



MINUTES

City Council Regular Meeting

6:30 PM – Monday, February 8, 2021

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CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Genna Dorow called the meeting of the Othello City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. and led a silent invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present:

John Lallas

Jonathan Erickson

Corey Everett

Mark Snyder

Genna Dorow

Maria Quezada

Angel Garza

Councilmembers Absent:

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT

Tania Morelos, City Clerk

Anne Henning, Community Development Director

Shawn O'Brien, City Engineer

Spencer Williams, Finance Officer

CITIZEN INPUT

Roger Enz, 1150 E. Oak Street requests Council to make considerations regarding turning radius on the streets before approving to award the Main Street Safety project for the proposed installation of bulb outs.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council carried a motion to APPROVE THE AGENDA. M/S Garza/Quezada

CONSENT OF AGENDA

A. Approval of Accounts Payable Checks

Council carried a motion to APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. M/S Snyder/Lallas

CURRENT BUSINESS

2021 SPRINGBROOK SERVICE AGREEMENT

Spencer Williams, Finance Officer presents an agreement with Springbrook which used to be BIAS, the City's accounting software. As BIAS transitions to Springbrook, Springbrook will honor the current contract between the City and BIAS, however there will be changes over the next year or two. The main change will be the increase cost in the software. After research of other software's, Staff determined it is best to stay with the current software and recommends approving the contract with Springbrook.

Council carried a motion to ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH SPRINGBROOK FOR 2021 SERVICES. M/S Lallas/Quezada

AWARD MAIN STREET SAFETY PROJECT-REBID

Shawn O'Brien, City Engineer presents a bid from ESF Solutions who is the lowest bidder out of six to take on the Main Street Safety Project. Washington State Department of Transportation' Local Programs Engineer (LPE) is reviewing the bid documents at the time of this memo. The City will need concurrence from the LPE that the low bid is responsive before the project can be awarded to the Contractor. If the City has not received concurrence prior to the February 8th meeting, staff will present the following two options to City Council: Award the contract contingent upon LPE determines or table the agenda item until the next City Council meeting.

Council carried a motion to POSTPONE TO THE FEBRUARY 22ND COUNCIL MEETING. M/S Lallas/Erickson

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING- RENTAL HOUSING LICENSING & SAFETY INSPECTION PROGRAM

Mayor Pro Tem Genna Dorow opens the Public Hearing at 6:56pm.

Anne Henning, Community Development Director presents photos, comments by landlords, and changes made to the proposed Ordinance. Henning reminds Council that staff is proposing this Ordinance to simplify things for Code Enforcement to deal with the serious issues pertaining to the condition of landlord rental properties. The Ordinance is about having rental units that meet the basic standard of the Landlord Tenant act such as water, heat, a connected sewer system, not infestations, etc.

Henning sent out responses to comments made by Landlords at the previous meeting and did not receive response. Henning points out changes made to the proposed Ordinance were about the Sunset Clause and she added a provision for an annual report to the Council. Budget impact would be a positive since it would save a lot of staff time.

Councilman Erickson inquires about staff time. Henning says CEO spends 40 to 50% of her time inspecting rentals and the Building Inspector spends about 30% of his time on these units. They believe this tool will reduce staff time. Councilman Erickson asks if this will create more work for Code Enforcement and if a second officer will be needed. CEO Miller responds with her current process without this tool and how much time she spends just to try to get into a home as she seeks a court order granting her access to enter a home.

Councilman Lallas says there is still a due process Miller still needs to follow even if this Ordinance is passed. There is still paperwork to fill out and all the Ordinance is doing is allowing her to get through the door. Miller responds it still saves staff time, City Attorney times, etc. Chief Schenck further elaborates how the Ordinance will save Staff time.

Councilman Garza left the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Councilman Everett says he has statements about the Ordinance. He likes the annual report, he believes the duration should be removed as future Council can review the reports and decide if they want to keep the Ordinance going or not.

Councilman Lallas comments he is not sure if this is the right tool to do this job. Asking all Landlords to license their rental property when the City is only trying to eliminate the undesirable landlord/tenants. Lallas believes this is the "wrong approach to solve this problem".

Councilman Everett responds to Councilman Lallas with an example. Councilman Snyder also responds with examples. Much discussion ensued between Councilmembers.

Councilman Erickson weighs in about what he believes the real issue is and how this tool can be properly used. Erickson's thought is what can staff present and implement "while doing this without discouraging good property investors from becoming part of the community". Its sounding like a hassle to own properties when there is a housing shortage at this time. Erickson believes both sides has brought good points and he is having a hard time coming to a conclusion on this issue.

Mayor Pro Tem opens the Public Testimony.

Support- None

Neutral- Roger Enz, 1150 E. Oak asks questions to Code Enforcement Officer. Chris Dorow, 850 E. Hemlock St. Planning Commissioner weighs in on the issue.

Opposed- Leo Galleta, 700 S. Ridgeview Loop understands the purpose of the Ordinance is for safety and will be used as a tool but he does not believe this tool will help staff accomplish what they want. Galleta believes this tool will become hard to implement and enforce and staff should find a different tool.

Lolo Garza, 605 N. 12th Ave. agrees with Mr. Galletas comments. He speaks about landlords abiding by the landlord's tenant act.

Tim Unruh, Building Inspector comments that he believes tenants are afraid to report anything because of the condition the home is in and if they report it the Landlord may kick them out and they will have nowhere else to go. People continue to live in these situations because they are afraid of law enforcement.

Kelly Konkright, City Attorney weighs in how access to an attorney may be difficult for low-income tenants since attorneys are typically expensive. Therefore, low-income tenants continue to live in these poor conditions rather than reporting.

Chief Schenck weighs in and clarifies staff is not looking for more work.

Mayor Pro Tem Dorow close the Public Testimony at 7:39 p.m.

Councilman Snyder points how he believes this may be a "good thing" because if rentals are considered a business then why not get a business license? Snyder believes this is not made to hurt the good landlords or anyone.

Councilman Erickson made a motion to CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND DELIBERATE MORE. There was no second. Motion dies.

Council carried a motion to PASS ORDINANCE 1557 WITH THE EXCLUSION DROPPING SECTION 4.40.200 THE DURATION. M/S Everett/Snyder

FOUR TO TWO VOTE.

IN FAVOR- Quezada, Everett, Snyder, Dorow

OPPOSED- Erickson, Lallas

Public Hearing closed at 7:45 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

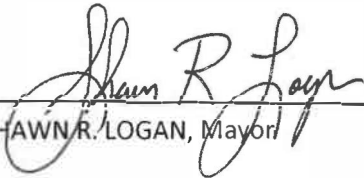
Mayor Pro Tem Genna Dorow announces there will be a joint meeting tomorrow at 6:00pm with the Othello School Board. Councilmen Erickson, Lallas, Everett, Snyder announce they will not attend. Councilwoman Quezada announces she will attend. Mayor Pro Tem Dorow is undecided. Councilman Garza has left the meeting, staff will check with him.

COUNCIL WILL ALSO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING

- Building and Planning Report
- Legislative Report

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to discuss, Mayor Logan adjourned the Council meeting at 7:51 p.m.

By: 
SHAWN R. LOGAN, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: 
TANIA MORELOS, CITY CLERK