

City Council Work Session March 19, 2013 at 6:30 pm

Present: County Commissioners Bret Milburn and Louenda Downs (Commissioner Petroff was excused), Mayor Kenneth Romney, Council Members James Bruhn, James Ahlstrom, Debbie McKean, and Dave Tovey (who arrived at 7:05 pm), Ben White (City Engineer), Heidi Voordeckers (City Recorder/Auditor), Steve Maughan (Public Works Director), Cathy Brightwell (Deputy Recorder/Secretary), Council Member Mark Preece was excused.

Visitors: Kelly Enquist, Bud Ingles, Alan Malan

The work session was scheduled to give the County Commissioners an opportunity to discuss current issues and answer questions. They began by describing the State of the County: Davis County is in good shape. The county average income is \$52,000, everything runs in black, they have been working on \$27 M in flood control projects, they work closely with Cities, and have a good reputation of partnering with others. They suggested their website as a way to get more information.

The Mayor described West Bountiful's financial position as being in good shape, with sales tax revenue up, and other revenues up as a result of recent building by Holly Refinery.

Commissioner Downs asked about the City's Economic Development efforts. Mayor Romney explained there is an area out west that may have potential but the last few years have been difficult with the downturn in the economy. West Bountiful has done some rezoning around Holly Refinery on 500 South from a Commercial General zone to a Commercial Highway zone to encourage types of businesses without a high volume of people. Commissioner Downs asked who, internally, the City uses for Economic Development. The Mayor stated that the City doesn't have a specific person; the City Manager and Mark Preece share some responsibility for it. He said that West Bountiful has not had a lot of Economic Development opportunities but has had a lot of street projects, and parks and trails projects.

West Bountiful's housing starts are up a little – to approximately 2 per month. In 2007 and 2008, there were a lot of subdivisions but inventory is down now with only about 20 building lots available including a new subdivision of 15 lots. Demand is up but not a lot of land is left to develop. Housing doesn't bring in as much revenue as business. Our zoning requires our lots to be larger so not a lot of density. Our one large area of possible development is in a zone that requires 1 acre lots so it's more difficult for developers to work with. This area, currently named Mistletoe Estates, may have about 75 lots but there are major issues to resolve before approval.

In response to a question about its trail system, the City explained that a new east-west trail was just put in last year that connects 800 West to Legacy trail and there is a major north-south trail through the City that connects to the new trail. A new trail is also being put in around the City Park this summer. Asked about bike lanes, Steve Maughan responded that West Bountiful has a lot of shared lanes on most major streets in the city.

General Discussion:

James Ahlstrom – Economic Development is a good goal especially around Mannheim to develop light commercial business. Commissioner Downs recalled that a couple years ago there was interest by an office building developer to anchor that area. She suggested we get with the County's Economic Development Director, Kent Sulser, to help the City when it's ready to move forward.

James Bruhn – We still have drainage issues with Legacy. It wasn't built properly so the water backs up – the highway acts as a dam.

Commissioner Downs asked about trail maintenance in the winter on Legacy. They are considering having their County public works people help out. She would like to extend talks about it to see if there is a lot of usage and interest. She is very interested in trails especially connecting trails throughout the county. She described Salt Lake City's new bike share program.

They rent bikes to ride trails – they may want to extend north-south which would mean Legacy and Davis County.

Commissioner Milburn told the City that he appreciates the opportunity to work together and looks forward to future partnering. He excused himself at 7 pm.

Bud Ingles, resident of West Bountiful, presented a letter to Commissioner Downs. He explained that he was born and raised here and the City is very important to him. Because the County Commissioners are charged with levying taxes, adopting ordinances and making policy for residents of Davis County, he wants to explain a concern he has with reductions in property taxes to support Davis County schools and West Bountiful. He said Holly has purchased properties in Southern Davis County, removed the structures, reduced property taxes to reflect the lower property values, consolidated acquired properties to meet green belt provisions, then reduced property taxes, e.g.,-\$43,000 in 2011, and held many properties in “idle mode” at lower tax rates for years, decades, as in the case of the consolidated piece where they built their new office and shop. The land they have purchased is not developed and if developed could bring in tax revenue. Mr. Ingles went on to request the Davis County Commission to take the lead in studying the potential economic development of properties beginning on the corner of 500 South and 1100 West, going both west and north from that corner that are in Davis County, West Bountiful and Woods Cross. He asked that they assign staff and budget resources to examine the economic development potential of this significant area and then make the report public and available to all interested parties. He said his efforts are not adversarial to Holly, but with the economy picking up he believes it is time to start looking at how to maintain tax revenues. Because the area includes two cities and the county, the county should take the lead in the project.

Commissioner Downs said she appreciated his comments, although she is not familiar with details. She wondered if the purchases were Holly’s effort to increase the buffer around the refinery as that has become a big safety concern recently. Many residents want more buffer for safety. She will be glad to check into it and get back with him. She said she is glad there are citizens that take an interest in these kinds of things. Mr. Ingles said he doesn’t need an answer, he just wants County staff to start looking at it. He wants to make sure schools, cities and the county benefit from economic development. He can be reached at 801-295-8900

James Bruhn recalled that Holly said a few years ago they want 2,000 feet buffer for safety purposes.

Commissioner Downs asked Chief Hixson how his new job was going. He said it was going very well. He was welcomed with open arms, has a good staff, is trying build stronger foundation, and is improving public relations – it has been positive.

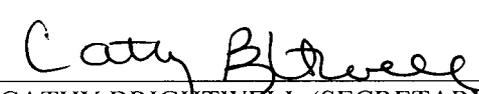
Heidi said the City is busy getting budgets ready. Commissioner Downs said she was glad we’re not on same budget cycle. Asked about potential impacts due to the Sequester, Commissioner Downs said in some ways it is very bad but some services may not be affected. The poverty level has dropped so more people will qualify for impacted programs and it’s tough when also trying to take care of the economy. Hill AFB will be impacted, but not sure what the impacts will be yet. They will try to mitigate some of the impacts through good planning.

The work session ended at 7:25 pm.


MAYOR KENNETH ROMNEY




HEIDI VOORDECKERS (CITY RECORDER)


CATHY BRIGHTWELL (SECRETARY)