

City of Othello
City Council Workshop
July 6, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Wilson called the workshop to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers: Eleanor Brodahl, Kenneth Caylor, Dan Dever, Kenneth Johnson, Mark Snyder, and Marc Spohr.

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

Absent Was: Mayor Shannon McKay.

CARGO CONTAINERS

City Planner Darryl Piercy explained that there are a number of unpermitted cargo containers in the C-2 commercial and industrial zones. There may be at least 12 cargo containers located on property that, by code, must have a conditional use permit. A conditional use permit is valid for two years. We anticipate a number of applications will be received for the conditional use permit process before the Hearing Examiner. Some of the property owners may feel that they are in compliance with the code or had approval for their container. Mr. Piercy advised that Othello Municipal Code (OMC) Chapter 8.62 clearly provides requirements for cargo containers and a conditional use permit is required to place them in commercial zones. However, OMC Chapter 17 provides that cargo containers are allowed as a permitted use in the industrial zones, provided they meet certain criteria and the owners have an approved conditional use permit. Because there is some confusion within the codes, he felt it was appropriate for the Council to review the zoning codes. This provides an opportunity to approve cargo containers through an administrative review, or prohibit all cargo containers in any zone. He stated that the code is very clear they are not allowed in residential zones. Mr. Piercy explained that the two year period is addressed in the Commercial 2 zones and Chapter 8, it gives the impression that you can go through the Hearing Examiner and receive an additional permit for another two years.

Mr. Piercy explained the hearing examiner process noting it would be expensive and time consuming. He stated that the code allows for locked storage containers at construction sites. Mr. Sheldon advised that there was a cargo container in a C-1 zone a few years ago, and the property owner removed it, once they were asked. Mr. Piercy advised that OMC Chapter 8.62 is the oldest section of our code and there seems to be some ambiguity of the code. Mr. Piercy stated that stick structures can be built for storage that would meet all codes. He noted that many communities prohibit cargo containers in commercial and residential zones. Most of the containers that have been located are within the commercial zone and do not have a permit. Mr. Piercy noted that in the industrial zone, under our current code, a conditional use permit is not necessary. Our code enforcement officer has a list of the properties that he has sent letters relevant to their cargo containers and there may be more letters sent out. He summarized: does the Council want to allow cargo containers in the C-2 and Industrial zones? If they don't, what do we do with those current containers? Or do we simply keep the code as is, and go through the conditional use permit process? Or do we review them administratively and give them two years to remove them? Mayor Pro Tem Wilson stated that he would like to prohibit cargo containers in the commercial zones and give them two years to remove them. Councilmember Snyder stated he would like to look at the locations and then make a decision. Councilmember Dever stated that it is expensive to go through the permit process. The commercial core of 1st Avenue and Main Street are C-1 zones and cargo containers are not allowed. Councilmember Johnson would like to review it more and noted it may be difficult to review them administratively. Mr. Sheldon advised that Council will receive a list of locations of the containers. He also explained that the conditional use process is used to move a nonconforming use into compliance over a set time period.

SECOND QUARTER REPORT FROM ADAMS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 5

Adams County Fire Chief Gary Lebacken advised they have received 35 fire calls this last quarter. They hosted the live fire training for their personnel using the flash over trailer from Walla Walla. The City's ladder truck #8120 was inspected and passed; minor repairs will be done to it. He advised the most common City fire call is false alarms in the industrial area. He advised that smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years and the batteries should be replaced every six months. Councilmember Spohr advised there was a serious traffic accident at 1st Avenue and SR 26 this morning and the State's assessment of that intersection is accurate. Mr. Sheldon advised that the new building codes will require new residential units to be fire sprinkled next year.

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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION-PAUL MAYER: LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

Municipal Services Coordinator Jay Van Ness presented a letter of understanding with the Department of Transportation (DOT). This defines that the DOT will administer, design, conduct all change order correspondence, and will oversee the SR 26/SR 24 and 1st Avenue project. The City will be responsible for the pass through of the federal monies to the contractors. He asked to place this on the next consent agenda for consideration.

FIBER OPTICS AGREEMENT DISCUSSION

IT Manager Stan Anderton presented an extension for the current agreement with Saddle Mountain Wireless. Currently, the agreement allows Saddle Mountain to erect antennas on water towers and at the City Hall building. In exchange we get free wireless internet at all city facilities. The new agreement will extend fiber into the City Hall building, with the City and Saddle Mountain Wireless sharing the expenses. The City will continue to get free internet service and we will provide space for Saddle Mountain's equipment in our building. He advised that the benefits in bringing the fiber to our building will allow us to connect the Public Works building for an additional \$3200, which will increase the capability of the Public Works offices. This would also eliminate the need for the T-1 line to the Public Works building and the new equipment will provide fiber for the Police Department to the Ritzville Sheriff's office. This should be a cost savings for the City. It will also be more reliable and provide very fast internet service. We will need to purchase equipment for both city buildings for approximately \$1,000. Mr. Anderton indicated that there will still be a monthly charge for the fiber. Mr. Sheldon stated that Adams County paid \$125,000 to bring fiber into the city and now businesses are able to pay a cost to extend that fiber service to their buildings. This improvement would also allow video conferencing in our facilities. If Saddle Mountain were to cease operating as a business, it would not be a significant impact to the City. Mr. Anderton explained that the City Hall building is currently a "hot spot" for internet access and we could provide free internet in our parks for an additional \$50 per park plus employee costs.

Mr. Anderton advised as that as the Informational Technician Manager, he takes care of the electronics portion of the heating and ventilation in City Hall, maintains the telephone system, surveillance cameras, computers, and networking issues. He also asked that we place the agreement on the next Consent Agenda. Councilmember Spohr asked for a cost comparison of the new monthly fiber costs versus the T-1 costs.

COULEE CORRIDOR KIOSK - KENNETH CAYLOR

Councilmember Kenneth Caylor advised he has been working on the Coulee Corridor kiosk project for three years. He stated that this will become a community project and it may also be a part of the centennial program. He explained there is a piece of property on Main Street which is currently a weed patch, located west of Mira Star at the head of the walking path. He proposed that a mini park be constructed at this triangle shape location. It would need to be filled, rolled, and planted into grass with underground sprinklers installed. We could also provide a gravel parking lot. A kiosk would be erected to have Othello area information on one side and the Coulee Corridor map on the other side. We have two light posts that can be placed on both sides of the kiosk and benches could be placed at this location for our citizens. Coulee Corridor has some funding for the kiosk project and the Beautification Committee has offered to participate. He would like to get the project started this year and completed by early 2010. He stated that he doesn't know if the property owner will donate the land for the project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHARE INFORMATION

Councilmember Johnson reported the ACDC meeting is this Thursday in Lind. He attended the swim meet last week at the community pool and it was very well attended. He received many positive comments on the facility. Councilmember Caylor reported that the Coulee Corridor is now advertised in the American Road national magazine. He noted that the Centennial Committee is meeting monthly and they are working on several new projects. They will install signs advertising the City's centennial, with calendars and posters available to purchase at the fair. Councilmember Dever noted that he has access to a wheat thrasher for a demonstration during the fair.

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OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Sheldon advised there is a pool committee meeting Thursday at 4:00. Councilmember Caylor thanked Public Works for taking the bleachers to the dialysis center grand opening. Councilmember Dever thanked Public Works for cleaning up Lions Park after the 4th of July activities. Councilmember Dever asked about the intersection at 14th Avenue and SR 26; he thought there was to be a dedicated right turn lane. Mr. Van Ness advised that the project includes a right turn lane, forward lane, and left turn lane. Mr. Sheldon noted the outstanding issue is the blinking yellow, caution lights.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Spohr advised that he receives complaints about noise from mufflers and stereos in vehicles. Councilmember Dever stated that he has received many comments about the new parking configuration at the post office. Mr. Sheldon advised that the post office has not completed their street striping within their parking lot and when that is done, the traffic flow will improve.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to discuss, Mayor McKay adjourned the workshop at 8:07 p.m.

By: _____
SHANNON MCKAY, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
DEBBIE L. KUDRNA, City Clerk