



CITY OF LA CENTER CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 9, 2016

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City Council

**REGULAR MEETING:**

1. Mayor Thornton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL:**

**Council:**

Councilmember Birdwell-Currey	Present
Councilmember Luiz	Present
Councilmember Williams	Absent/Excused
Councilmember Valenzuela	Present
Councilmember Cerveny	Present
Mayor Thornton	Present

**Staff:**

Marc Denney, Chief of Police  
Suzanne Levis, Finance Director/Clerk

**Guests:**

Tammy Bigler	Tom Gilstrap	Mick Martin
Doug Boff	Judy Hickman	Wendy McGraw
Doug & Barb Burtwell	Dennis Hill	Joe Melroy
Claudia Conrad	Dayna Hines	Hallie Nelson
Ken Couch	Candice Howell	Erin Nolan
Rae Lynn Crocker	Jim & Candi Irish	Grace Nolan
Brittney Curry	Jack LaBounty	Nelda Perryman
Cory & Alisha Delong	Howard Leroy	Emmy Storm
Al Filla	Tammy Leroy	Wendy Storm
Theresa Filla	Larry Lewton	Andy "Sheriff" Taylor
Carol Gibbins	Emily Martin	Rick & Suzi Terrell

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS/ADJUSTMENTS – 11.09.16**
- B. **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – 10.26.16**

**MOTION MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER CERVENY, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BIRDWELL-CURREY AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 9, 2016 CONSENT AGENDA.**



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**5. COUNCIL STAFF REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**A. MAYOR'S REPORT.**

- Members of the Miss Teen La Center court and other citizens in attendance commented on the discontinuance of the float with the City's 2017 budget. The following advocates of the float requested Council keep the float in the budget: Dennis Hill, Candi Irish, Emily Martin, Erin Nolan, and Brittney Tracy.
- The next regular City Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 22 (instead of November 23) due to the Thanksgiving holiday.
- City offices will be closed Friday, November 11, in observance of Veteran's Day.
- The City's treatment plant supervisor is resigning effective November 30. A City Council work session is scheduled for Monday, November 14, 6:30 p.m., to discuss interim staffing. A representative from CH2M Hill will present a company overview.
- Discussion at the monthly Mayor's Town Hall Meeting on November 2 focused on the City's 2017 budget proposals, specifically the reduction of gambling tax from 10% to 5%. Mayor Thornton has directed the Finance Director to keep the gambling tax rate at 10%. The budget will be closely monitored next year, and discussion of the cardrooms' potential drop in revenue will be readdressed.
- The City's Master Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan for the I-5 junction is underway at the direction of Planning Consultant Eric Eisemann. Two intensive development planning meetings were held recently with City Staff, property owners, stakeholders and a consulting team. A public open house was held where comments were received after a presentation by the consulting team. The City's Planning Commission is involved in the process, and the public is welcome to attend the Commission's meetings. Focus is currently on the development of the I-5 junction with the downtown corridor development plans occurring at a later date.

- B. ATTORNEY'S REPORT – DAN KEARNS.** The Growth Management Hearings Board appeal should be ending early next year. The Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court was filed by the non-tribal plaintiffs, and a decision is anticipated by the end of this year.



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**C. COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

- **COUNCILMEMBER BIRDWELL-CURREY** – None.
- **COUNCILMEMBER LUIZ** – None.
- **COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS** – None (Absent/Excused).
- **COUNCILMEMBER VALENZUELA** – Budget cuts are necessary and unavoidable. Priorities will be set. La Center needs to come into conformance with other small cities. The cardrooms have contributed to the City for many years, but we must accept the fact that it might end. Everyone will have to be flexible and collaborate. He attended an elected officials regional meeting in Woodland—other cities are experiencing the same issues. Council will respond to citizens’ needs as much as possible.
- **COUNCILMEMBER CERVENY** – It is vital for City Council to hear the public’s comments. The float can continue with the establishment of a non-profit organization and community support.

**D. STAFF REPORTS.**

- **POLICE CHIEF MARC DENNEY, POLICE DEPARTMENT.** Chief Denney emailed the October 2016 *Monthly Advisor* to Councilmembers which included crime statistics for September as well as other PD highlights. Halloween ended safely; La Center patrol officers handed out candy. Minor traffic incidents have occurred in the I-5 junction work zone due to drivers’ lack of attention and signage issues. The PD’s CRESA dispatch module has been updated. La Center participated in this year’s drug take-back program at the Battle Ground Police Department. Citizens were reminded to be responsible pet owners and keep their dogs vaccinated and licensed with the City. Licensing your animal enables the Police Department to locate roaming dogs. An agreement with the Cowlitz Tribe for law enforcement services is pending.

**6. CITIZEN’S PUBLIC COMMENT.**

**LARRY LEWTON, 119 W. C AVE.,** gave an update on the Clark County Mosquito Board, as the City’s representative on the Board. As a citizen, he questioned if the sewer project to the I-5 junction has been postponed and why.

**DOUG BURTWELL, 34608 NW 11<sup>TH</sup> AVE.,** is impressed with the development plans for the I-5 junction and is looking forward to the “new” La Center.



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**DENNIS HILL, 1316 W. ALDER PL.**, commended City Council and Mayor for holding public workshops and recommended they continue and possibly utilize the Community Center in the future to facilitate the large number of citizens who attend some of the meetings.

**JIM IRISH, 1653 E. HERITAGE LOOP.** The City is not sidestepping development plans for La Center downtown proper. The planned development at the I-5 junction is on raw ground with no zoning, sewer, or electricity and the goal is to make it a profitable investment.

7. **PRESENTATIONS** – None.

8. **ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS.**

**A. PUBLIC HEARING – 2017 BUDGET.**

Finance Director Suzanne Levis presented updates to the 2017 Preliminary Budget. First, it was noted that the sewer line project is moving forward and the bond ordinance will be presented at an upcoming City Council meeting in November or December. Preliminary budget updates are as follows:

- Gambling tax will remain at 10%.
- The Police Department has a vacant position due to the resignation of one Police Officer. The position is in the budget.
- Excise taxes will begin October 1, 2017.
- There will be a new City position in 2017—a Community Development Director.

**At 8:02 p.m., Mayor Thornton opened public comment.**

**DENNIS HILL, 1316 W. ALDER PL.** The cardrooms are good neighbors and the City should collaborate with them in the future. The new Community Development Director could work with the cardrooms as well and possibly assist in filling empty facilities in the City.

**DOUG BOFF, 151 W. 16<sup>TH</sup> ST.**, agrees with the decision to keep the gambling tax rate at 10%, hiring a Community Development Director, and the utility tax. He supports the 2017 budget.

**JIM IRISH, 1653 E. HERITAGE LOOP.** The City should wait until the 2017 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to see the impact of the new casino, before making decisions on budget cuts. The City should work with the cardrooms. He agrees with keeping the gambling tax at 10% as well as hiring a Community Development Director if they work with the City's current planning consultant for an interim period.



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**At 8:13 p.m., Mayor Thornton closed public comment.**

Council commented on the float with some Councilmembers in support of keeping the float in the budget. It was pointed out that in addition to the \$5,000 float expense, there is additional expense for City staff to operate and maintain it. The community tradition could continue with public sponsors, non-profit organizations, and community fundraisers; however, at this time, the City should not be responsible for the float expenses. Information will be available at a later date, regarding the surplus of the float.

The 2017 final budget will be presented for approval at the November 22 meeting.

9. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA** – None.
10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – None.
11. **NEW BUSINESS** – None.
12. **ADJOURNMENT.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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Mayor Greg Thornton

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Suzanne Levis, Finance Director/Clerk