with Washington State Department of Transportation final approval.

The Plan will identify strategies to improve conditions for walking, biking, and rolling throughout the City. It will identify and prioritize projects that will improve safety, access and connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle networks; develop a strategy for funding, implementation, and maintenance; and improve coordination across City departments to advance equitable and sustainable travel options.

Staff provided an update to the Council at its March workshop. Public input on the project was initiated with an online survey that is active from April 3rd to June 3rd. The first Steering Committee meeting was held on April 20th with good attendance from various agencies. The consultant held focus group meetings with the Opportunity Council and Whidbey Bicycle Club for input. The City also had a booth at Holland Happening and received input from citizens. A potential on-line virtual meeting is being discussed for August, as is a stakeholder walk/bike ride.

Principal Planner Kamak provided an overview of the Oak Harbor ATP Draft Engagement Plan. He noted while the public input for the project is ongoing, staff is working with the consultants on the framework and structure of the Plan. Currently in review and discussion are the Existing Conditions Analysis and results and also Network Analysis Initial Findings.

The consultants have reviewed the City's existing plans, including the Capital Improvements Plan, and ADA Transition Plan, and have looked at City infrastructure and land use zoning. Their proposals for prioritizing projects was also included in the update as the Network Prioritization Approach. The layout of the proposed plan is already under discussion along with its vision and goals.

Councilmembers Hoffmire, Woessner, Munns, Marshall, and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon provided their respective questions and comments.

Principal Planner Kamak, City Engineer Warner, and Public Works Director Schuller responded to questions.

RECESS

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon called for a brief recess at 4:22 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 4:34 p.m.

ADMINISTRATION

a. City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Oborn noted in the interest of time, Council could contact him with any questions regarding the monthly report.

CITY COUNCIL

a. Interviews of short-listed applicants for City Council Position No. 4

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon announced the Council would now begin the individual interviews for City Council Position No. 4. Some questions were included in the application packet, and she noted the Council might also ask additional questions.

The Council conducted the interviews in the order of the date the applications were received as follows:

John Chaszar
Barbara Armes
Wismine D'Avilar
Christopher Wiegenstein

The questions asked of all applicants were as follows:

1. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?
2. What experiences, talents or skills do you bring to the Council and community that you would like to highlight?

3. Are there any regional issues or forums in which you have a particular interest or expertise?
4. Do you want to serve on the City Council because of a particular local issue on which you want to work, or are your interests more broadly distributed?
5. Do you have any plans or ideas on how we can enhance economic development in Oak Harbor?
6. How do you intend to increase transparency and citizen engagement in local government, and what measures will you take to ensure that residents have a voice in the decision-making process?
7. Do you have any significant financial investments or holdings in local groups, organizations or properties that might require you to recuse yourself in future votes?
8. We meet three times a month on average, plus occasional special meetings, extra events, staff activities, conferences & other opportunities for community involvement. It's not unusual to get a 600–900-page agenda packet on Thursday afternoon for our Tuesday meeting, so a lot of our weekends are spent reading meeting materials. How will you reconcile the demands of Council with your current work, family, and other commitments?
9. What is the value added you personally will bring to this Council?

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted the Council would move into Executive Session to evaluate the qualifications of the applicants for appointment to elective office per RCW 42.20.110 (1) (H). The anticipated duration was fifteen minutes and she noted action was anticipated upon return to the open session. Executive Sessions are not open to the public.

b. Executive Session

The Council entered Executive Session at 5:40 p.m. At 5:55 p.m. the Council announced it would continue in Executive Session for an additional ten minutes.

At 6:05 p.m. the Council came out of Executive Session and resumed the open session of the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted all four of the applicants were highly qualified and she thanked them for their willingness to serve and that the Council agreed, each would bring value to the position. She encouraged those who were not selected to consider applying to serve on other City Boards and Commissions.

c. Action Item – Appointment of Selected Applicant to Elective Office – Oak Harbor City Council Position No. 4

Motion: Councilmember Munns moved to appoint John Chaszar to City of Oak Harbor Council Position No. 4. Councilmember Stucky seconded the motion, which failed by a vote of 2-4 with Councilmembers Munns and Stucky in favor and Councilmembers Hoffmire, Marshall, Woessner and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon opposed.

Motion: Councilmember Hoffmire moved to appoint Christopher Wiegenstein to City of Oak Harbor Council Position No. 4. Councilmember Marshall seconded the motion, which carried 5-1 with Councilmember Stucky opposed.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon invited newly appointed Councilmember Wiegenstein to step forward and take the Oath of Office, administered, and notarized by the City Clerk.

ADJOURN

Hearing no other discussions, Councilmember Woessner moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Wiegenstein with all in favor, therefore Mayor Pro Tem Hizon declared the workshop meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Certified by Julie Nester, City Clerk