

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2006

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Library Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, March 27, 2006 at 5:30 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Woodrow, Ballew, Fitch, Ralston, and Pishioneri. Also present were Interim City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Councilor Lundberg was absent (excused).

1. Historic Commission Applicant Interviews.

City Planner, and staff liaison to the Historic Commission, Kitti Gale presented the staff report on this item. The Historic Commission has two openings on its seven-member commission. The recruitment for these openings began February 13, 2006, and closed March 3, 2006. The two candidates that have applied, Maren L. Tomblin and James A. McNett, are applying for re-appointment to the Commission.

Section IX, 3.8 of the Springfield City Council Operating Policies and Procedures, states that the *"...Mayor and Council will hold formal interviews of applicants for positions on the Budget Committee, Historic Commission, and Planning Commission and a recommendation from these bodies is not necessary although they may have a representative present to participate in the interview process. . ."*

Springfield Code 1-10-1, Historic Commission Charge, requires that the 7-member Commission shall be residents, electors, or property owners within Springfield, appointees of other Springfield public agencies such as Willamalane Park & Recreation and School District #19, or specialists with expertise in such fields as architecture, history, architectural history, planning or archaeology who live within the Metro-area General Plan boundaries. A majority of the Commission meeting professional qualifications for State Certified Local Governments (CLG) for accreditation is desired for State funding.

Maren Tomblin was appointed to the Historic Commission on February 22, 2005, to fill Donald McCormack's vacated position.

James McNett was appointed to the Historic Commission on February 22, 2005, to fill the position vacated by Karen Glickman. Both applicants are now applying for their own 4-year term on the Commission.

Council discussed the questions and determined that Councilor Fitch would ask the following questions of each candidate:

Are you willing to serve for a full term?
What did you learn over the past year serving on the Historic Commission?
What would you like to learn in the future?
Have you done a preservation project of your own?

Councilor Fitch thanked the candidates for their past year of service and their willingness to continue on the Historic Commission.

Maren Tomblin and James McNett were interviewed for the Historic Commission.

Council consensus was to re-appoint Maren Tomblin and James McNett to the Historic Commission.

2. Historic Commission Annual Joint Meeting to Review 2004-2005 Grant Work Program and Goals for the 2005-2006 Grant Work Program Goals and Objectives.

City Planner, and staff liaison for the Historic Commission, Kitti Gale presented the staff report on this item. The Council is requested to review the results of the Commission's 2004-2005 Grant Work Program and the proposed 2005-2006 Grant Work Program, which includes a Resolution adopting the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Special Assessment Program revisions contained in House Bill 2776.

The Historic Commission is dedicated to planning and protecting the community's historic resources. The Commission's adopted goals serve as a framework for fulfilling this mission. These goals are consistent with City Council goals of: Preserving our hometown feel as we grow; Partnering with citizens and other public agencies; and Participating in a renaissance for Springfield.

The Commission goals (see Attachment 1) also function as the Commission's yearly work program. The priorities of each goal are re-evaluated annually to reflect the changing needs of the City of Springfield and resources available to the Commission. This year the Council is asked to focus on Goal G as it pertains to the State of Oregon's Special Assessment Program that permits owners of historic residential property to apply for a second period of special assessment benefits. Council is requested to review the program during the March 27th work session and a public hearing is scheduled for April 3rd on the attached resolution.

The local implementation measures of the Springfield Historic Commission Work Program include activities such as: application review pertaining to historic resources; providing financial and educational support to Washburne Neighborhood Association; supporting preservation-related education projects in the Springfield School District, Springfield Museum, and Willamalane Park's Dorris Ranch; sponsoring activities during National Historic Preservation Month; and, reviewing/updating inventories.

Under the state Special Assessment Program a property's assessed value is frozen for a period of 15 years. This allows the owner to restore or improve the condition of the property and not pay additional taxes on the resulting increase in property's value until the fifteen-year benefit period has expired. Twenty-four properties have completed the program and twenty-five properties are currently enrolled in the program (see Attachment 3). Properties in the Washburne Historic

District continue to increase in value. A good example of the increase in structure values is the Springfield General Hospital at 846 F Street. Assessed values rose from \$167,817 in 1995 at the end of their benefit program to \$285,340.

Staff support for the City's preservation program varies depending upon grant funding. SHPO requires a one-to-one grant match. The financial impact to the City for implementing the State/Federally required program is approximately 0.2 FTE.

Historic Commission Chair John Tuttle said it was a pleasure to work with such a dedicated group of Commissioners and staff. He said that each year the Commission reviewed the past year's accomplishments and set goals and objectives for the following year. He discussed the 2004-2005 Summary Results of Activities as they related to the different Historic Commission goals. This summary was included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1. He discussed House Bill 2776 regarding the State's Special Assessment Program and the benefits of such a program. It could be a good incentive for homeowners.

Councilor Ballew said it could be frustrating for those living in the Historic District to have to pay two different fees in order to do a building project on their home. She asked if there was a way some of the information gathered by the Historic Commission could be used to offset some of those fees. She would like staff and the Commission to work together to find a solution.

Ms. Gale discussed Council's past direction to staff to create fees that would bring cost recovery.

Councilor Ballew said that was correct, but she felt those living in the Historic District were paying the fees twice.

Planning Supervisor Colin Stephens said the fees associated with the Historic District were not raised, while fees in other areas were raised.

Councilor Ballew said it still seemed that those living in the Historic District had to pay twice.

Ms. Gale said she and Mr. Stephens would look further into that.

Mr. Tuttle said a Historic District did add another layer of bureaucracy, and those that moved into a district often knew they would pay extra for those protections.

Councilor Ballew said she understood there could still be some additional costs, but there may be some similarities between the information going to the State and to the Commission.

Ms. Pappas said staff would look into that and bring the information back to Council.

Councilor Fitch asked for clarification on the House Bill.

Mr. Tuttle said anyone who had been on the special assessment program for fifteen years could reapply for another fifteen years, even if the original fifteen years had expired. They would need to submit an approved plan.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there was a financial benefit for the homeowners.

Mr. Tuttle said the assessed value of their home would be frozen at the time they were approved for the special assessment. He said it wouldn't freeze taxes, but the assessed value of the house over the fifteen years.

Councilor Pishioneri asked about the fee Councilor Ballew referred to and asked if it was part of that process.

Ms. Pappas said a fee was paid to have a review by the Historic Commission, but homeowners didn't pay a fee to get into the district, as that was already determined.

Discussion was held regarding advantages and obligations of being in the Historic District.

Mr. Tuttle said the homeowner would need to show their home was a contributing home for the district. He explained the guidelines for approval.

Discussion was held about the fees and the different application processes.

Ms. Gale gave an example of a homeowner applying for the tax assessment program, which showed approvals from both the State and the local Historic Commission. She noted that much of the process was redundant because the work had been done at the State level and the State of Oregon standards were usually higher than the City's.

Councilor Ballew asked about the frozen value and if the tax rate would increase three percent as it did for all other homes.

Mr. Tuttle said the taxes would increase the three percent each year at the frozen value.

Ms. Tomblin asked if the assessed value was based on home sales. No.

Ms. Pappas said this program had more benefit to the homeowner prior to Measure 47, which limited tax increases.

Mr. Tuttle said only three people had been on this program since 1997, so they did not expect too many more to apply. For those that did want to do it, the opportunity should remain.

Mayor Leiken asked if the Historic District only included residents.

Mr. Tuttle said currently businesses were allowed to extend the special tax program for an additional fifteen years.

Mayor Leiken asked if there were any commercial sites in the Historic District. Yes. He asked about buildings on Main Street and if they could be added to the Historic District. He asked about the process to have them included.

Ms. Gale said they would need to be surveyed, the owners would have to agree to a national listing, and an application could be completed.

Ms. Pappas said some of the historic buildings on Main Street were separately on the Historic Register. They were not included in the district, because there needed to be a critical mass of historic structures in order to form a district.

Mayor Leiken asked if there was a percentage that constituted a critical mass. He said if commercial buildings could be included in the Historic District, some interesting design standards could be set, eliminating some of the less tasteful businesses from moving downtown. He asked if that was something that could be done and if the Historic Commission would be willing to explore that option.

Ms. Gale said the Commission undertook a study in 2000 which surveyed downtown and Glenwood. She said she had a survey book specifically for downtown and that information was available. There was a list of buildings that had a potential to be nominated, but were not grouped together close enough that they could be in a district. There were about six buildings downtown that could warrant nomination to the Historic Register.

Mr. Tuttle said a historic district wasn't needed to establish design standards.

Mayor Leiken discussed some of the businesses that were moving into downtown that were negatively affecting the whole area. He said improvements had been made downtown, but he wanted to look at more opportunities to bring a historic feel to downtown. He referred to the MetCo building as a good example. He said he did not want to make it complicated, but asked staff if they could explore it further.

Ms. Gale said whenever there was development in downtown that used Federal Money, a review had to be submitted to the State. She discussed the new building by St. Vincent DePaul and noted that they had come before the Historic Commission several times so they could be sensitive to constructing their building with the ambiance of downtown and with a small oldtown look to the building.

Mr. Grile said the Local Chapter of the American Institutes of Architect was having a design charette in downtown Springfield a week from Saturday. He said staff could bring this suggestion to them for discussion. He said that any member of the Council or Historic Commission that was interested could join them. If Council did not see what they wanted to see following that exercise, staff could bring back a short report identifying some options if Council directed.

Councilor Fitch said if it was not something that could be set up in the Historic District, she would want the design standards to embrace what existed in the Washburne District.

Ms. Gale said there were recommendations for historic design standards for commercial buildings within the historic design guidelines.

Mayor Leiken asked if the Commission, with their expertise, would be interested in looking into some of these options.

Ms. Tomblin said she had gotten a sense from Historic Commission that they were interested in design guidelines for downtown. She said the design guidelines may not need to be called

historic, but could have some historic flavor with some standards that could be brought into today's design.

Mr. McNett discussed zoning downtown and the changes that had occurred over the years.

The Mayor and Council noted the importance of the Historic Commission and commended them for all they did for Springfield.

Councilor Woodrow also commended Mr. Tuttle and Ms. Tomblin for serving on the Justice Center Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

Ms. Gale said Springfield was very fortunate to have a seven member Commission with so much professional background. She noted that staff would bring back the resolution regarding House Bill 2776 on April 3.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder