



PUBLIC MEETING: City Council / Port Joint Work Session

DATE: Wednesday **November 15, 2023, 6 PM**

LOCATION: The Gorge Pavilion 395 SW Portage Rd, Cascade Locks, OR 97014

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85806615790>

MINUTES

- 1) Commission meeting called to order 6:00 PM
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance
 - b. Roll Call
 - i. President Lorang
 - ii. Vice-President Klute
 - iii. Commissioner Nance
 - iv. Commissioner Peterson
 - v. Commissioner Thweatt
 - vi. Mayor Cathy Fallon
 - vii. Council Member Butch Miller
 - viii. Council Member Eric Keller
 - ix. Council Member Pete Happy
 - x. Council Member Denise Emmerling-Baker
 - xi. Council Member Sean Crompton (joined via Zoom at 6:19 pm)
 - xii. Council Member Tamara Farrell
 - xiii. Members of the Staff and Other Support – Executive Director (“ED”) Jeremiah Blue, Secretary Keriane Stocker, City Administrator (“CA”) Jordon Bennett
 - xiv. Members of the Public – Joshua Baker; Alfonso Barron; Brittany Berge; Jeanetta Blue; Tom Cramblett; Chuck Mosher; Lauryl Nagode; Joanne Wallace; Melissa Warren; Shania Weldon; Brenda Wood; via Zoom – Flora Gibson (Columbia Gorge News), Chris Matlock
 - c. Modifications, Additions and Changes to the Agenda
- 2) Discussions
 - a. Coordination of City and Port Tourism Activities
 - i. ED Blue opened the discussion, explaining the purpose behind the Joint Work Session was to get the City Council and the Port Commission together to discuss a few topics and concerns that the City and Port wanted to address. One of the aligning topics was tourism, and the Port’s role, the Tourism Committee’s role and the City Council’s role. Council Member (“CM”) Emmerling-Baker acquainted the group with the Oregon Parks & Recreation program, Oregon Main Street Program, part of the Main Street America Coordinating Program. Emmerling-Baker explained that the Main Street program does not solely involve businesses but the community and focuses on the community/city as a whole. A discussion ensued exploring the idea of a Chamber of Commerce or a Small Business Association, or to pursue becoming a part of Main Street. P Lorang pointed out that they may want to look into how much money is coming in and where the City stands as far as the Transient Lodging Tax (“TLT”) rate compared to other outlying communities in our region. CM Emmerling-Baker informed the group that the City is currently participating in Main Street at the Connected Communities level however, she would like to pull together

a group of people to apply for the next level, the Affiliated Main Street level, as it provides access to grants. The higher tier requires a group of seven (7) people and she is hoping that one representative can be from the City, one from the Port, one from the Tourism Committee, and local business owners as well as community members. She also informed that the deadline for the application to move from the Connected Community level to the Affiliated Main Street tier is January 2024. C Peterson asked what the roadmap for the first two (2) years of being an affiliate of Main Street would look like. CM Emmerling-Baker explained that they would take the Port and City goals and priorities, as well as those from the community, they will take a look at the downtown corridor and note the City's advantages and disadvantages. Oregon Main Street will then work with the Cascade Locks Main Street group to reach those goals. ED Blue asked if the Commission, possibly along with the Council, would like him to invite a representative from Main Street America to speak to them. There was a consensus for ED Blue to reach out to Main Street. C Thweatt commented that her concern is the empty businesses downtown. P Lorang stated that the Port is committed to not letting buildings in downtown sit vacant, whether that's supporting the City in utilizing derelict building codes and giving an incentive to those building owners to either sell the building, fix them up or assisting in find clients for them. CM Miller pointed out that the Chamber of Commerce does not use government money for funding. Government entities dare members of Chambers of Commerce, but the Chamber itself are a 501c6 and that it is up to businesses and business owners to start a Chamber, not the government's role. P Lorang noted that it is up to the government to allocate taxes to the Chamber. CM Emmerling-Baker notified that the City is looking at quotes to change the codes. They have been informed that it is unlawful for the City to issue fines to empty businesses but was recommended to implement a "Dark Store" code, which would require buildings to have lights on in the business to make the business appear to be in operation and prohibit windows from being covered or boarded up. The discussion steered towards vacation rentals, new builds, and the opportunities for workforce housing. ED Blue commented that the focus previously was to create workforce housing to bring huge companies in, now the focus is to revitalize downtown. He added that it would be ideal if they could provide housing for key leadership positions, such as a Police Chief, Fire Department, lineman, City Administrator or General Manager, that are vital to this community. CM Miller mentioned that the 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement ("IGA") between the City and the Port should be revisited. C Peterson asked if there were specific points that CM Miller felt needed to be addressed. CM Miller replied that the IGA in its entirety should be redone. P Lorang pointed out that it should be dependent on the Strategic Business Plan ("SBP") and what the Commission decides is their intention for the Business Park. CM Miller stated that the City and Port were under time constraints because of the grant. P Lorang acknowledged that he is aware of the time limit, however they can only revisit the IGA once they know in what direction they are headed. ED Blue reminded the group of the time and invited the group to make closing comments. C Nance stated that, regarding the topic of vacation rentals and whether to make the codes stricter on rental properties, he would like the City to be considerate of the visitors and tourists, as a few of the events that the Port coordinates with mentioned the lack of housing available during the events. He provided the scenario with Bridge of the Gods Run, who accidentally announced the upcoming year's dates to the public *before* reserving rooms for their own staff and

then discovered that all the rooms in the city had already been reserved. M Fallon commented that the City is only allowed a certain percentage of rental housing within an area, 5% within 250 square-feet. CM Happy inquired if the events that require more accommodations could utilize the same amenities that PCT Days does, like camping on Thunder Island. C Nance speculated that with PCT Days, many of them are hikers and are used to tent-camping, where as the other events are a different type of participants and may require very different accommodations. ED Blue mentioned that there previously was a Joint Work Group on Economic Development ("JWGED") that has not convened for awhile. P Lorang commented that he found that the problem with JWGED was that it did not produce any actionable plan. CM Farrell added that she also used to attend them and it seemed more like a meeting for updates. CM Emmerling-Baker suggested a shared drive such as Google Drive that the City and Port could use to share key information. ED Blue commented that he understands the need to want to share information amongst each other, but will check with the Port's attorney if there is anything in the Public Records law that they may need to consider if they implement a shared drive, especially if there will be any actionable items shared. He suggested that they direct documents through him and CA Bennett as a contact point. CM Keller stated that the role of ED Blue and CA Bennett is to focus on the actionable day-to-day tasks, and the job of the Council and Commission to look ahead at the twenty-year plan. C Thweatt expressed the importance of knowing what comes first, that they have to know where they are going first before making decisions. C Nance commented that he really appreciated everyone getting together and looks forward to doing a couple more work sessions. He considered the work session an opportunity to set the foundation for what they can create, twenty-years out and felt like the work session was a good step in figuring that out. CM Miller did not have anything to add. CM Happy stated that he also found the conversations useful and liked the idea of bringing back JWGED. M Fallon noted that the City is currently focused on completing their SBP as they need it in order to have a plan and apply for grants. She understands that the Port is facing a similar plan of action. M Fallon finds that the work session was a good start and thanked the attendees for their time. P Lorang agreed with M Fallon and reiterated the importance of figuring out what direction they want to head in, what things can be accomplished and the timeline for those. VP Klute brought up the topic of the holiday lights and expressed that she would love to see the holiday spirit grow in town and become more of an economic development opportunity for the town. CM Crompton found the work session eye-opening and believes that they need to have another work session that has more actionable items and less grand ideas, but noted that once the City and Port has their SBP finalized, that will happen more easily. CM Farrell also agreed with the idea of making housing available for key people that the city needs. Her biggest importance would be having a sheriff live in town, pointing out that they spend so much money as a city, paying the Sheriff Office to travel back and forth [from Hood River]. She also expressed her favor for creating a Chamber [of Commerce]. Lastly, CM Farrell pointed out the need for childcare and although she understands that tourism is a main focus, she would like to see some of that focus shift to provide things for the residents who live here. CM Emmerling-Baker recommended that local events should be announced well in advance so that businesses have a considerable amount of time to plan if they want to participate. She also suggested that the City and Port provide each other with a report at each other's meetings. As a final point, CM Emmerling-Baker mentioned that during the

League of Cities ("LOC") seminars, they stressed the importance of being involved with the County and the State to evaluate code changes and to work with developers. C Peterson commented that the work session helped highlight the opportunities where the City and Port can work together and agreed with CM Happy that they discussed very specific topics yet did not develop any actionable strategies.

3) Adjournment 7:52 pm

VP KLUTE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN; C NANCE SECONDED; Passed Unanimously

Port of Cascade Locks

Port Commission President
Brad Lorang

Port Commission Secretary
Albert Nance

Date Signed

Date Signed