

Mins 02/21/2024

City of Mosier City Council

Attendance: Witt Anderson, Monte Spencer, Brenna Campbell, Acasia Berry, Ron Wright

Jayne Bennett, John Worsley

Community: Brian Barrett, Chief Michael Carlson (Mosier Fire), Christie and Sam, Colleen Coleman, Mary Ramsey, Andrea Rodgers, Noah Estes, Elizabeth Payne

Motion to approve Minutes from January 2024

Acasia Berry requests correction to differentiate council from other audience on list of attendance.

Brenna Campbell

Second: Monte Spencer

All in, motion passes 6:46 PM

Vacant council seat Position 1. This is to complete a 2-year term from NOV 2022 election – commencing JAN 1, 2023, and expiring DEC 31 DEC 2024

Elizabeth Payne and Noah Estes have both expressed interest in applying for the position after extensive outreach to the community. Council will deliberate in executive session at next meeting as necessary.

Brian Barrett (Community of Mosier) Dark Sky and Lighting: (CHAPTER 8.30 OUTDOOR LIGHTING MOSIER CODE)

Testimony from Brian Barrett:

Mosier School Neighborhood Coalition (MSNC)

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Mosier, OR 97040

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December 21, 2023

City of Mosier

PO Box 456

Mosier, OR 87040

We of the immediate community in the vicinity of the Mosier School request action from the City of Mosier for the following, related to new lighting in this neighborhood:

1) That the City of Mosier order Pacific Power to extinguish and remove the light at

pole # 029240, on the south side of the Mosier School, near the east breezeway. Some call it "The Eye of Sauron". We have endured it for about a year. It is well-known to be offensive and highly-disturbing to neighbors by disrupting essential sleep patterns (of both humans and other animals) and privacy. It has also contributed to disturbing the roosting behavior of a federally-protected bird species (namely Vaux Swifts) that used to roost in the school chimney. This light was out for an unknown number of years before somebody requested it be illuminated. It is offensive. We don't need it.

2) That the City of Mosier order the Mosier School to extinguish the east breezeway light. This light is new and is clearly "overkill". It is too bright, poorly-shielded, and clearly reflects off the walkway and school walls into neighbors' property. It malfunctioned by strobing for about two months after installation. This light clearly trespasses and has disturbed the sleep patterns of those who live nearby. It has also contributed to the disruption of the Vaux Swifts roost in the school chimney. This migrating flock has apparently split into at least two portions in order to cope with their preferred roost being disturbed by excessive lighting at the school. We're looking out for a federally-protected bird species. If we don't, who will?

3) That the City of Mosier order the Mosier School to extinguish the electric billboard at the northeast corner of the schoolyard. This billboard, erected a couple years ago, is clearly so bright as to be virtually impossible to read. And its light obliterates the viewing of the night sky of this area. It clearly goes against Mosier's own stated goal of attaining Dark Sky status. The school staff appear to care little about this sign; the messages are frequently outdated.

*If the spectacular and well-known flock of Vaux Swifts were disturbed by reckless lighting at the Raleigh School of NW Portland, there would be widespread justifiable outrage in the surrounding community, as well as the relatively powerful Audubon Society. It is shameful that the City of Mosier tolerates the lighting that obviously has disturbed this flock.

Our morale is low, and we continue to be dismayed at the City's apparent absence of awareness of these important effects, as well as the apparent unwillingness to investigate further and exert stronger leadership regarding these matters. Again, we invite the mayor and all council members to see with their own eyes what it's like to live in this neighborhood at night. This may be done by a short and simple walk-and-talk, led by the residents of this neighborhood. The only drawback is that we cannot plainly show you what it was like before the increased lighting of the past few years.

One of the greatest assets of Mosier is the night sky. It is appreciated by humans for the wonders that may be observed only at night. And it is essential to both humans and other animals for healthy sleep and predation behavior. It is a proven public health issue of great importance, and there is countless evidence of the importance of darkness. We assume the City of Mosier is aware of the horrific mosquito outbreaks of the past two years. The predators of mosquitos are bats and birds, including Vaux Swifts. These predators depend on darkness in order to rest, hunt, and thrive. We assume the City of Mosier is also aware that many diseases, including Covid and heartworm, are carried by mosquitos.

The night sky is being regressively obliterated via reckless and reactionary (fear-based) decisions (both passive and active) made by people who obviously do not live in Mosier or this particular neighborhood. We used to be able to go to the Mosier Schoolyard at night to lay on the grass and observe the wonders of the night sky, including stars, comets, and aurora borealis. This is no longer possible. If current trends of passivity and apathy continue, Mosier will surely move even farther away from its own stated goal of Dark Sky status; there are really no clear regulations to stop anybody from erecting something like a Bat-Signal spotlight anywhere. New construction may comply with lighting restrictions at the outset and then add noncompliant lights at will (examples already abound and can be pointed out during a night-time walking tour).

About five years ago, Mosier stated a goal of Dark Sky. Will Mosier have five MORE years of apathy and consequent inaction? "Small enough to make a difference?" The farther away Mosier moves from the goal of Dark Sky, the more difficult it will be to make a turnaround in order to achieve it. Mosier needs true active leadership in this matter from its leaders, the Mayor and the council members. What a pity to continue to allow neighbors to offend other neighbors with offensive lighting. What a pity it would be to abandon one of Mosier's greatest assets (the natural night sky) due to the fear and apathy by the powerful, both of the City of Mosier and the Mosier School.

Mosier is small enough to do much better.

END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FROM BRIAN BARRETT

Brian Barrett following up on several meetings, and conversations about the existing lighting in Mosier in the commercial zone, which is falling outside of the new building code (pre-existing non-conforming).

STAFF:

The City of Mosier staff and council, and Mosier Community School, and volunteers have met with Brian (who is representing a group of neighbors/community members as well) to discuss and address this concern on a few separate occasions. The City of Mosier staff has worked closely with and met with

Pacific Power, as well as the school to keep this issue moving forward. The City has considered all stakeholders in the community when selectively addressing lighting issues, and will continue to do so. The Mosier Community School has already committed to a date to remove the pole. This was after careful consideration of concerns for public health and safety.

There are a number of people in Mosier that would also like the lights removed for various reasons, and in various circumstances. Partners in our region include the county (Wasco) and the state (Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)). Wasco County and ODOT have jurisdictional agreements in place with the City of Mosier, specifically to the right of way, and safety involving vehicular traffic, multimodal transportation, franchise agreements or otherwise.

The City of Mosier will continue to address the lighting concerns as appropriate, or identify significant funding to do so for the budget cycle, as council directs, after community outreach. The City of Mosier also has written concerns regarding safety and removal of lighting. An update will be provided at the next meeting showing the improvement to the school area.

April: fee proposal for Short Term Rental with public outreach as well as the general fee's for City of Mosier business – Ron Wright and City Staff will work to formalize the application process and present in April for May “go live” and implementation.

Mayor Anderson gives update on the Joint Use Facility (JUF) meeting to council, no action required. Mosier Fire is still working on their feedback on the operations agreement.

Next milestone is completion of documents and bidding, and another meeting the end of March. Objective is to start construction as soon as possible (late spring/early summer).

Sources and uses of funding for the JUF are reviewed and covered in the presentation.

Surplus property discussion on the City of Mosier City Hall lot seeking community feedback, after the legislature and earmark from congress will assist in next steps.

Request for Proposals (RFP) for the surplus lot (existing city hall) will be in response to community planning and desires for use of the land. Final process to commence prior to April meeting 2024.

Colleen Coleman reviews the Department of Environmental Quality Point Source Loan (half forgivable) – previously, the permission sought and received by council were for 1.2m+ however, the projects that are most efficient and appropriate will only require 750k – no permissions required.

Lighting: City Staff will adhere to achieving the goal of the 31st of March to assist the school with the removal of the offensive light. City staff will also assist with speaking with Pacific Power on standards and communicate with all of the community – not just individuals.

City staff will work with Ron Wright on the Short Term Rentals.

City Staff will address the fees on the Mosier State Road Cemetery and the Pioneer Cemetery. This fee will reflect the cost only, no profit.

The city will support the Early Child Learning and this has no impact on tax dollars or politics. It is a letter of support from the Mayor, therefore to council.

Friends of the Gorge: Items of mutual interest to provide authority for maintenance on City of Mosier property that hosts the trails. The Friends of the Gorge (FOG) is also receptive to removal of safety hazards and communicating and coordinating resources.

The late David Povey is due a bench near the Pocket Park which was donated by him, and his children are wanting to sign the easement necessary to complete the portion of trail missing from the documentation finalization regarding.

Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning is being assisted by Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD). Jayme will work with Ron Wright from City of Mosier City Council and select other community representatives and follow up in April. There are regular meetings all month for planning, outreach is going to commence in April.

Walk and Talk: April 20th 10:00 AM Main Street Mosier

Reminder: Meeting once a month – 3rd Wednesday of the month. Look forward to the City of Mosier Charter update in the upcoming election year! We need to consider updates every 10 years, and this is an opportunity for us to consider other nuances (example: how many meetings, how many council members, what form of government).

Lighting will be an ongoing issue through the fiscal and 2024 calendar year.

Adjourn 8:28