

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
February 9, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

The meeting of the La Conner Town Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Hayes.

Present: Councilmembers Brunisholz, Leaver, Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas and Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Manville, New Planner Davolio, WWTP Operator Wynn and Sgt. Willard of the Sheriff's Department.

This meeting was held electronically on Zoom. Information to join was posted at Town Hall, the published Agenda in the La Conner Weekly News and on the Town Website.

Public Comments:

Resident Marna Hanneman asked if the public restrooms on Morris Street will be open for the upcoming Daffodil Festival. Mayor Hayes stated Administration will have a discussion internally to come up with the best strategy in light of a post COVID year.

Resident Linda Talman shared her thoughts regarding the push of the Planning Commission's consideration of the Hedlin Property Project at the last meeting of 2020, when it had been going on for a year and a half.

Resident Dan O'Donnell was not able to comment due to computer problems. Mayor Hayes did call him to include him by phone, but he preferred to send his comments by email.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of January 26, 2021

Accounts Payable:	23819 – 23852	\$68,661.87
Auto Payments:	201681 Parking Meter Processing Fees	\$6.19
	201682 CC Payment Processing Fees	\$142.80
	Total February 9, 2021 Claims	\$68,810.86
Payroll of February 5, 2021	Checks 5335 - 5343	\$20,808.12
Auto Payments:	DCP #201678	\$2,291.00
	PERS #201679	\$11,185.58
	PR Taxes #201680	\$6,724.72
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$20,211.44</u>
	Total Payroll	\$61,220.86

Councilmember Wohleb asked for a correction of her comment in the minutes regarding the Hedlin Property development. Finance Director DeGoede agreed to playback the January 26, 2021 recording for more direct wording.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the requested corrections to the January 26, 2021 Minutes. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 5/0.

Chamber Report:

Chamber Director Carter shared 309 people joined in on the Snowy Owl presentation for the Birds of Winter. The Daffodil Festival is a day-by-day process waiting on the Bloom Map. There will be no actual event, but the Kiwanis will be putting on an outdoor craft bazar, as well as selling daffodils and smoked salmon. She just posted the Virtual Smelt Derby Run on March 6th and is still waiting on the status of the Tulip Festival. The Frequent Shopper Cards were very successful with the last drawing this week. Director Carter has been keeping the website as current as possible posting information as she receives it.

Revenue and Expenditure Reports:

The Sales Tax from November came in higher than the last few years. Mayor Hayes gave credit to all the efforts from Chamber, the Facebook Ad and all the local support. Hopefully there will not be another hit of restaurant closures. It was expected to see the Hotel Motel Tax down. The rest are stable.

Planner's Report:

This will be the last Planner's Report from Marianne Manville. The new Planner, Michael Davolio will be assuming the position.

Councilmember Brunisholz heard the Swinomish Tribe has installed Tsunami sirens and thought it would be a good idea for advance notice to the La Conner citizens when they are going to test them. Administrator Thomas stated we were given notification of testing when they were installed last December. He assumes we will get notification again.

Fire Department:

Administrator Thomas directed Council to the Memo in the packet, provided by the Fire Department, setting out future planning for equipment and supplies, such as a ladder truck and replacement of the ambulance. He will be scheduling a committee meeting to discuss it.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes introduced resident Adam McGarity who created a history walking tour of the Town. It works by GPS on the phone and gives the history as it tracks where you are walking. It is ADA friendly and is exclusively audio. He will be developing several other historical subjects that are time-based storytelling. For example, the first tour is based on the 1860s/1870s, followed by the 1880s and then themes such as warriors/veterans of the area and famous courtships of La Conner. He is planning on opening up the first tour to the Public the beginning of March. Mayor Hayes asked that staff help in scheduling tours for Councilmembers. Councilmember Leaver asked to meet with Mr. McGarity to discuss updating the current Walking Art Tour with audio.

There is another history tour in development that is based on QR codes attached to buildings. This tour is based on print information in regards to a specific location.

Committee Reports:

Arts Committee:

Councilmember Leaver noted there will be a meeting on Thursday to discuss possible art donations and the proposed contract between the Town and the new Art's Foundation. First on First went well last Friday. The vendors nearly sold out and the DJ attracted dancing. He is looking forward to what this can do in the future to bring people to Town.

EDASC Agreement:

Administrator Thomas explained this is the annual agreement that is the same for all cities in Skagit County. Last year they helped us with the process of the Cares Grant applications.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the EDASC Agreement. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Hedlin Property Agreement – Option 2:

Administrator Thomas recapped the timeline of the process. Last March 2020, the Town entered into an agreement that provided a one-year option with a payment of \$37,000 and an additional extended option to include a second payment of \$37,000. The second option requires a notification by February 15, 2021, followed by the second payment due by April 15, 2021. The Town has until April of 2022 to exercise Option 2. At the last meeting, Councilmember Wohleb requested different scenarios of park and residential allocation.

Planner Manville explained three different scenarios as follows:

Option 1 - 25% Park and 75% Residential (60,000 sq. ft. development and 20,000 sq. ft. park) provides up to 19 multi-family units or 11 single family lots.

Option 2 - 30% Park and 70% Residential (56,000 sq. ft. development and 24,000 sq. ft. park) provides up to 18 multi-family units or 10 single family lots.

Option 3 - 40% Park and 60% Residential (48,000 sq. ft. development and 32,000 sq. ft. park) provides 15 multi-family units or 6 single family lots.

Roads, utilities and setbacks were accounted for in all options and single family lots were based at 4,000 sq. ft.

Mayor Hayes explained we need to recoup approximately \$750,000. The higher allocation of park means less multi-family units and single lots, which would drive up the cost per unit or lot. This is an important factor in the Council's decision in maintaining a moderate price range.

Mayor Hayes stated we have always looked at the 25%/75% model, but wanted a consensus of the Council on whether or not to have more discussions on the other two options. Councilmember Chamberlain and Wohleb were interested in looking at the other two options. Councilmembers Brunisholz, Leaver and Stokes wanted to stay with the original plan, Option 1.

Linda Talman – Resident at 202 N. Fifth Street wanted to know who would do the platting and can they purchase two lots for a larger home. She feels affordable housing is wishful thinking. Planner Manville explained the Town can put restrictions on how it would be developed, but that would impact the value of the property and buyer pool. However, with no restrictions, the builder can do what they want, multi, single or a combination of both, as long as it is within the parameter of the zoning codes.

Mayor Hayes reiterated this is not up for a vote of the Council, just a consensus of the Council. The Council will vote on whether or not to exercise the second option of extending the Hedlin Purchase Agreement another year.

Catey Ritchie – Resident at 11767 E. Caledonia Street was happy with the information provided in the options, but would like a visual of what the multi-family units would look like. She also would like more discussions on the options and feasibility of more park.

Amy McFeely – Resident of 818 S. Fourth Street felt the \$37,000 was worth buying more time to work out a future vision of more affordable housing.

Mike Ritchie – Resident at 800 Finley Lane brought up another development of four to five cottages behind Pioneer Market that would provide more housing. He would like to see more park, which it was his understanding that was what the Hedlins originally wanted as well. Mayor Hayes stated the original desire of the Hedlins was something we couldn't afford, so we sent it back. The 25/75 was agreed on.

Dick Nord – La Conner Resident and Commercial Broker with Windermere, discussed the current and upcoming residential developments in Town and the estimated costs to develop the lots and units. The issue with developing the 11 lots on the Hedlin Property is the recoup cost of \$750,000. Because of the utilities that have to be brought up to the homes from across the street, it would cost a minimum of \$30,000 to \$35,000 to develop each lot. There is a market for multiples right now and the 19 multi-family units are the most cost effective. He recommended selling the property for \$900,000 to \$950,000 at approximately \$50,000 a unit. This would leave extra funds for the development of the park. The 11 single lots would sell for \$82,000 to \$83,000 which would drive up the purchase price moving away from the moderate price.

Councilmember Brunisholz would like to see any excess funds from the sale of the property go towards the dike, not the development of the park. The park can stay as it is while we look for grants.

Discussions resumed on the second agreement option. If Council does not agree to move forward with the second extension and payment, they will lose the first \$37,000 from 2020. The second payment is an investment of time for decisions. Although unlikely, if it sells by April of this year, the second payment of \$37,000 would not be expensed. Mayor Hayes confirmed we would recoup costs in the sale of the property.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to accept the second-year option of the Hedlin Agreement. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0

Agreement – Planner Davolio:

Administrator Thomas noted this is a similar agreement for professional services we had with Planner Manville.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Agreement of Professional Services as the Town Planner Michael Davolio. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Waterfront Property - Recommendation for Acceptance:

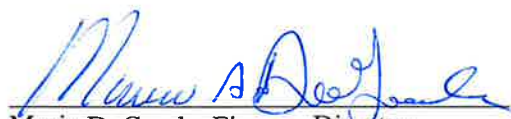
Public Works Director Lease requested a motion to approve Recommendation for Acceptance from David Evans & Associates.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Recommendation for Acceptance for the Waterfront Park. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion Carried 5/0.

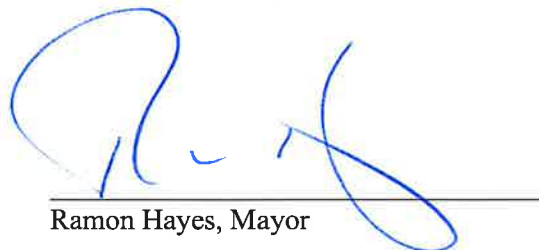
Mayor Roundtable:

Finance Director DeGoede stated there are businesses that have not paid for their licenses that were due by the end of January. Some are temporarily closed until the COVID restrictions are lifted. Normally we would send out penalty notices but due to the circumstances she would like to put off penalties until June if Council is ok with that. It was the Consensus of the Council to wait until June to penalize business licenses.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor