



Special City Council Meeting Minutes

Irrigon Special City Council Meeting

May 12, 2011

6:00 PM

Irrigon City Hall

500 NE Main Avenue

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor David Burns called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call was taken by City Manager Gerald Breazeale.

Council Members present: Ken Matlack, Linda Skendzel, Laura Clark, Joe Theisen, and Eleanor Partridge. Councilor Kathy Simonis had an excused absence.

Staff members present: City Manager Gerald Breazeale, and Public Works Director Keith White.

Citizens present: Bill Kelly, Kat Calvert, Stan Anderson, Christine Sorenson, Linda Anderson, Wayne Huwe and Barb Huwe.

2. Mayor's Comments Issues

Mayor Burns stated that Councilor Simonis sent an email in her absence of tonight's meeting stating that said she did not support the plan that is drawn now; however, she would support whatever the council decides.

Mayor Burns stated that the vision for Irrigon needs to keep going, there has been a lot of great projects to be happy and proud of. We always need to have a dream, it has to be reasonable, affordable and something the public wants. The concept plan can be scaled down, including the landscaping and a much smaller parking lot. We hope to continue to have the public involved in this issue. We are here tonight to discuss just this subject and whether we go forward or postpone.

Mayor Burns mentioned that after the budget meeting earlier this week, there will probably be a small water increase and if there is an increase in water rates, he thinks it will look bad for the city to go forward right now with a big pool project.

3. Consideration of Riverfront Park

Councilor Theisen talked about the criticism today being the same as when the citizens were against the skate park and the children's park and the City did not have any money at that time for either project. However, the citizens could see what the vision was and the money became available. Councilor Theisen continued to say that this is a design concept, that's all it is and the concept could die for lack of funds, which is very possible, however, we don't know that.

Councilor Skendzel stated that there would be ongoing cost of maintenance and insurance and also an inside pool would need to be heated in the winter time and cooled in the summertime. It was stated that this would not be a free swimming pool; there would be an admission fee.

It was asked why such an elaborate plan? Mayor Burns stated that the design could be scaled down to what would be comfortable, however you have to start somewhere.

It was stated by an unidentified citizen of the audience that we can't fix the streets and why are we not concentrating our funds on finishing the sewer project?

Barb Huwe asked the council to please consider the economy state at this time and work on what the public wants.

It was asked by an unidentified citizen of the audience that shouldn't an environmental study be in place first before starting a project? It was stated that it would depend; we don't know if the project would even get off the ground.

Councilor Theisen stated that he thought it was incorrect to link the pool project with the sewer and streets, if this project was to happen at all it is not going to come out of Irrigon's budget, it will be heavily dependent on grants. Councilor Theisen stated that grants are very specific about what you can spend them on, and if you get a grant for the pool, you could not use it to pave the streets.

It was stated by Mayor Pro-Tem Clark that the city cannot afford the maintenance for a pool and that searching for grants takes a lot of time and energy. Mayor Pro-Tem Clark stated that the water, sewer and streets are the things that need to be taken care of first with going into an economic down turn. She continued to say that the citizens are having a hard time paying their water bills.

Councilor Matlack stated that he thought a survey should be sent to the citizens asking if they are interested in a swimming pool.

City Manager Breazeale had written on the dry erase board the issues that were stated during the public comment:

- Finish sewer before doing anything new
- Environment study
- Streets are in bad shape
- Cost of facility maintenance
- Water capacity-water rights
- Water and Sewer too high
- \$17,000,000
- Can't afford maintenance

Manager Breazeale gave some history of what the City wanted in 2005 when he became city manager. What the citizens told him was that they wanted nice streets, sidewalks, and a downtown. The City conducted extensive planning efforts. Citizen involvement in the process was high. The planning efforts resulted in a Water System Master Plan, A Wastewater System Master Plan. A Parks System Master Plan, a Transportation System Plan and a Downtown Development Plan on US 730 Streetscape Plan. The planning process created vision that showed what the city would look like when completed. They were no monies for this downtown plan. However, in time money became available, that was used to construct the First Street & Columbia Lane Pedestrian Improvements.

Manager Breazeale stated that this planning allows you to know where you want to be in the distant future, not tomorrow. Planning needs to be done ahead of time to get the concept that you want. Manager Breazeale referred to a letter submitted to the Army Corp of Engineers. There is a management plan for the Army Corp of Engineers for their property along the river that addresses a lot of recreational needs that is referenced in the letter. There is the river and the Heritage Trail, the draw for Irrigon is the river which has not been developed, and the property is in the Irrigon city limits. To move forward, there has to be some kind of proposal, the letter was submitted to the Corp of Engineers to see if they would go along with the proposal and a copy was submitted to the Tribes for their comment.

After the concept design was presented at the April 19, 2011 city council meeting, the councilors sent their comments in to the mayor. This meeting was called to discuss the comments. A map was shown to the council, a smaller concept design. And it was discussed that even if the City did not want to have a swimming pool, perhaps the City would like to develop the trail along the river or campgrounds.

Councilor Theisen stated that he thought the council should pursue the planning. It was moved by Councilor Theisen and seconded by Councilor Partridge to allow the architect to pursue the planning to the point of the product we paid for (\$2000). Vote was taken, Councilor Matlack, yes; Councilor Skendzel, no; Councilor Clark, no; Councilor Partridge, yes; Councilor Theisen, yes. Motion carried 3 yeses to two nos.

It was moved by Councilor Theisen and seconded by Councilor Matlack to establish a committee to work out some of the details such as been described. Vote was taken, Councilor Matlack, yes; Skendzel, no; Clark, no; Partridge, yes; Theisen, yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Burns asked if there was any further discussion. City Manager Breazeale stated that he would like to talk about the council's relations to each other and if they want to be successful, once you reach a decision, then the rest of the councilors should get behind that, even though you were opposed to it. If the majority of the council says this is the way we want to go, then if you want to be effective the whole council needs to move as one. To be successful, you need to join together. Manager Breazeale stated that the staff will honor whatever the council wants.

There was a discussion with Councilor Skendzel being opposed to *this* plan and she is sorry, however, she cannot get behind this plan.

With no further discussion, Mayor Burns adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment was at 8 p.m.

SIGNED:

David Burns, Mayor

ATTEST:

Gerald W. Breazeale, City Manager