

**Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier**

MAYOR AND CITY HALL WORK SESSION

**DATE: December 15, 2015**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER LEVEL CITY HALL

**Call to Order**

7:12 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier MD

**Presiding Officer**

Mayor Malinda Miles

**Officials Present**

Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Councilmember Tracy Loh

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

**Staff Present**

Interim City Manager Larry Hughes

**Minutes provided by:**

Brishay Corbin

**AGENDA**

Review and Approve Agenda

Recycle Cart Proposal

Clear and Safe Streets

Election Board

Rental License Code Update

Public Art Policy

Community Development Street Update

Rolling Agenda

Comprehensive Road Plan

**Special Session:**

Resolution 21-2015

FY2017 Budget

Approval of Budget Calendar

**Recycle Cart Proposal – Speaker Joseph (Green Team)**

The easiest way to improve recycling rates in the city is by increasing the size of our bins. We conducted an analysis where we took a look at a study from a municipality in Minnesota where certain people received a specific bin while other people received a different bin to see what the difference was and we used that information to compare to our own rates. We found that if we were to implement a 32 gallon bin at the costs that we've looked at we would break even in approximately 4 ½ years from the reduced tipping fees.

Having a particular bin could help with less contamination and lessens the chance of putting the wrong trash can out. It also helps with storage, branding and reduces the amount of incorrect trash in recycling bins. The 32 gallon bins are what are currently allowed under our ordinance and within our trash structure. For a larger bin, 64 gallons, there are loan programs with 0% loans that could help pay so that upfront costs for the city would be inexistent.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** 64 gallon bins are too big.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** Who administers the Closed Loop Fund? It's not the Walton Family Organization?

**Speaker Joseph:** That's probably correct.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** Are you interested in pursuing that?

**Speaker Joseph:** They were not interested in any program that involved more of an infrastructure investment in trash trucks.

**Mary Miles:** If we're talking about volume, how did we come up with our numbers in terms of our 20%?

**Speaker Joseph:** The numbers for Mount Rainier are based upon the weight collected.

**Mayor Miles:** Did we consider who is recycling? I'm not certain we've even gone far enough to look at our businesses recycling.

**Speaker Joseph:** The businesses are outside of the realm of Public Works. They would not show up in any of our numbers since we do not pick up their trash.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** We don't require our businesses to recycle at all, but we could.

**Mayor Miles:** When I wrote the law years ago we didn't have a way to do it. We were after paper, cardboard, and newspapers which ended up making money for the city. Would that be something we should consider?

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** I know where it would go in the code I just need to figure out the language. When we do our budget we need to take a serious look at all the Public Works capital line items and come up with a realistic plan and this could fall under that. We could probably also buy the carts 300 at a time over 3 years, its \$10,000 per year or we could try to research other grant opportunities.

**Councilwoman Shivali Shah:** The Green Team has a Sustainability Coordinator, maybe that's something that she would be able to take on.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** Do we want to see this as part of the budget proposal that is put in front of us in March?

**Mayor Mile:** The answer is yes. We made a decision to go from the small yellow bins to the 32 gallons. With that decision we're also asking to do the research for any funding out there to do this project now.

**Consensus:** Mayor and council discussed and agreed that we will move on at least part of the proposal from the Green Team. In regards to larger trash cans we're not exactly sure when we will be moving in that direction but we've assigned staff the responsibility to begin the process.

## **Clear and Safe Streets – Spokesperson Brooks**

This is a proposal to extend Clear and Safe Streets' services for another year. MRBA is entertaining renewing the contract. There was \$27,000.00 invested in this program last year with a 2 person crew and the job was very successful, so they are able to drop to a 1 person crew part-time. They will also pass by the Queens Chapel Road businesses once a week so that they're included. Kaywood Management provides support for the businesses on Arundel Road, so with their efforts and also this we will be able to touch almost the entire commercial district.

It is important to consider extending this for another year because we have a lot of aesthetic benefits to this program and the consistency will really pay off to make people continue to feel comfortable at our public transit hubs and on the sidewalks.

We ask that you extend your support this year for the \$20,000.00 budget. We have secured almost \$2,000.00 in sponsorship and we have several other requests pending. The MRB board is going to be very cautious in what they invest so between what MRBA does and what the city does its piecing together what service we can provide in 2016.

**Councilman Jesse Christopherson:** So how much do you want?

**Spokesperson Brooks:** Originally I was going to ask for what was contributed last year, \$4,000.00, but my board members wanted me to ask for more, and to consider maybe up to half with the idea that it provides part of a service Public Works can't right now.

**Councilwoman Shivali Shah:** If not the 20K plan is there an alternate plan that's 16K or 12K or is this the only one that we've pieced together?

**Spokesperson Brooks:** We've already hacked away at the program's model. Next Opportunity puts people back to work and this contract is already subsidized because they receive grants in their job training program. I could ask but we're also squeezing a workforce development program.

**Councilwoman Shivali Shah:** MRB's budget is about \$14,000.00 a year?

**Spokesperson Brooks:** We have \$14,000.00-\$15,000.00 a year through the CDMA fees and we will have a cash balance at the end of this year of approximately \$24,000.00 so the investment in this will take at least half of what we have available.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** Last year MRBA stated that they hoped to raise money to support this program in future years, where's MRBA at on that?

**Spokesperson Brooks:** There's not a lot of staff capacity to do grant research or secure additional sponsorship it's still an all-volunteer run organization with a little bit of contract and staff support.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** Where's Queenstown on this since you will be helping their shopping center?

**Spokesperson Brooks:** I don't know.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** It would be to the benefit of Queenstown to have their shopping center look a bit cleaner than it does right now because those businesses, of course, are paying the CDMA fees. You might talk to the Queens Chillum Center across the street because it would also be to their benefit if that corner looked better. Whether they will be able to donate I don't know. But I am totally in support of this, I think it's to benefit the city, but the amount will probably be the issue.

**Mayor Miles:** I definitely support keeping it but I think Mr. Knedler is correct with the amount.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** It's helpful for us if we need to think of this as an annual expense rather than a onetime expense to plan to budget for FY17.

**Councilwoman Shivali Shah:** I would like to see if we could find one of our small businesses or fund some money to get a "Mount Rainier" vest or something so that people can identify them.

**Consensus:** The board has reached a \$5,000.00 agreement and the topic will become a budget item to revisit once the budget season starts.

### **Spokesperson Joseph – Green Team**

Regarding the Kaywood Parking Lot proposal the Green Team looked it over and has a few additional recommendations. One, we looked at the Bicycle Master Plan and we wanted to suggest that share-rows be painted on that street in accordance with the bicycle laws. There was a discussion about trees and we wanted to suggest that native trees be planted and discussions occurred with the tree commission. There are several areas that are going to be paved and painted with stripes but we suggest that Kaywood considers turning them into rain gardens which would allow them to get money from the Raincheck Rebate.

**Mayor Miles:** If you could send me an email with this information I would appreciate it.

**Spokesperson Joseph:** We put together a letter for the council regarding the extensive amount of our development occurring. We would like to suggest, as the city moves forward, to consider ways in which we can improve the building efficacies and rain water efficacies of these buildings. We would like to look into ways to possibly have suggestions to improve our codes so we can have more efficient buildings come in earlier in the process. Jessica Lawrence is taking lead.

**Mayor Miles:** This won't be tonight's discussion but we will take that advisement and put it on another agenda.

### **Election Board – Councilman Bryan Knedler**

What they're suggesting is that we ask the city attorney to review these documents and pose the fixes that we would need, not only to the code but the charter, so I think it's a matter of us deciding whether we want to spend that money or legal fees to have that done. The easiest thing for us to do is increase the stipend for the members on the board which is the last item they asked for. It makes sense considering the small amount of money that they're getting. We are legally required to have this group and if we're not going to pay them we're not going to have them.

**Mayor Miles:** I'm assigned to the committee and they gave this to us to review, so we need some input on where we want to go with what they've given us.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** The majority of the board of election's recommendations that would need to be undertaken by council primarily involves amending the charter.

**Mayor Miles:** If you all would like to put the charter back on the agenda and revote the resolution and move towards sending it to the city council just make sure there's a line item in the budget that covers the cost.

### **Rental License Code Update – Councilwoman Tracy Loh**

I copied the current code that governs rental licenses and then I added details of how you can lose your rental license if your property's a public nuisance, and I defined a bunch of ways your property could become a nuisance. I also increased the penalties for allowing occupancy of a house that doesn't have a rental license, including making it a misdemeanor. I haven't heard back from the Chief on that, but I'd like to hear from him before the January meeting when we do the first reading.

I created a new Sidewalk Café License. As the draft stands right now the license is free and you have to submit a diagram and insurance guidelines. One of the things I proposed in the draft is that all Sidewalk Café permit applications that are in the mixed-use town center must have an approval from the mixed-use town center committee before they come to City Hall.

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** We need to make sure this doesn't conflict with the zoning plan. I also suggest we have LGIT look at it due to dealing with public space and I'm not sure you could waive off your liability that easily.

**Mayor Miles:** SHA would not allow that to happen, but with the members and new ways of doing business so we need to run that by whomever to see if they have any objections.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** I will look into following up with SHA on this prior to the January council meeting. If I can't make significant progress and figure something out I will just remove this section from the ordinance and we can go forward as just rental licenses and business licenses.

I also proposed amendment to the current language about how to apply for a business license in Mount Rainier. In this draft I propose that we delete the phrase “or other arrangements” so in order to get a business license you will have to have trash collection.

**Mayor Miles:** Some businesses don’t put out the kind of trash that would require a contractor to remove. So, as to not penalize those persons they had to show proof of what they were doing with their trash.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** If you look very carefully at the exact wording of the change I proposed, nothing about it would prohibit small businesses from getting together and sharing a contract. Basically, you’re not going to be able to get a business license by handing in a letter to the staff saying that you promise to take home your trash, which is a concern for our code enforcement team when we discussed this topic with them. But, on the draft that we have the first reading of at the January meeting I think it will be best to remove this topic for now.

#### **Public Art Policy – Mayor Miles**

**Councilman Bryan Knedler:** If we are going to put more art up we need to have clear guidelines of who is going to select the art, take care of the art and how.

**Councilwoman Tracy Loh:** We need to talk about whether we want to legislate a 1% public art requirement in the developments of a certain size, so I think it would be helpful to look into creating this committee to perhaps research a policy and provide recommendation unless there’s significant energy on council for taking this on.

#### **Community Development Street Update – Interim City Manager Larry Hughes**

We applied for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) last year and had a list of street projects in it that totaled, in retrospect, approximately \$500,000.00 but we roughly got \$135,000.00. I found an engineering firm to help prioritize the projects with an estimate of how much they would cost. Next, I would like to get a paving contractor and get that done in this paving season, hopefully December. Of all the projects, some of the alleys will need to be completely reconstructed.

So, I would like to find a contractor who can work on the projects using that money starting with the list of projects in the CDBG.

**Councilman Jesse Christopherson:** When looking at some of the poor conditions of the city last year it was decided that the best way to proceed would be to get an infrastructural evaluation with the prioritized recommendations from professionals. We had \$65,000.00 allocated for roads in FY15 and during the budget season we decided to use that money in the coming fiscal year. By adding another \$65,000.00, also using CDBG funds and any other roads funding, we could get a plan done and begin to implement it before putting projects on the CDBG application which ties our hands.

**Motion to Adjourn Work Session:** Councilman Bryan Knedler

**Mover:** Councilman Jesse Christopherson

**Second:** Councilwoman Tracy Loh

#### **Special Meeting – Councilman Bryan Knedler**

It's a resolution to setting the proposed budget calendar for the fiscal year of 2017 budget, its resolution 21-2015.

#### **Accepting Resolution 21 for Budget Calendar 2017**

**Mover:** Mayor Miles

**Second:** Councilwoman Tracy Loh

**Ayes:** Councilwoman Tracy Loh, Councilman Jesse Christopherson

**Move to Adjourn:** Councilman Bryan Knedler

**Second:** Mayor Miles

**Aye:** Councilwoman Tracy Loh