

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP OF THE CITY OF REDMOND WAS HELD JUNE 21, 2022, IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Krisanna Clark-Endicott – George Endicott – Clifford Evelyn – Ed Fitch – Jay Patrick – Shannon Wedding – Cat Zwicker

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Keith Witcosky – City Attorney Keith Leitz – City Engineer Jessica MacClanahan – IT Manager Matt Hayes – Communications Director Heather Cassaro – Assistant to the City Recorder's Office Trish Pinkerton – Police Captain Aaron Wells

MEDIA PRESENT: None

Mayor Endicott called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

CITY MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Draft Blasting Standards and Specifications: Worksession #2

Mayor Endicott explained that the Council would be taking testimony from three panels: Teak Avenue homeowners, technical experts, and blasting/construction representatives. He stated the purpose of the workshop was to discuss the City blasting standards in Section 18.8.00 of the Public Works Standards and Specifications and to gain more knowledge on blasting. The goal after the workshop is to be able to move forward with approving new standards.

Mayor Endicott read a letter from Nick Porta on behalf of a group of Teak Avenue neighbors that stated the proposed revisions should be thoughtful, with consideration given to all variables that impact development, blasting, and safety of persons and real property. The letter also encouraged Council to review the residents' draft redline changes and comments to the proposed revisions as submitted at the June 7 Council meeting.

Teak Avenue neighbor Mark Noble addressed starter questions Staff had sent to the neighborhood, including qualifications for blasting engineers, notification requirements, and items that should be included in pre- and post-blast inspections.

Teak Avenue neighbor Jacqueline Noble requested more specificity in language on qualifications, citizen notification, safe distances, and penalties for violations of standards.

Technical panelist Bob Cummings of Call & Nicholas, emphasized the blasting standards should incorporate current scientific and engineering research and principles. He explained what happens when explosives are detonated in a rock mass and the effects experienced by structures and people, both from ground vibrations and air over-pressure. He also addressed the use of seismographs and other monitoring devices, methods to control blasts, qualifications for the blaster-in-charge, notification requirements, and pros and cons of blasting alternatives. The scaled distance formula for blast controls, which is the distance divided by the square root of the pounds per delay, directly relates to the computation of the particle velocity. He shared the opinion of many others that if a numerical standard is adopted for notification distance, pre-blast survey distance or, monitoring distance, it should be tied to the scaled distance.

Technical panelist Dr. Bill Gates of McMillen Jacobs Associates, explained his professional credentials and stated he was retained by an attorney representing Hayden Homes to review the blasting operations at the NW Teak Avenue properties. He addressed questions/comments from earlier in the meeting and offered his general conclusions from his investigation of the blasting operations in the NW Teak Avenue neighborhood. In his professional opinion the minor damage reported by residents in the area was not related to blasting operations.

Mr. Cummings addressed Council questions concerning safe blasting distances, timing between detonation of charges, and the role of blasting consultants.

Redmond Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal Tom Mooney explained there are two standards he uses when a project is submitted to him for a blasting permit: the Oregon Fire Code, which contains minimal information on blasting, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 495's explosives standard. When a blasting plan comes in, he has to rely on the blasting company to provide accurate information on their experience. Fire Marshal Mooney does not have the staff or resources to be on-site at all times; however, if it is a unique blast or there are a lot of variables at play, his office will consider making a site visit.

Blasting/Construction Industry panelist Jacob Clark, Central Oregon Land Development Manager for Hayden Homes, presented costs associated with excavation, using a project that was put together at the end of 2021. The scenarios included drilling and blasting with a rock saw option and using rock hammers for the whole site. Most of the impact in cost comes from the sewer and water lines, the deeper lines on an excavation site, which means more rock to remove.

Blasting/Construction Industry panelist Matt Higgins, owner of Quality Drilling and Blasting, provided estimated costs showing how the increased amount results from the panel's understanding of proposed blasting provisions. He said developers face challenges when building in Central Oregon due to the unique rock in the area. Blasting in Central Oregon requires a special set of skills, which can cause companies, that are not used to blasting in the area, to struggle. He noted he has blasted in the area for 30 years. As part of the blasting process, Quality Drilling and Blasting uses a third-party company to inspect homes out to 300 feet. Regarding the project used as an example in the cost comparison mentioned by Mr. Clark, his company had inspections done on all of the homes. Mr. Higgins answered Council questions on timing and content of notices to neighboring properties, and use of tests blasts.

Blasting/Construction Industry panelist Chad Bettesworth, from Pahlisch Homes, shared his practical experience of being a homebuilder, especially a developer who works in multiple phases, which means they work around their customers all the time. Relative to the other work they do, blasting is probably less than half of the complaints they get for noise and vibration. Vibrations caused from other methods of rock removal, such as compactors and rock hammers, are more stressful for the community and the neighbors. Mr. Bettesworth stated that Pahlisch Homes receives more pressure when they use those methods and opined there seems to be less pain for customers when blasting is used. He asked the Council to consider using existing criteria that has been tested over time by other agencies and municipalities, such as Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) standards. To use industry standards that cover 90 percent of the situations seems to make practical sense. Mr. Bettesworth responded to Council questions on the use of rock hammers, notification distances, how or if scaled distance could be quantified in the code, issues with fly rock, and the use of seismographs.

City Engineer Jessica MacClanahan recapped takeaways from the discussion:

- Take a closer look at how the City defines "qualified." ODOT has a list of qualified blasting experts. Other jurisdictions sometimes have lists of qualified contractors to work on their property or rights-of-way.
- Explore ways to better clarify how and when the public is notified.
- Detail elements of a good pre-blast inspection and further clarify how that could be stated in the code.
- Look at the charge weight per delay in terms of getting the scaled distance for notifications, inspections, and potentially a monitoring plan including use of seismographs.

Mayor Endicott opened the meeting for public comment.

Jake Hanning with Jack Robinson & Sons is not a proponent of test blasting on larger projects but opined it might be considered instead of an initial geotechnical investigation as the revision suggests. While there is no opportunity to test blast on smaller projects, doing them on larger projects could verify the blasting plan to put the homeowners and City at ease.

Michael Robinson, an attorney with Pahlisch Homes, noted the proposed blasting standards by the City incorporate ODOT's standards in a particular section of the rules, which were included by Mr. Witcosky. The rules include nearly everything discussed: fly rock, vibration, and notices. He added that ODOT's standards are widely accepted and understood in the industry. Mr. Robinson questioned whether there is enough time to complete the revisions in time for the July 12 Council meeting, especially with the July 4th holiday approaching. He requested that the industry experts be involved in the drafting the language.

Witcosky confirmed Staff's goal would be to get another draft out next week. If a draft cannot be done in a manner that is comprehensive enough and allows enough time for comments, then the date will be moved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Prepared by ABC Transcription Services
Reviewed by Trish Pinkerton, Asst. to the City Recorder's Office

APPROVED by the City Council and SIGNED by the Council President this 16th day of August 2022.

/s/ Robert J. Patrick
Robert J. Patrick, Council President

ATTEST:

/s/ Kelly Morse
Kelly Morse, City Recorder