

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

March 28, 1995

The minutes of the proceedings of a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, beginning at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Those Present

Those present were Mayor Joanne Verger, Councilors Joe Benetti, Cindi Miller, Don Spangler, Judy Weeks and David Williams. City staff present included City Manager Bill Elliott, City Recorder/Finance Director Gail George, City Attorney Randall Tosh and Community Development Director Bruce Meithof. Members of the media were also present.

Mayor Verger called the meeting to order and explained the purpose of the work session. Community Development Director Bruce Meithof explained how the size of Urban Renewal districts are limited and recommended the Council limit the size of the proposed district in Empire to allow for future expansion of either the current district or the proposed district. He also explained the relationship between the County's Urban Renewal District and the City.

Barbara Foord, Deputy Assessor for Coos County, gave an overview of how their office handles Urban Renewal districts. She explained that the goal of an Urban Renewal area is to stimulate private economic activity in that area, and the area must be blighted for an district to be formed. Foord reported how tax increment financing works and said that if the district were formed before October 1995, the base value established would be the assessed value of the area in the district as of July, 1994. She said that the value may go up or down and based on current trends their could be a \$3,000,000 increase next year next year. It was pointed out that forming a new Urban Renewal district would cause the tax figures from three Urban Renewal to show up on tax bills and she also explained how tax increment financing affects all taxing districts in the County.

Mayor Verger opened the meeting for public comments. Roger Gould remarked that the people who live in and own property in the Empire district have done an excellent job in improving their properties and he would like to see them to progress further with an Urban Renewal district. He said that Urban Renewal is a method for making the entire area better, is a good tool, and is a long range plan. Gould would like the district, however, limited to the downtown business district and felt the Council would be making a grave mistake by including residential areas.

Paula Bechtold, Empire property owner and Coos Bay resident, expressed her support for an Urban Renewal district in Empire. She felt the potential for developing Empire outweighed the minimal impact on taxes and would ultimately benefit the tax payer when Empire is improved. Bechtold would like to see the planning process emphasized.

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Mike Freeman, Empire resident and property owner, representing the Empire Business and Property Owners Association, said he felt sufficient interest in an Empire Urban Renewal District has been expressed and asked the Council to begin the formal process necessary to establish the District.

Glen Marker said he did not understand why the meeting was being held and questioned why they are asking for their sidewalks to be paid for out of Urban Renewal instead of using the regular process. He also felt taxes were high enough already noting that his Urban Renewal taxes last year were \$80. Marker is bothered by the planned use of current Urban Renewal funds to expand the Library without involvement by the citizens. He would like to see funds put into the City budget and benefit all areas and felt he was speaking for a lot of tax payers.

Sergeant Webster, Empire property owner, spoke in favor of the Urban Renewal District in Empire and asked if the Council would be the Urban Renewal Agency if such a district is formed. He was informed that his understanding was correct and Webster asked if after the plan was adopted, there be more public input as the projects were done. Meithof explained that the projects are set out in the plan and the Agency would proceed with projects at open meetings. City Manager Bill Elliott noted that public input is required when the Urban Renewal Plan is being put together. Webster asked if an undesirable business could be eliminated through the Urban Renewal process, to which the Council answered in the negative. Verger also repeated Foord's statement that Urban Renewal's purpose is to attract private investment.

Hal Ford said he was all for private investment and was not in favor of Urban Renewal. He said that he has not seen an Urban Renewal project that has been successful, maintaining that in his opinion, most Urban Renewal projects have made the areas more blighted. Ford asked who would be paying for the additional services that would be necessary and resented putting a lien on his property to pay for improvements on someone else's property.

Bob DePeal, Empire business owner, spoke in favor of the project, noting the amount of tourists that come through the area and how beautification would give them a better impression of the whole city.

Alden Miller, Empire property owner, said he appreciated the support the Empire area is getting, citing the beneficial aspect of community policing. He spoke in favor of the project and saw it as a positive issue for the whole city, bringing various factions together.

Karen Freeman, Empire property owner, said she was very much in favor of Urban Renewal in the Empire district and related that many people have told her they have no reason to come to Empire. She would like to see the area improved so that people will stop instead of just driving through.

Jan Lawrence said as a parent she would like us to be able to show our children pride in the

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area, and Urban Renewal would help accomplish this.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Verger adjourned the meeting to 7:00 o'clock P.M. in the Council Chambers of City Hall on April 4, 1995.

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

ATTEST:

Gail George
Recorder of the City of Coos Bay
Coos County, Oregon