

City of Othello  
Council Workshop  
August 7, 2000

Mayor E R Kelley called the workshop to order at 7:00 p.m. Council members present were Leonard Lyon, Eleanor Brodahl, Les Clemons, Everett Cole, Donald Derifield, Jeannie Ochoa and Kenneth Johnson. Also present were Debra Travis, Debbie Kudrna and Curt Andrews, City Department Heads; Bill Shaw, City Administrator; Inez Freeman, MCL Librarian and several library committee members.

### LIBRARY ISSUES

Finance Officer, Debra Travis led a discussion regarding the formation of a Rural Library District (RLD); possibility of annexing into the RLD; and other options for the Council to discuss and consider. She explained that the opportunity to form a RLD will be on the preliminary ballot to be determined by the rural voters. She discussed options if the RLD is or is not formed; including whether the Council will want to adopt an ordinance requesting annexation into the RLD. Ms Travis reviewed the procedures and time frame for requesting annexation into the RLD, which could be placed on the general ballot in November or as a special election in February. It was reported by Becky Macy that the County Commissioners are ready to appoint a Library Board of Trustees on September 21st, if the RLD is approved by the voters on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms Travis reviewed a scenario if the RLD asked for \$0.50 tax levy, which included the impact to other junior taxing districts. A brief discussion was held on the status of the library in 2001, since no taxes will be collected or used for library funding for 2001 by the RLD, even if one is formed. This will be discussed more thoroughly after the September 19<sup>th</sup> vote and during the budget sessions. Librarian, Inez Freeman presented a plea to the Council to request annexation into the RLD, when approved by the voters.

### SIDEWALK REPAIRS

City Administrator, Bill Shaw showed pictures of several sidewalk areas in the commercial district that are need of repair or replacement, due to dangerous conditions or to meet ADA requirements. He stated that six of the property owners were informed of unsafe sidewalk conditions last year, followed by conversations with the building department, with no improvements being done. The next step of enforcement is to have the Council adopt resolutions which would provide for sidewalk compliance. Mr. Shaw noted that unsafe sidewalks are liability issues for property owners and the city and are a safety issue for pedestrian traffic. Mr. Shaw explained that, as an option, the city may be able to loan the property owners the funding for the sidewalks at a reasonable rate and require repayment or lien against the property.

Further discussion was held about sidewalks not only in commercial districts but in residential areas. Council member Lyon voiced his concern of imposing improvements upon private property. Mr. Shaw explained the process that is set by state law regarding enforcement of sidewalk compliance. Mr. Andrews noted that all new buildings in commercial areas require sidewalks and maintenance of them thereafter. They discussed other areas in town that sidewalks could be installed to help with pedestrian traffic and controlling vehicular traffic by providing sidewalks, curb cuts and access points.

Mr. Shaw stated that when the project is presented clearly to the citizens, and communication is open and informative, this compliance process could proceed positively for our citizens.

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Mr. Andrews noted that there are three stages to our sidewalk issues:

1. hazardous sidewalk conditions – safety issues
2. parking lots that have no sidewalks, curb cuts or driveways
3. vacant commercial lots without sidewalks – safety issues

**U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE OFFER**

Mr. Shaw stated that the Fish & Wildlife would like to dispose of property located at 9<sup>th</sup> and Pine Street. Alan Hanks, of Othello Housing Authority explained the Fish & Wildlife had inherited these lots and had surplus them several years ago. They would like to donate them to O.H.A. for affordable housing, but due to constraints of federal property laws, are unable to outright donate them to the O.H.A. They have been informed that the property could be donated to the city, who could in turn donate the property to O.H.A. for affordable housing. Mr. Hanks noted O.H.A. would be responsible for any out-of-pocket expenses due to the change of ownership. Mr. Hanks stated that their housing is 100% full with 175-200 farm working families on a waiting list. He explained that the O.H.A. makes a payment to the city in lieu of property taxes. He also stated that in the new Harvest Manor development, 100% of the occupants are farm workers and in the other sites, the average is 40-65% are farm field worker families, who all meet the low to moderately income family status.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Mr. Shaw stated that the Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on August 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss the Planned Unit Development, proposed for north of Olympia Street. Council will begin involvement of the process as early as late August.

Mr. Shaw noted that the Council will receive the notice of intent to annex from four land owners in the vicinity of Bench Road and Hwy. 24 at the August 14 meeting. He stated that Columbia Colstor is operational. He noted discussions with Walmart representatives who assured completion of plat paperwork after August 10<sup>th</sup>, which is the closure of the SEPA response time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Council member Clemons suggested writing a letter to Simplot, welcoming them to Othello, since they have acquired the Nestle' plant.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Kelley adjourned the workshop into an executive session at 8:45 p.m. for approximately 15 minutes to discuss personnel. Council reconvened at 8:48 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Kelley adjourned the workshop at 8:49 p.m.

Debbie Kudrna, CMC  
City Clerk