

JOINT WORKSHOP REDMOND CITY COUNCIL / BEND CITY COUNCIL WAS HELD AUGUST 1, 2023, IN CIVIC ROOMS 207/208.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Tobias Colvin – Clifford Evelyn – Ed Fitch – John Nielsen – Kathryn Osborne – Shannon Wedding – Cat Zwicker

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Keith Witcosky – Deputy City Manager John Roberts – City Attorney Keith Leitz – Homelessness Prevention and Response Coordinator Natalie Lantz – Communications Director Heather Cassaro – Housing Program Analyst Linda Cline – Accounting Manager James Wood – Urban Renewal Program Analyst Meghan Gassner – City Recorder Kelly Morse

BEND COUNCILORS PRESENT: Anthony Broadman – Barb Campbell – Melanie Kebler – Ariel Mendez – Megan Norris – Megan Perkins – Mike Riley

MEDIA PRESENT: KPOV

Mayor Fitch called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and handed over leadership of the meeting to Bend Mayor Kebler.

Mayor Kebler stated to Bend's knowledge, this was the first joint meeting between the Bend and Redmond City Councils; Mayor Fitch indicated Bend and Redmond Council's would have an annual dinner roughly 40 years ago. Introductions took place.

PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSIONS

A. Homelessness

i. Joint Office Update

Discussion Leaders: Cat Zwicker / Megan Perkins

Lead Staff: Eric King / Keith Witcosky

Coordinated Homelessness Response Office (CHRO) Board Members Councilors Zwicker and Perkins provided an update on the CHRO's governance, by-laws, strategic plan going forward, priorities, moving the Office from Deschutes County to Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council for a needed regional approach, and the upcoming roundtable.

Mayor Fitch opined the two emergencies are taking care of those experiencing homelessness and the impact of homelessness on the community.

Councilor Broadman pointed out a key reason for the creation of CHRO was to define roles and responsibilities, without which the same problems will continue to occur. He added that passing the issue to other agencies or cities will not solve the problem.

ii. Homelessness Initiatives

Discussion Leaders: Melanie Kebler / Ed Fitch

Mayor Fitch provided an overview of the East Redmond Campus Area which will accommodate several homelessness initiatives. City Manager Keith Witcosky added the goal is to have Oasis Village operational by January 10, 2024. The RV site and the County component will likely have a 2024/2025 timeframe.

Questions from the Bend City Council were addressed. Mayor Kebler noted there was a handout of Redmond's established homeless response and what is in progress.

Mayor Kebler presented Bend's homelessness response work over the past couple of years, noting the efforts have resulted in 529 beds spread amongst the Lighthouse Navigation Center, the Franklin Avenue Shelter, the Stepping Stone Shelter and Safe Parking, and the temporary outdoor shelter.

Mayor Fitch confirmed that as Redmond moves forward on the homelessness issue, he does not believe the constant pursuit of funding will end. Councilor Zwicker emphasized the importance of permanent supportive housing which cannot be left out of the cities' plans.

Mayor Kebler opined that Bend and Redmond are aligned on the issues of helping people avoid falling into homelessness and addressing the current emergency; however, both cities have limitations with being able to do so.

B. Highway 97 Safety Corridor Investments

i. Discussion Leaders: Melanie Kebler / Ed Fitch

Lead Staff: Gary Farnsworth, ODOT Regional Director

Oregon Department of Transportation Region 4 Director Gary Farnsworth presented background/safety assessment and crash data on the US Highway 97 corridor between Redmond and Bend, upcoming and completed work on the Bend Safety Project Phases 1 through 4, and other corridor projects.

Mr. Farnsworth will communicate the offer of a joint Bend-Redmond letter of support for funding opportunities and will send comments to Deschutes County staff about improving northbound access on US Highway 97 at Deschutes Market Road. Deschutes County is drafting provisional language in their Transportation System Plan to address areas farther south. He opined they will be supportive of Mayor Fitch's request for better access options south of Yew Avenue from the south side to the east side.

Mayor Fitch called for plans to alleviate the Cooley Road bottleneck for the whole corridor and for support of the alternate route on the eastside.

C. Effective Strategies for Engaging Your Community

i. Discussion Leaders: Melanie Kebler / Ed Fitch

Discussion took place on how each Council engages their communities, what they see in Council meetings, and how they connect with constituents.

Redmond Councilors stated they make themselves available to speak with constituents and business owners, they are active at different levels within the community, and they reply to the emails citizens send; however, the most important thing is that the Council works together as a team. They noted the challenge of City business versus community issues that weigh heavily on people's minds. Mayor Fitch stated he dealt with the difficult situations by establishing guidelines for City Council meetings.

Mayor Kebler commented the Bend City Council has been offering other opportunities to interact, such as their roundtable format. She described KTVZ's "Questions with the Mayor" segment and other Bend City Council outreach through KBND and KPOV. They are looking at City Council compensation for extra meetings, etc. She spoke about the neighborhood trailer from their Communications and Engagement Division which has table, chairs, lawn games, an audio system, etc., to facilitate a meeting and attract people to an event.

Bend City Manager Eric King spoke about their System Development Charges update process where a group of stakeholders walks through the technical components then has an active Q&A/input section.

Both City Councils discussed responding to the volume of emails they receive. The Bend City Council and staff try to read every email, but due to the volume received, anyone not receiving a response is encouraged to resend their message.

Councilor Nielsen noted when City Council members have disagreements, they discuss the issue, but do not attack the person.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 pm.

Prepared by ABC Transcription Services
Reviewed by Kelly Morse, City Recorder

APPROVED by the City Council and SIGNED by the Council President this 12th day of September 2023.

/s/ Cat Zwicker
Cat Zwicker, Council President

ATTEST:

/s/ Kelly Morse
Kelly Morse, City Recorder