

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Shannon McKay called the workshop to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor Shannon McKay; Councilmembers: Eleanor Brodahl, Kenneth Caylor, Dan Dever, Kenneth Johnson, Mark Snyder, Marc Spohr, and Tim Wilson

**Also Present:** City Administrator Ehman Sheldon and Department Heads: Police Chief Steve Dunnagan, Debbie Kudrna, and Jay Van Ness

**SKATE PARK DISCUSSION – JOSH MOHS**

Council viewed a brief video showing various types of skateboard parks. Josh Mohs explained the types of skateboard parks and reviewed the construction of a cement park, including a plaza style skate board park. Mr. Sheldon advised that WCIA reported that in 25 years of coverage, they have only seen 2 injury claims at a skate board park. Mr. Mohs advised that cement parks ride the best; are the most durable; and will last a lifetime. Mr. Van Ness reported that skate board park costs start at \$45,000. Mr. Mohs stated that 10,000 sq. feet would accommodate a decent park. He recommended a combination of the street obstacles and transition/bowl parks. He explained that skate boarders usually police themselves and older skaters often assist the younger skaters. He offered to assist with the designing of a skate board park.

**DAVE ANDERSON, COUNTY ASSESSOR, LEVY RATES: LIBRARY, HOSPITAL, FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Adams County Assessor Dave Anderson explained that he wanted to answer any concerns and questions when a taxing district requests a levy rate increase. He stated that there are safeguards in place so that a taxing district cannot over tax citizens. He explained there are several factors relevant to the limits of taxing districts: the taxing district budget request (the maximum amount they can collect in property taxes); the statutory rate (for instance, Othello is \$3.60 per \$1,000 less the Library District rate and Adams County Fire District is \$0.75 cents per \$1,000 valuation); and the \$5.90 calculation (if you add up all of the levy rates, the total cannot be more than \$5.90 does not include voter approved, Port District, or State School levies). If all of the taxing districts asked their full rate, it would be more than \$5.90 and the Assessor's office reduces the amounts that they actually get. Another control of how much a taxing district can get is the 1% increase cap, including new construction and state utilities. Normally, taxing districts in Adams County collect their highest lawful levy amount, including Othello. The Library and Hospital District had not been collecting their highest levy amount. There's a State law to reward a District who requests only what they need and it allows them to collect their capacity for future needs. Both the Library and Hospital Districts have been banking their levy capacity. Last year, the Hospital collected \$450,000 and the Library District was \$0.32 per \$1,000. This year, the Hospital District's budget was \$650,000; it was decreased by the Assessor's office to \$615,000. The Library District also asked for their highest lawful levy. By State law, there is a specific order of the taxing districts that get reduced. Mr. Anderson advised that there is also a special protection for some levy reductions. For instance, the Hospital maximum is \$0.75 per \$1,000, of which the first \$0.50 is protected and the second \$0.25 is lower on the reduction list. Library Districts are rated higher than the Hospital's \$0.25 portion. This year, the Hospital District's \$0.25 was reduced and their total levy rate was reduced to \$585,000, which is \$135,000 more than they collected in previous years. He reported that Othello was the only entity in Adams County that reached the \$5.90 cap. Mr. Anderson noted that the City's assessed property value increased due to new construction was \$36.375 million.

**PARK TREE DISCUSSION**

Municipal Services Coordinator Jay Van Ness reported that 10 diseased trees were removed from Lions Park. They received recommendations of four types of trees for planting in public areas. Mr. Van Ness stated there is nothing budgeted for trees in 2009. He presented a quote of \$4,600, which includes a fee for planting and purchasing 20 trees. Councilmember Spohr recommended that Public Works proceed with getting quotes for the trees.

**PROPERTY DISCUSSION**

Mayor McKay advised that we have an opportunity to purchase property to develop community parks or other uses for the community. Councilmember Spohr talked about whether there is value to the

City of Othello  
City Council Workshop  
March 2, 2009

City to buy property to motivate construction or to develop into parks. He advised that the school district is in need of additional tennis courts. Mayor McKay noted that communities are buying troubled property and turning them into something for their community. Councilmember Caylor noted that there is an abandoned house at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hemlock Street and Habitat for Humanity is looking to build homes next to it and he wondered if the City could do something with the abandoned house. Councilmember Caylor stated that we also need to look for property for a park and a visitor/community center. He suggested getting 20 acres for a park and build a visitor/community center on it. He noted there are several grants available for those types of projects and the City can use park reserve funds for matching funds. The visitor center would have to be adjacent to Hwy 17 to meet some of the grant criteria. Mr. Sheldon reported that the City owns a small piece of property off of S. SR 24 that is designated for a park. Councilmember Johnson added that we own an additional 60 acres where the storm water system is. Mr. Sheldon explained that we do not have enough park property to meet the population/park ratio and the Council had directed to appropriate funds to develop large parks instead of small, neighborhood parks. Councilmember Caylor offered to create a concept of a visitor/community center with an adjacent park. Mayor McKay suggested that we work on the funding concept first.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS – COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHARE INFORMATION**

Councilmember Caylor reported that he attended the AWC conference in Olympia. They talked about the State shortfall; projects that the stimulus package are designated for, and current legislative topics. He reported that the next meeting for the centennial is this Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

Councilmember Spohr reported that the pool committee is working on the following projects: expanding the fencing and grass areas and upgrading the concession stand. This includes a hot dog steamer, nacho maker, 2 large shade structures, and 4 smaller shade areas in the grass area. The Swim Team has requested use of the pool for swim meets and the committee is reviewing their request. Councilmember Spohr explained that as the City's valuation goes up, so does the Mid Columbia Library District fee (MCLD). MCLD is now negotiating with the Adams County Rural Library District. MCLD is asking approximately \$360,000 for the 2010 contract.

Councilmember Johnson asked what the status of getting a Coyote Ridge crew back. Mr. Sheldon reported that we have not received a response from the Mayor's correspondence to Coyote Ridge. He advised that Public Works is working on an alternate course using the same funding.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor McKay stated that we have maxed out our natural gas lines, and we now have an opportunity to ask for a higher volume of natural gas. He advised that it's really important to get a higher volume of natural gas in our area. The Mayor noted that there are several committees researching this issue. Port District Manager Mike Beardsley recommended that we pursue the issue and find out where natural gas is located. Councilmember Caylor reported that he believes if we push the issue with the government, we will get results. Councilmember Spohr stated that he has been approached about an accumulation of vehicles at a business on 9<sup>th</sup> and Main Street.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to discuss, Mayor McKay adjourned the workshop at 8:36 p.m.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
SHANNON MCKAY, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
DEBBIE L. KUDRNA, City Clerk