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CITY COUNCIL JANUARY 25, 2016
WORKSESSION 6:30 PM MINUTES
City Hall, 1001 Bridge St. Vernonia, OR 97064

Mission Statement

The City of Vernonia pledges to be an ethical and responsive government using community collaboration to foster leadership and a vision for civic improvement while providing a safe, peaceful, economically viable community.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order -- Mayor Parrow

Mayor Parrow called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

In attendance: Mayor Parrow; Councilors Tierney, Hult, & McNair

Absent: Councilor Seager

2. Additions or Removal of Agenda Items

Councilor McNair made a motion to approve the agenda as written, Councilor Hult seconded, motion passed.

Addition: Mayor Parrow read into the record a letter he received from Tamala Argue, Attorney at Law. Tamala would like to act as Prosecutor for Vernonia Court on misdemeanors. Council consensus was that the City of Vernonia does not have the budget or need to hire a prosecutor for the Vernonia Court. City Administrator Mitchell to draft a letter explaining this to Tamala Argue.

3. New Business

- Heal Cities Program Discussion of City of Vernonia involvement

Councilor Tierney started the discussion by giving a brief overview of what the HEAL Cities Program is about. The goal of the program is to improve quality of life by reducing obesity, reduce healthcare costs, and provide overall cost savings for community members. If enrolled in the program the campaign will provide technical assistance and sample policies.

The HEAL Cities Campaign promotes bike paths, farmer's markets, community gardens, and any other healthy options for the community. Councilor McNair asked what the status was of the community garden and whether or not it was still being done here. Brett Costly advised that while there is a plan for a Community Garden, the area for said garden is currently covered by the fill dirt at the Vernonia School.

Council then discussed whether or not there were any downsides to becoming a HEAL City. Councilor Tierney stated that she wasn't aware of any and joining the program will make the city eligible for some small grants. City Administrator Mitchell then stated that Vernonia is the only city in Columbia County that is not a HEAL City.

The City of Vernonia is already working on implementing several of the proposed HEAL City Policies. We currently have a Summer Meal program, Master Garden program, WIC, and several more. City Councilor Tierney stated that the cross walk project that is currently in the works will enable us to sign up for the program. We can then focus on implementing more of the policies like workplace wellness, encouraging gym memberships, and sending out fliers to the community educating them on HEAL events in the community.



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Councilor Tierney inquired on how they could incorporate HEAL at the Vernonia Schools. Brett Costley told Council that the school has already made great progress on encouraging kids to be healthier and are working on providing even more healthy options. Closing the school campus has been good for limiting the kids' food options and steering them towards the healthier options provided at the school. Councilor Tierney would like to see healthy options at sports desserts.

City Administrator Mitchell proposed that perhaps the city could require food vendors to have healthy options on their menus. Councilor Hult inquired as to if the Open Air Market has tried to acquire approval to accept SNAP or WIC. Mr. Costly answered that while they would love to do so, there are extensive hoops to go thru. Bill Langmaid has tried but he is not sure what the status is on where he is in the process or if he is even pursuing it at this time.

Council consensus was to move forward with the project and direct staff to create a resolution to be presented to Council for approval. City staff to include the City of Vernonia's support of The Open Air Market, Community Garden, and increased city parks by 22 acres in the Resolution per the HEAL Cities Program requirements. The Resolution is to be presented to Council at the February 15th, 2016 City Council Meeting.

Council then discussed the homeless population in Vernonia and how we can help them. Councilor McNair expressed his desire to do some good for the community by helping the homeless population. Councilor Tierney addressed the fact that although there are many reasons people become homeless, it seems that the reason is often linked to the fact that they don't have an adequate support system. City Administrator Mitchell notified Council that city staff is working on helping those we are aware of. City staff has helped several people apply and get approval for long term housing as well as find resources to help them long term.

Unfortunately, it seems that the reason we are seeing an increased homeless population in Vernonia in recent years is that they have a connection and are being drawn here. It seems that many people who are moving here are looking at the reduced cost of housing here, not the actual cost of living.

1. Adjournment

Mayor Parrow adjourned the meeting at 8:08pm.

These Minutes were approved at the February 1st, 2016 City Council Meeting.



Stephanie Borst, City Recorder



Randall J. Parrow, Mayor