

MAYOR'S REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER, 2015

Sometimes it is very hard for a person outside city government to know what is going on. This City Council has been more open than ones previously. People who come to city council are allowed to participate more than before. If someone in the audience has important information, we often ask them to share it. We try to answer questions. In the past, council did not answer questions. All questions were referred to the city manager.

Council public meetings are recorded and downloaded onto the city's web site in real time. This Mayor's report gives a highlight of what is happening to the average citizen. It's read on the radio and downloaded onto the city's web page. This has never been done before.

The council meeting last night, October 12th, dealt with very complicated issues requiring study and understanding of very complex issues. It is a credit to this council and The Dalles is lucky to have this kind of council willing to spend the time to fully understand the facts before a decision is made.

The Granada project Delayed Development Agreement was automatically terminated on September 30th when the developer, Rapoza, failed to cure the notice of default issued in June. As a result, the Urban Renewal Agency will send out a Request for Proposals around November 10th and the application period will close at the end of February, 2016. This means that other developers and Rapoza can submit proposals.

The city just paved around 20 miles of road by taking a new look at the budget and making roads its top priority. No new roads for three years. Annexation of land stopped. Agreement with the county to share costs will result in transfer of annexed roads to the city. All this has been done without asking the tax payers for any new money. Some franchise and tourist tax dollars were used for roads.

This approach will continue until we bring all roads up to standard. The city was falling behind in road maintenance. The estimate to fix the roads was around \$5.5 million and would have required a new road tax or other funding measure. The City Council did not want to do that.

Google money has been in the news. When the first Google money was given out, it was a shake of the hand and verbal promises on how it was to be used. In one case, over \$700,000 was given over seven years and not used for the promised reason. When the second Google build out was negotiated, the City and County discussed with tax districts what they needed money for and could not afford themselves. Once this was agreed upon, inter-governmental agreements assured the money would only be used for intended purposes; rehabilitation of the second fire house and money given to Parks and Rec, eventually used to finish the swim pool, are examples.

Enterprise zones are given to communities deemed in need of financial stimulus. That's how The Dalles was allowed to have enterprise zones. The fees from a business which is given a tax break, such as Google, are intended to be used by the sponsors, in our case the City and County, to improve the services and welfare of its citizens. That requires an analysis of the best and highest use for those dollars. The City and County plan to discuss with those tax districts, who otherwise would get tax dollars from such a business, what their needs are. We will ask for suggestions of very important projects that could benefit the entire community; ones that could not be financed any other way.

One of those considerations is the school district. With the second build out, the City and County gave 30% of the annual payments of \$800,000 to District 21 for school maintenance because that is what the District said was their highest priority. Beginning next year and continuing for 15 years, unless changed by agreement, the District will receive a total of \$3,600,000. Yes, there is an inter-governmental agreement to ensure the money is used for its intended purpose.

While considering any new money for schools, the City and the County will ask how School District 21 can be improved.