



Observer Corps reports of the Medford City Council July to August 2017

Medford City Council Meeting, July 6, 2017

Observed by Rick Bennett

(Wallin absence)

A lengthy agenda with a number of ordinances and resolutions related to public works contracts, it also included Item 40.6 (removed from the consent calendar for discussion purposes) that changed municipal codes pertaining to Council procedures. The ordinance would amend several code sections related to the Council's meeting time, agenda consent calendar, study sessions and order of business. The changes would eliminate the council's noon meetings and study sessions and change the starting time for evening sessions from 7 pm to 6 pm. Council meetings would continue to be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month and study sessions would be limited to the second Thursday evening of the each month with an option to utilize the fourth Thursday for special and time sensitive subjects. The order of business for council meetings would be restructured to allow for time-certain public hearings. If approved, the proposed changes would be effective in September 2017.

The idea of eliminating the noon council meeting was discussed in February 2017 and May 2017. Research indicates that the noon meeting was established in the 1970's with the intent of the Council moving through ordinances and resolutions in a timely manner. However, the dual noon and evening council meetings have become more burdensome for council members and staff and noon meetings are often difficult for participation of the public. During the council's discussion some members voiced concerns regarding the order of business, specifically that oral requests and communications from the audience would be moved to later in the agenda (after public hearings and actions on ordinances and resolutions). Council members were concerned that this would eliminate an opportunity for public comments before the council voted on agenda items. The proposed ordinance was amended to allow for a limited amount of time for public comment at the beginning of agenda and additional time for public comment – if needed – later on the agenda.

Item 40.6, as amended, approved 5-1-1.

For additional details, go to <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Agendas.asp?SectionID=542>.

Medford City Council Meeting, July 20, 2017

Observed by Rick Bennett

All Council members were present.

The main agenda item, based on both public comment and discussion by Council members, was Item 60.3 (actually two action items). Council Bill 2017-85 designated a portion of City-owned property and three privately-owned tax lots as a campground under terms of ORS 446.265. Council Bill 2017-86 authorized an amendment to the Hope Village Operational Agreement with Rogue Retreat to allow for expansion of the Hope Village area.



In January 2017, after months of discussion, the City entered into an agreement with Rogue Retreat, Medford-based nonprofit organization. Rogue Retreat was approved to operate a pilot transitional housing project – Hope Village – for one year on City-owned land. Since approval of the agreement Rogue Retreat has leased adjacent private property to expand their facility. The amendment to the operational agreement deals with the limits and responsibilities associated with the City-owned land versus leased private-owned lots.

Under Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience, a number of persons associated with the Rogue Retreat organization spoke in support of both council bills.

Much of the discussion by Council members centered around the original intent of Hope Village to be pilot (and temporary) project to be evaluated after one year. The tiny houses on the City-owned land are temporary structures that can be moved. The privately owned land is being used for permanent facilities (showers, cooking, offices, etc.). While supportive of the Rogue Retreat's efforts, several Council members expressed concerns regarding the permanent facilities as related to what was advocated as a temporary pilot project. After further discussion, both council bills were approved 6-2.

For addition information regarding this issue and other agenda items, please see the City of Medford website: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Agendas.asp?SectionID=542>.

Medford City Council Meeting, August 3, 2017

Observed by Rick Bennett

One Council member absent (Gordon).

The main agenda item, based on both public comment and discussion by Council members, was Council Bill 2017-86 (Item 40.1) authorized an amendment to the Hope Village Operational Agreement with Rogue Retreat to allow for expansion of the Hope Village area. This agenda item was heard and approved two weeks ago; however, the vote was not unanimous and Council rules require a second hearing and vote.

Background: In January 2017, after months of discussion, the City entered into an agreement with Rogue Retreat, Medford-based nonprofit organization. Rogue Retreat was approved to operate a pilot transitional housing project – Hope Village – for one year on City-owned land. Since approval of the agreement Rogue Retreat has leased adjacent private property to expand their facility. The amendment to the operational agreement deals with the limits and responsibilities associated with the City-owned land versus leased private-owned lots.

Under Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience, a number of persons associated with the Rogue Retreat organization spoke in support of both council bills.

As was the case two weeks ago when this item was heard, much of the discussion by Council members centered around the original intent of Hope Village to be pilot (and temporary) project to be evaluated after one year. The tiny houses on the City-owned land are temporary structures that can be moved. The privately owned land is being used for permanent facilities (showers, cooking, offices, etc.). While supportive of the



Rogue Retreat's efforts, several Council members expressed concerns regarding the permanent facilities as related to what was advocated as a temporary pilot project. After further discussion, both council bills were approved 5-2.

Interesting Note: Under Agenda Item 80 – City Manager and other Staff Reports – a discussion regarding livestock limits, specifically chickens. Unlike several other cities in southern Oregon, Medford does not have any code limits or restrictions regarding chickens. Code enforcement officers have no options for responding to residents' complaints regarding chickens (smells, noise, etc.). Issue may be considered for future study session.

For details, please see the City of Medford website: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Agendas.asp?SectionID=542>.

Medford City Council Meeting, August 17, 2017

Observed by Rick Bennett

All council members were present.

Under Ordinances and Resolutions, agenda items 60.1 and 60.2, related to wages and salaries, hours, fringe benefits and other working conditions for executive staff and non-represented staff, were approved. Also, agenda item 60.3, a resolution to expand the composition of the Joint Transportation Subcommittee, was approved (Note: Rick Bennett is currently chairperson of the Subcommittee).

Under Staff Reports, agenda item 80.4 provided an update on procedure for an ordinance related to food trucks operating on public right-of-way. After much discussion the Council approved a motion (7-1) directing staff to develop ordinance language for consideration.

For future meeting and study session agendas as well as details regarding agenda items, see the City Council's website: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Agendas.asp?SectionID=542>.

Note: This is the last daytime City Council meeting. Starting in September, the Medford City Council will meet on the first and third Thursday of the month at 6 pm. Also, city council meetings can be viewed via live-streaming and public access cable TV. Go to <http://rvtv.sou.edu/schedules/> for details.