

## **MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**July 14, 1999**

The minutes of the proceedings of a City Council work session with the Coos Bay Downtown Association held on July 14, 1999 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 500 Central Avenue, Coos County, Coos Bay Oregon.

### **Those Present**

Those present were Mayor Joanne Verger, Councilors Joe Benetti, Cindi Miller, Don Spangler and Judy Weeks. Councilors Jeff McKeown and Kevin Stufflebean were out of town. Downtown Association Board Members present were President Jim Berg, Board Members Christine Coles, Jack Fitzpatrick, Flora Lee Lockhart, Trish Midyette and Rhondi Potter; and Ralph Larson representing the Parking Committee. City staff present were City Manager Bill Grile and Deputy Recorder Joyce Jansen.

### **Introductions**

Mayor Verger opened the work session and introductions were made for the City Council and Downtown Association Board. Mayor Verger explained the purpose of the meeting was to find ways of improving communication and working together to ensure the City has a vital living downtown area.

### **Review Establishment of the Historic Museum in Downtown Coos Bay**

Mayor Verger reported the establishment of the historic museum in downtown came about as a result of an anonymous \$1 million donation. The donor made it a stipulation the museum be located in the downtown area, and the City Council and staff looked at several locations before considering the current Tourism Information Center property. City Manager Bill Grile explained the City is involved as a condition from the donor, and the funds are to be used for the building only. The Historical Society is the recipient of the \$1 million and the City will have a say in how the site will be developed. Grants will also be sought for the museum project, and plans will go through a public review process.

Mayor Verger commented part of the plan is to have a wing for a maritime display and tie in with the newly formed downtown historic district. Association President Jim Berg commented the Board has not had an opportunity to meet with the whole Downtown Association membership regarding the museum project and the Board has concerns about the impact on availability of parking. It is the desire of the Board to open the remainder of Central Avenue to traffic. Flora Lee Lockhart suggested the City buy the Kaffe 101 site for location of the museum. Ralph Larson suggested keeping the tourism information center next to the museum and expressed concern that a two story building would block the view. Mayor Verger commented it may be included in the museum because of the pedestrian traffic, although the Historic Board has not decided on the concept. Mr. Grile noted there would be considerable public input before decisions are made. Trish Midyette suggested the project committee also have a member from the Downtown Association, and expressed concern about parking during the construction phase. Councilor Benetti asked if the Downtown Association had thought about making Anderson Avenue two-way. Ms. Midyette commented it would not be as good as opening up Central. Rhondi Potter noted from an aesthetic point of view, the corridor from city hall to the bay should be open. Councilor Miller commented the museum would have a very positive affect on the downtown area. She noted the Council and the Association has the same goal for downtown. Councilor Spangler commented Central was designed as a walking street and it would be a mistake to open it up to

## **City Council Minutes – July 14, 1999**

traffic. Councilor Weeks commented a two story building could work very well and she did not support opening up Central Avenue or changing Anderson to two-way traffic. Jim Berg commented opening Central to one-way traffic from Hwy 101 north is important to bring people into the downtown area. He supports having the tourism information center as part of the museum, and commented at the present time the traffic pattern is confusing.

### **Discussion of Location of the Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Information Center**

Mayor Verger reported Chamber Manager Kathi Joy does not have a problem with moving. Rhondi Potter suggested using some of the empty office space in the downtown area. Geno Landrum, Coos Bay, supported locating the information center in the museum facility and suggested the ground floor be used as parking. He also supported opening up the remaining block of Central Avenue. Trish Midyette suggested the chamber not be placed in ground floor retail space because the downtown area is slowly becoming a service center rather than a retail center.

### **Review and Discussion of Downtown Parking**

Mayor Verger briefly reviewed the Kittleson traffic pedestrian parking study and noted the plan was designed for the benefit of the customers and did not classify employees in the same context as customers. She noted a number of public hearings were held during the study and the plan was never used or tried. Mayor Verger commented the current parking arrangement does not make everyone happy and there seems to be a lack of concern for providing parking for customers. She suggested the Association make a recommendation on what parking should be to protect the business owners.

Flora Lee Lockhart commented the parking system used prior to the Kittleson report worked extremely well. Ralph Larson commented in retail 60 percent of sales are made in the six weeks before Christmas and if parking is being used by employees the customers will go somewhere else. Councilor Benetti noted that ticketing is not done during the holiday season and asked if it has been an issue in the past. Jim Berg commented there is not much of problem at Christmas time, but no one likes the current situation. He noted three-hour lots with permits works well and the areas for employee permit parking is confusing to citizens. Mr. Berg suggested the City acquire more land for parking lots.

There was further discussion on areas designated for employee parking, the time limit in parking lots, complaints about no parking for customers, and employees moving their cars rather than buying permits. Trish Midyette said the complaints started when the lots were changed to two-hour parking limits. Councilor Spangler commented most of the complaints are from employees and he would support whatever the downtown businesses wanted. Sharon Thompson from the Quilt Shop reported quite a number of complaints from customers because the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> parking lot is always full of employees. Jack Fitzpatrick commented as a property manager he finds that many people do not want to locate in the downtown area because of the parking difficulties.

Trish Midyette commented the Downtown Association needs to work out a solution and bring it to the City Council. Mayor Verger suggested the Association consider how the City can better partner with the downtown businesses and reported the governor has signed a bill designed to help fund livable downtowns and there may be some grants monies available to help staff a downtown promotions director. **Other Business**

Geno Landrum, Coos Bay, suggested looking into locating a rest area next to the Best Western Hotel at Bayshore and Market Avenue. Jim Berg, Downtown Association, agreed a partnership between the

## City Council Minutes – July 14, 1999

Association and the City would be beneficial, and commented the City still needs to do the Tree Lighting Ceremony in November. Mayor Verger commented when you are working hard, it is a real help when someone else can do the leg work for you; although the City shouldn't do too much of the work. There was some discussion on the possible contracting out for parking enforcement and Mayor Verger reported the issue had been brought to the Council but no action has been taken. Councilor Benetti commented he would like to see a recommendation from the Association regarding parking, and expressed concern about losing parking spaces if Central Avenue was opened to traffic.

Trish Midyette supported opening Central to bring traffic into the downtown area. Judy Lovell, Harvest Book Shop, commented the mental thing about parking is that if people can see the building they are going to, there is not a parking problem which is why people are willing to walk further when shopping at a mall. Councilor Benetti noted access from Hwy 101 could be a problem and possibly the City could consider a parking structure or another parking district. Councilor Miller commented a unified voice of downtown businesses is important and suggested a brochure be developed and she would be willing to help put one together. Councilor Spangler inquired what percent of the downtown businesses the Association represents and Mr. Berg responded there are 48 members in the Association and they are working on getting more members. Councilor Weeks thanked the Association for meeting with the Council and supported the development of a brochure.

There was discussion on developing more specialty shops to make downtown a viable shopping area. The members of the Association Board thanked the Council for the meeting and suggested future meetings be held. Flora Lee Lockhart expressed concern about the 4<sup>th</sup> and Anderson intersection and Mayor Verger commented ODOT would probably not allow the City to change the intersection. Additional signage on Anderson was discussed and staff will follow up. Mayor Verger closed the meeting commenting on the importance of downtowns to cities and communication between city hall and downtown businesses.

### Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Council the meeting was adjourned to July 20, 1999 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

---

Joanne Verger  
Mayor of the City of Coos Bay  
Coos County, Oregon

ATTEST:

---

Joyce Jansen  
Deputy Recorder of the City of Coos Bay  
Coos County, Oregon