

**CITY OF HAMILTON  
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**DATE:** July 28, 2020

**NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Committee of the Whole

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Council President Claire Kemp,  
Councilors Bielski, Pogachar, Mitchell,  
Pruitt and West

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**NOTE TAKER:** Cynthia Fleming, Deputy Clerk

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Matthew Rohrbach, City Planner and Dominic  
Farrenkopf, Mayor, Karl Bauer, City Planner I

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**Public Comment**

Joe Och, 121 State Street, came to the meeting regarding the loud speaker permit that was issued to Marleys Saturday night, July 25. He said that he called the police at midnight or the party would still be going on. He observed that there was no social distancing, no masks and the license plates in the parking lot were from many states. He commented that we have a low incident rate here and if there is a spike in infections in Ravalli County, it probably came from this party. He said that the Parkside Apartments where he lives is directly across the alley from the bar and all the residents are seniors. He said that the Councilors may not be there yet, but he likes to go to bed at 10:30pm.

**Approval of Minutes from July 14, 2020**

Councilor West moved to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2020 meeting. Councilor Pogachar seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Agenda Items**

• **Review for Approval of Wayfinding Plan**

Matthew Rohrbach, the City Planner reminded the Committee that the wayfinding sign designs were approved in March and everyone agreed that they are attractive and functional. The Covid pandemic threw a wrench in the plan for implementation. He told the members that he recently heard back from the Montana Department of Transportation, (MDT) and they are requiring some changes to the sign designs so that they meet standards as spelled out by the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) for signs that are in the public right away. Changes to the design include eliminating the swish at the top of some of the signs, as signs must be rectangular and replacing the stylized, “P”, for parking and using the standard parking symbol.

Councilor West asked him to clarify that we won’t be able to use the designs that were approved. Mr. Rohrbach replied that signs in the public right away have to conform to MUTCD. Merje

Designs our consultants, have a lot of experience dealing with this and we have been able to keep some things. It will only affect signs in the right of way. Mr. Rohrbach added that he checked to see if there would be other options for placement other than the public right away, but they need to use existing poles and most of them are in the right of way. We were able to get some aspects of the designs approved as is and if the Wayfinding Plan is approved we can start getting some of these signs up and added that the actual sign designs won't change outside of the swoop and the parking, "P".

Councilor West asked about signs directing people to trailheads and asked where they will be placed. Mr. Rohrbach replied that the signs will likely be directing people to places like River Park and other parks, that there may be a centralized location for signs showing Forest Service trailhead information. His hope is to have it ready for the end of the week.

Councilor West moved to send the Wayfinding Plan to City Council for approval. Councilor Pogachar seconded. The Committee unanimously approved to send the plan to Council for approval.

### **Recommendation**

Send Wayfinding Plan to City Council for approval.

#### **• Discussion of DEQ Grant for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at City Hall**

Mr. Rohrbach explained that the Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) grant was brought it to his attention by Russ Lawrence, Hamilton resident and member of the Bitterroot Climate Action Group. The grant, which expires on Aug 30, 2020 is funded by the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust, which was formed as part of the settlement for the Volkswagen emissions fraud case. Two charging stations would cost about 3 to 5 thousand per a station and require a 10 percent match from the City. Mr. Rohrbach is suggesting using the first two spaces on the north side of City Hall's parking lot. The spaces closes to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. He believes that they would be required to do a pedestal mount for the charging stations. At this time he does not have specific information as to the cost of electricity and if the Committee is interested in pursuing the grant he will provide more of the specifics such as the cost of the electricity. Russ Lawrence, 600 S 5<sup>th</sup> Street commented that he recently had a friend who was traveling by electric car around Montana and there were no charging stations in our area. The cost is approximately .89 per an hour of charge. Some vehicles can charge fully in about an hour and a half. He said many stations are provided as a free service. If a vehicle parked out there for two hours it would cost the City about \$1.00 an hour.

Committee members discussed the stations including whether the City would want to charge more for the electricity. Are there other towns in the State that are providing charging stations? What do we do if someone leaves their vehicle there overnight? Mr. Rohrbach stated that all of these details could be looked into, but at this time his main goal is to find out if the members are interested. If the members don't want to pursue this he doesn't want to dedicate the time in finding out more. Councilor West likes the idea and mentioned she had a friend who had a hard time finding a place to charge her car. Mr. Rohrbach stated that the idea would be that someone traveling through can plug their vehicle in and during the time it is charging they can go downtown for lunch and shopping.

Councilor Bielski moved to send the request to use two north City Hall parking spaces for charging stations. Councilor Mitchell seconded.

## **Recommendation**

Send request to use two north side City hall parking spaces for to City Council for approval.

### **• Covid 19 Issues**

Mayor Farrenkopf provided the members with a draft resolution that was created in an effort for the City to have an official position on Governor Bullock's mandatory mask directive. He felt that this meeting would be a good opportunity to work on the directive together. He also told the members that if a motion is made on the resolution tonight it needs to be very specific as to what you would like to do. Mayor Farrenkopf believes the Governor's directive is clear and that it has always been the City's position. He feels that we need to take the lead on this and make decisions before others are forced to.

Councilor Bielski commented that she would like to see something out in the community. She feels that there needs to be a platform where citizens can voice their concerns. She added, however, that she is not comfortable meeting in this room if we have 50 people in attendance. Councilor Kemp responded that having Covid 19 as a standing agenda item allows the public to make public comment at any meeting. Councilor Bielski would also like to hear from Ravalli County Public Health and the hospital. She feels that with the absence of Dr. Calderwood who is no longer leading the public health department and in the absence of a task force we need to make sure we are tracking information that we need.

Councilor Pruitt told the members that she invited Matt Anderson, Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor to update the members on how the Forest Service is planning to deal with any potential wild fires during the pandemic. Mr. Anderson began by saying the forest is quickly drying out with the recent warmer weather. The Forest Service will try to put out anything it can as quickly as possible. If we have a lightning caused blaze in wilderness, those are fires we don't fight. Wildfire smoke is a big concern for people with respiratory disease. His agency has been contemplating the logistics of fighting fire during Covid. He told the members that the big thing for us would be how to keep firefighting crews isolated from one another if we had a big campaign fire. On a big fire we may see crews coming in from all over the country. If we come up with crews that are infected, where do they stay? Right now we don't have a place to keep 30 infected fire fighters. Other logistics that have been planned for are fire briefings which would be done remotely. Food would be catered to keep crews isolated as much as possible. We have not had a positive Covid case with Bitterroot personnel. Councilor Pogachar asked what Mr. Anderson would do if homeowners needed to be evacuated. Where do you evacuate to and how do you maintain social distance. Forest Supervisor responded that from a pure space consideration we don't have a lot of options.

Councilor West suggested the currently vacant Trapper Creek Job Corp facility. Mr. Anderson agreed that it could be considered. There are some internal Forest Service rules that would need to be changed or temporarily by passed in order to use the facility. Councilor Bielski asked if it was a bad loss to lose Trapper Creek Job crews. It is a hit, one that we will try to make up for it with more planes, replied Mr. Anderson.

Councilor Kemp thanked Mr. Anderson for coming and asked the Committee if there were any other concerns. Councilor Bielski stated that she would like to have something in place limiting the number of people allowed in the audience at a meeting.

Councilor Pogachar moved to limit the number of people allowed in the audience to 20 people. Councilor West seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilor West says she likes the draft resolution and would like to move it to City Council. Mayor Farrenkopf responded that the resolution is already on the City Council meeting agenda.

Councilor Mitchell asked if anyone had information on how the Farmers Market went as far as following the Covid 19 guidelines. The Mayor responded that the Farmers Market manager was sent the updated notice. He did not receive any complaints.

Councilor West responding to public comment at the beginning of the meeting and the Loud Speaker Permit given to Marley's Bar wondered if the City should consider putting a moratorium on issuing Loud Speaker Permits. Mayor Farrenkopf stated that the venue had talked to public health and had a plan in place before the permit was approved. The Mayor has discretion and we do want to support our businesses. Councilor West feels this is not the time for big public gatherings.

Councilor Kemp asked for public comment.

Kent Barbian, 110 Cottonwood, stated that he hopes the City will take advantage of the expertise at Rocky Mountain Laboratories, (RML). In regards to the Loud Speaker Permit, it is hard if you give one to some but not to someone else. It might be best to nix them all. He asked the members to back up City businesses that are trying to comply with the mask mandate.

Members briefly discussed a mask up award and celebrating businesses that are taking the mandate seriously. Councilor Pruitt commented that she appreciates the positivity of people who are doing the hard job and that social media could be a way of bringing attention to them.

**Recommendations:**

Send to City Council to consider limiting the number of audience members at City meetings to a total of 20 people.

**Non-Agenda Items**

Councilor West asked that a sign be put up at Steve Powell Park with park rules. She said that there are people camping overnight and shooting guns. Mayor Farrenkopf will ask the Public Works Director about the sign.

Councilor Bielski would like to know if a letter was sent to the 509 Desmet Street house that has over grown weeds, is dilapidated and vacant. She feels that it is unsafe.

Councilor West believes it may be time to think about hiring a Parks Director. With the new parks we have a lot going on.

Skalkaho Bend Park was discussed briefly, including if there are bigger plans for the park and what is going to happen to the top bench. The Mayor commented that he would like to have a public process to create a park plan. Councilor Kemp feels that we need more direction and information.

**Topics for Consideration for a Future Meeting**

- Discussion of Fireworks Ordinance

**Adjourn**

Councilor West moved to adjourn. Councilor Bielski seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.