

Puyallup City Council
Nancy Dahl

The November 14th meeting had an extensive agenda with the opportunity for citizens to comment on proposals related to 2018 property taxes, the 2018 city budget and the 2018 update to the Comprehensive Plan. The council granted unanimous approval for the first reading of all these proposed ordinances except for the 2018 Tax Levy ordinance which council member Johnson opposed. The major discussions were as follows:

- Cliff Craig, city finance director, explained the need for maintaining the annual 1% inflation increase to property taxes allowed by state law as a necessary mechanism to keep up with inflation which is currently running at about 3%. Council Member Swanson, in response to negative public comments about increased property taxes, pointed out that some low-income property owners are eligible for reductions or deferral of taxes and that information can be found on the WA State Dept. of Revenue website (www.dor.wa.gov/find-taxes-rates/property-tax/property-tax-exemptions-and-deferrals).
- Council members Swanson, Palmer and Door expressed support for the budget that will further reduce the city debt while maintaining existing services and providing revenue to fund additional needs requested by residents. The budget funds 2 additional police officers and a social worker, renovation of sports fields at the Puyallup Recreation Center allowing for use by soccer teams in addition to the current use for baseball, Phase 1 development funds for the new Van Lierop Park and additional funds for downtown Puyallup development. Work is also progressing on design of a new public safety building to be built on recently purchased land on South Hill.
- Changes proposed to the Comprehensive Plan are text and map amendments designed to bring area property into compliance with Puget Sound Regional Council guidelines. They include changes to land capacity assumptions and policy adjustments to zoning overlays, rural buffers and infill housing. Map amendments focus on properties with multiple zones and changes to zoning of city-owned property primarily to designate it as open space.

These additional ordinances were considered and voted on by council:

- 2nd Reading - Ordinance establishing compensation for Pro Tem Municipal Court judges was approved 6-0.
- 2nd Reading - Ordinance amending the Flood Damage Protection Code to correct overly rigid rules previously enacted by council. The change allows plan for retail development at Shaw and Pioneer to move forward and was approved 6-0.
- 1st Reading - Ordinance allowing for the Public Works director to defer charges to add sewers at Elmwood Mobile Home Park. This is a low-income neighborhood that has been impacted by the Stewart Crossing housing development and the requirement to install sewers in the area to allow for higher density residential development. The fees for sewer upgrades at Elmwood will be deferred until a future date when the property is sold. Council member Swanson expressed his dislike for

the method of creating policy by exception and encouraged the council to consider a more general policy to address the issue of low-income mobile home parks with septic systems soon. Approved 6-0.

- 1st Reading - Ordinance to establish uniform rules for how public property in the downtown area can be used simplifying enforcement by the police. Councilmember Door confirmed that signage would be added to these locations making the rules clear for users. Approved 6-0.
- Consideration was given to a request to use a portion of Veteran's Park during the pending upgrades to the Milwaukee St. Bridge that includes an extension of the River Walk trail. A small portion of the park will be barricaded during construction, but should not impact users significantly. Council approved 5-0 (Council member Johnson had stepped out).
- The council considered a resolution to make a citizen appointment to the Design Review and Historic Preservation Board. The resolution was approved 5-0 (Council Member Johnson had not yet returned to the meeting).
- The final topic before the council was a presentation by Council Member Farris of a draft Ethics Policy she prepared to get the council thinking about creating some rules for itself to try to avoid future inappropriate actions by council members like those that have resulted in a recent successful suit against the city. It would also give city residents a clearer method for filing complaints. The members agreed they would submit feedback to Council Member Farris first before submitting the draft to city legal staff for review and development of a formal proposal. There was also a suggestion by Council Member Door to discuss the proposal at the next Council Retreat.
- A community memorial will be held Nov. 19th for SSgt Bryan Black, recently killed in an ambush in Niger. SSgt Black was a PHS graduate and his father is a resident of Puyallup.
- Council Member Swanson invited the community to come together on December 2nd for the annual Main Street Association's Christmas activities which include the Holiday Market in the Pavilion starting at noon and the Lighted Santa Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony starting at 5 PM.
- Gale Robinett, a member of the Historical Society Board, invited the community to enjoy the Christmas season at the Meeker Mansion starting November 24th. The mansion will be decorated inside and out in Victorian splendor. Plan to attend the special evening Candlelight Christmas event on December 8th from 5 – 8 PM.