



Harrisburg City Council Work Session Minutes April 22, 2015

The Harrisburg City Council met in a scheduled Work Session at the Harrisburg Justice Center, located at 354 Smith St, at the hour of 6:32pm. Presiding was Council President Mike Caughey. Also present were as follows:

- Kimberly Downey
- Sarah Puls
- John Loshbaugh
- Robert Boese
- Don Shipley
- City Administrator Brian Latta
- City Recorder/Assistant City Administrator Michele Eldridge

Absent this evening was Mayor Robert Duncan and Youth Advisor Bo Kelson.

Special Guests this evening were the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce Board. Those members present are as follows:

- Chamber President Brad King
- April Hodgson
- Chuck Cook
- Paul Canter
- Shaun Davis
- Bob Smith
- Barb Shipley
- Chamber Director Rick Kissock

The matter of a Meeting with the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce Board and Discussing Economic Development Goals and Better Collaboration Efforts

Staff Report: Latta welcomed the Chamber of Commerce, and said that the purpose of our meeting tonight, is for the Chamber board to come and share your purpose behind what you do, and understand what we do, and to find out where we can work together to create partnerships and cooperation.

- Chamber President Brad King, said that he has a great staff, and thanked their Director, Rick Kissock for what he provides. He then introduced each of the Chamber members

that were present this evening. Each of the Chamber Board members introduced themselves, and told the Council what they do in the community.

- King said that between the City of Harrisburg and Chamber of Commerce, we have great cooperation. For years, Bruce Cleeton was on the board, and now, Michele Eldridge (City Recorder) is on the board. Don Shipley, as Barb's husband, has a really good relationship with the Chamber. They are now the Tri-County Chamber, focusing on the Tri-County area of Monroe, Harrisburg, and Junction City. We are really lucky to have 3 towns, with wineries, and other types of businesses outside of the towns that are also members. We've developed a video promoting the area with Rick Dancer media, and we are in the process of building a new website...right now, we've asked for a grant from Junction City, who had some funds available that might help with that. It looks like it might happen. They are funded about 45% from memberships, 8% from the Junction City transient room taxes, and the rest is from their fundraisers. They do have some members that are outside of the Tri-County area, such as some businesses in the Eugene and Springfield areas. They have a great business center at the Chamber office, and they are part of the association that has Chambers throughout the State of Oregon. They pride themselves on including what's in our area, rather than what's outside, like jet boat rides in Grants Pass. They focus on trying to get people to shop here, live here, and stay here. Some of the main programs that they have are as follows:

- Monthly Networking Breakfasts.
- Annual Dinner & Silent Auction
- A Sponsorship Program (which is their biggest fundraiser)
- The annual community showcase; that was held just a couple of weekends ago, it brings together businesses and non-profits.
- The Annual Meeting, which recognizes local businesses; he had forms to nominate area businesses. They will have been operating as a Chamber for 60 years as of this July!
- The Distinguished Service Awards in November.
- Light Parades in both Harrisburg and Junction City.
- Annual Golf Event Fundraiser (Councilor Don Shipley announced that he was chairing the event this year, which will be held on June 6th at Diamond Woods Golf Course. He invited the Councilors to join him!)
- Lunch Forums
- Greeters and After Hours Events; both ways to give businesses lots of exposure.
- Cash Mobs (They gather people together on a certain day and time and crash a business, with all members spending funds there.)

They also help with the 4th of July event in Harrisburg. Business recruitment is a high priority for the Chamber; Economic Development is certainly part of their mission, but they also have to take care of who is here first. Those are their priorities. They have great marketing efforts; Rick puts out distribution list reminders every week, which includes area events, plus we have a newsletter. We've had a lot of people contacting us that are concerned about marijuana dispensaries, and it's a big problem for a lot of places; we are keeping our ears peeled for that.

They get a lot of inquiries about new businesses and we refer business inquiries to City departments. You guys have a business license program, which we love. From our standpoint,

it's a great tool. What the chamber tries to do, is to help with the local businesses. They do a great job of doing that, and there is a ton of business experience on the board.

The Chamber Members and Council exchanged some information, such as who the out of town business members were. (Selco, and Pepsi, amongst others) Boese asked how many members they had, and was told about 220. They meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00am. The Networking Breakfast is on the 2nd Wednesday morning at the Moose Lodge at 7:00 in the morning, and the Lunch Forums are always on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, also at the Moose Lodge. Unfortunately, they don't hold the lunch forums over the summer, so May will be the last one. The Chamber used to have a lot more people attending the breakfasts and lunch forums, but attendance has dropped off. Canter added that it depends on who is scheduled to talk....the hospital was very popular. Gheen Irrigation did a great job at the last forum. They exchanged other information, such as the Chamber redoing their by-laws, and deciding to not advocate for any political measures. King told the Council that they alternate their Executive Board lunch meetings between businesses in both Harrisburg and Junction City. The regular board meetings are held in Dari Mart's board room.

Chuck Cook added about how close our communities are. He talked about the history of the businesses supporting our communities. Morse Brothers did a lot for the area, and he sees Gheen Irrigation stepping into that role. Hurds does a great job supporting the Chamber. We have a lot of people in all communities who cross the county lines every day. Caughey thought that was important. When we first moved into the community, he felt like a lot of the organizations in the counties didn't want to admit that we were here. He felt that we as cities feel closer to each other than we do to the rest of the counties we reside in.

Downey asked what can we and the council do for you. King said to have a representative on the board, like Michele, is really good. That's one of the biggest things; having someone in the City on the board, and who volunteers with the chamber, is really helpful. It gives us opportunity to see what's going on, and provides good communication. Downey was really glad that after ten years of advocating for a grocery store, that Heidi came across the river and joined Harrisburg. She's doing really well there. King thought she'd do a lot better here in Harrisburg. Latta told them that we want to strengthen what we have, and to encourage businesses that want to grow here. King said that the City Council has influence over those kinds' of decisions. For example, if a new business is required to have lots of new landscaping as a requirement, it could prevent a business from coming here. Try to be as business friendly as you can, and try to not make unnecessary hindrances to businesses coming in. The permit process can either encourage, or discourage businesses. Latta said that might be something we can do. When the city updates something like a land use ordinance, it could use a dialogue with the Chamber and businesses. There may be something that government may not think of, or we may think of something being beneficial, when it really isn't to businesses. Kissock said that was important. In Lane County, there are a lot of businesses who want to leave. Latta said that we usually have information we send out when we are making changes, and he thought the Chamber was on that distribution list. You can call Michele and get more details.

Downey was enthused that we had talked earlier about transportation. It's a goal of ours to try to get people connected to Junction City, so that they can get to public transportation. Boese talked about people getting access to more places than Junction City too. They bring the

buses all the way up to McKenzie Bridge, so he's not sure why they can't come to Harrisburg. Shipley said that was because of taxation. King said that both he and Shawn Davis, pay taxes to LTD. If they came here, businesses would have to pay for it. Shipley said that they can tax property too. King suggested doing a poll and seeing if they want to have access to transportation, if it increases taxes. Latta said that money is a lot of it. He talked with LTD about it, and they didn't seem very interested. Downey said that something, even if it's just 2 times a week, would be helpful. Latta said that we did send out surveys.

Cook said that the newsletter the city sends, plus our newsletters, are great for people who are on all the different boards. He also loved the fact that the city paid up to a certain amount of covering 50% of the first year for Harrisburg businesses to join the chamber. That's a selling point. Tami at Gheen signed right up when she found that out. Council wanted to make sure that we maintained that program. Downey was interested in communication, and Kissock said that he was happy to add the Council to his distribution list.

Latta talked about some of what the City does to attract businesses. We do have a link with the Chamber website, with resources, and we can link to businesses too. He was interested in how the Chamber promotes business placement, if someone comes in and looks at siting. Harrisburg has some great opportunities. For one, there is the Enterprise Zone. He is the director of that, and it covers both Junction City and Harrisburg. We also have an Urban Renewal District, and we are looking at property improvement grants, or perhaps low interest loans to give businesses here the ability to develop. The chamber can tell potential businesses about those programs. We also have a lot of committees, boards and groups, and Chamber members can join some of those, because we don't have many of them involved. We held the Harvest Festival last year; we weren't profitable, but we didn't lose much. We are having another one this year, with a much longer period of time to plan. Having some Chamber board members on that planning committee would be terrific. We are happy to display items for the Chamber, and having more manpower to help with the event would be terrific.

The Council and Chamber talked about communication, and especially the fact that we have a good relationship with Junction City, and the Chamber both. The City is improving streets with the Urban Renewal Agency, and we hope to get businesses to come to town to capitalize on that. Cook was enthused about the Reader Board; that was a great item to have. Boese asked about how the Chamber dealt with questions about Harrisburg; how do you develop the information they need to get started? Kissock told him that if they want to put a shop in Harrisburg, or have questions about business licenses, then he just sends them to Michele, and he tells them to tell her that the chamber sent them. We give them as much information as we possibly can, and then send them to the right people to get answers. Kissock actually gets quite a few more inquiries than what people realize. A lot of prospective businesses don't want you to know they are looking. He said it's great to call the City, and he gives them Michele to talk to. That makes people more comfortable, to know that they are on a first name basis with someone in a small town. If you see the video, it's a small town, and we do things here that you don't see in larger town.

There was some more discussion about the upcoming golf tournament, courtesy of Shipley, and then Latta asked what kind of feedback did the Chamber receive about the business license programs? Does it turn people off? Kissock said that he's surprised that

Junction City doesn't have it. It seems that like Harrisburg, everyone else has it. Boese asked if the City events were promoted on the Chamber website, and was told that they do promote them. Kissock told of a couple who were so enamored of the summer concert series that they return to have their motor coach services around the same time frame. They were excited about what Harrisburg has to offer, because it has great food, the summer concerts and movies, the 4th of July, the river, jet boat rides, and other events like the Harvest Festival. As a small chamber, we have a relationship with our businesses, and our governments. Not many of the chambers can say that. We appreciate what Harrisburg has, and it makes his job much easier. After some more talk about the boat ramp, and the possibilities of getting politicians involved, the evening came to a close, and the Chamber Board members thanked the Council for their time.

Others

- Latta wanted to say thank you to Tim Gaines. He was recognized by PERS for meeting 100% of his reports this year. That doesn't happen very often in government agencies, and he's very efficient with it. Edie Moro has also been here one year in a week. She is terrific, and he'd really like to recognize her. She is trying to respond to the community, rather than getting the community to respond to her. Also, our newest staff member is almost at the end of his probationary time. Chuck is working hard to get the public works employees all certified, and cross trained. He's doing a great job to get the staff up to snuff.

Budget Committee

- Latta reminded everyone that the Budget Committee packets had been delivered, and that the meeting was on Monday night next week.

Mayor

City Recorder