

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
August 21, 2024

The Regular meeting of the Connell City Council was called to order by Mayor Lee Barrow at 6:00 pm in the City Hall and was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Lee Barrow and Councilmember's: Joe Escalera, Pat Barrera (joined by zoom), Shelly Harper, Preston Hart and John White.

STAFF PRESENT:

Fire Chief Ken Woffenden, City Administrator Cathleen Koch, City Clerk Marissa Ortiz, Police Chief Chris Lee, Public Works Director Hallie Tuck, Building Services Clerk Sterling Joyner, AHBL Project Planner MillieAnne VanDevender, and City Attorney Heidi Ellerd.

PRESENTATION

Ben Hooper, the Superintendent Broadband at Franklin PUD #1, was present and spoke on the future project for fiber to Connell homes. He reported that Franklin PUD was awarded \$4.85 million to deploy Fiber to homes in Connell and Basin City. It was a 100% grant with no matching funds due to its being a disadvantaged county. The project was set to begin mid-September 2024 and estimated to be completed by June 2025 and it included a combination of aerial and buried construction. A low income/senior discount was available and would mirror the existing district electrical program.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the consent calendar as amended:

- a) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting August 7, 2024
- b) Accounts Payable 8/21/24 for \$106,924.21 \$105,732.91
- c) Check Register 8/1/24 for \$339.74
- d) Payroll Register 7/19/24 – 7/19/24 for \$97,499.36
- e) Payroll Register 8/05/24 - 8/05/24 for \$129,683.11

Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08 – SURPLUS FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT

Resolution No. 2024-08 was intended to permit the City Council to consider allowing the Fire Department to surplus equipment that was unused, expired, out of service, or inoperable, and no longer needed at the Fire Department.

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Items included were as follows:

- Super Vac ventilation fan / Model #718G2 / Serial #327. This ventilation fan was required to operate on a 32:1 fuel-oil mixture per manufacturer, resulting in large amounts of carcinogen filled smoke exhaust. The plan to purchase a replacement was included in the proposed 2025 budget.
- Stihl leaf blower / Model #BR600 / Serial #288765812. The leaf blower was replaced in 2018, and it had not been used since that time. The unit was beyond its service life, and the recommendation was to surplus.

Motion: Councilmember Hart moved to approve Resolution 2024-08 to allow items listed above to be disposed of and surplus in accordance with state law for the best attainable value. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED RECORD HEARING – HERITAGE HEIGHTS PRELIMINARY PLAN

Mayor Barrow recessed the regular meeting at 6:18 pm and opened the Closed Record Hearing for the purpose of considering: a proposed Preliminary plat of Heritage Heights. The closed record hearing was for a quasi-judicial action and the City Council could hear testimony only from parties of record who presented a comment or testimony at or prior to the Planning Commission hearing. No new information could be presented, but information previously put on the record could be restarted or clarified if needed.

DECLARATION OF COUNCILMEMBERS:

None Heard

STAFF REPORT:

MillieAnne VanDevender, AHBL Project Planner, reported a summary overview of the proposal. The preliminary plat was to subdivide four parcels into eight new lots (approximately 3,873 SF to 5,092 SF each) in the Residential Medium Density zone (RM). There was an existing duplex located on each parcel. The four parcels were created when the land was previously separated into a short plat that was recorded with Franklin County in 2020. Due to fewer than five years passed, any further divisions required the preliminary platting process to be utilized. The applicant owned all the land and buildings and wanted to create townhomes from existing duplexes to be sold, with an underlying lot, to individuals. At the applicant's request, the city adopted amendments to Title 16 Subdivisions (adding CMC 16.16.400 and 16.16.410) and Title 17 Zoning to allow townhomes / zero-lot line developments (Ordinance No. 1038-2024).

A Public Hearing was held for the Planning Commission on August 12, 2024. The applicant submitted a letter on August 8, 2024, requesting a deviation from the requirement for providing infrastructure, such as sidewalks, curbs, and gutters as a prerequisite for preliminary plat approval. During the Public Hearing the Planning Commission debated the costs and the benefits of sidewalks and expressed a desire to find a compromise. Following the conclusion of the public hearing, the Planning Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval of the preliminary plat, with the findings of fact and conditions of approval for the requested deviation to allow the applicant to provide partial improvements to include a version of sidewalk that met the code.

Rick Jansons thanked the City Council for amending Title 16 & 17 Subdivisions and Zoning related to townhomes and zero-lot line developments. He stated that his request for deviation

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from the proposed requirement for providing infrastructure was based on the homes already being constructed and occupied with valid permits and approvals. No sidewalks, curbs or gutters were required when the homes were constructed. The improvements would cost up to \$50,000 and would result in an unnecessary cost to the property owner, but he was willing to provide sidewalks without curbs and gutters.

COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENT PORTION OF THE HEARING:

Councilmember Escalera – Although he was considering the planning commission's recommendation, with additional information being provided late, he needed more time to decide.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None Heard

Mayor Barrow closed the hearing and opened the regular meeting at 7:00 pm.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to adopt the findings and conclusions contained in the staff report and approve the preliminary plat of Heritage Heights with the listed conditions as prepared by staff and grant the deviation request to allow the applicant to provide a version of sidewalks without gutters. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS SALES TAX DISCUSSION

Police Chief Chris Lee provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the 911 funding for Franklin County. The emergency services for the community were in dire need. Rural areas were suffering from dead zones and the infrastructure was deteriorating and beyond repair. It was urgent to upgrade to 800Mhz capability for towers and radios. The current funding for 911 from user agencies only financed the basic services. The taxing options for consideration were for two taxes: E911 and communications. The E911 tax was one cent per \$10 purchase sales tax and the Communications tax was two cents per \$10 purchase sales tax. Residents and visitors to our County who were relying on Emergency Services would be subject to taxes. If the Communications tax was passed, the tax would be \$2 on a \$1000 purchase. This would enhance the effectiveness of emergency response and would be compatible with other local agencies. Police Chief Lee requested that the City Council consider its support for the approval of the proposition.

The City Council was not opposed, and the consensus was to push forward and bring back a Resolution in favor of submitting a proposition to the voters of Franklin County.

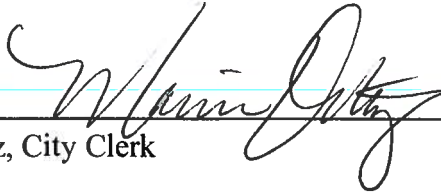
COUNCILMEMBERS REMARKS

Councilmember Barrera – Would like the Planning side of things to be consistent.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell Mayor Barrow adjourned the meeting at 7:38 pm.

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Marissa Ortiz, City Clerk



Lee Barrow, Mayor