

**CITY OF JOHN DAY
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JOHN DAY, OREGON**

August 18, 2017

Adjourned Meeting

COUNCILORS PRESENT:

Paul Smith, Councilor
Gregg Haberly, Councilor
Ron Lundbom, Mayor
Lisa Weigum, Councilor

COUNCILORS ABSENT:

David Holland, Councilor
Steve Schuette, Council President
Donn Willey, Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Nicholas Green, City Manager
Monte Legg, Public Works Director

Richard Gray, Police Chief
Ron Smith, Fire Chief

GUESTS PRESENT:

Sherrie Rininger, Etc.
Shannon Adair, 1188 Brewery
Rylan Boggs, Blue Mountain Eagle
Katie Piazza, House to Home
Jeanette Hueckman, State Farm
Dusty, State Farm
Dale Mosier, Furniture Store

Brian Hubbard, The Ugly Truth
Carole Thompson, Grubsteak
Tia Barrietua, The Outpost
Heather Rookstool, Java Jungle
Judy Lenz, John Day Resident
Greg Armstrong, Lens
Pete Teague, Dairy Queen

Agenda Item No. 1 – Open and Note Attendance

An Emergency Meeting of the John Day City Council opened at 12:00 p.m. Mayor Lundbom noted three council members were absent and excused.

Agenda Item No. 2 – Eclipse Street Closures on Main Street and South Canyon Boulevard

Mayor Lundbom read the following statement to open the meeting:

We are convening an emergency meeting of the John Day City Council this 18th Day of August 2017. I, Mayor Ron Lundbom, am calling the meeting to order as a public hearing at the request of the City Manager.

Numerous downtown merchants have petitioned the City Council to modify or remove the downtown parking restrictions in force for the eclipse. Some individuals have physically removed cones and no parking signs placed by the City, which is in violation of city ordinance.

Emergency Meeting rules are in effect. Individuals who wish to give testimony at this meeting will be limited to a brief statement that may last no longer than three minutes. Any person who wishes to be heard must signal by the raise of their hand. Minutes of the public hearing will be taken and recorded. Council will then close the public hearing and deliberate. Anyone who speaks out of turn without being recognized by the City Council will be asked to leave the room. Please state your name and business or primary residence for the record.

Mayor Lundbom then opened the meeting for public comment.

A written record of the public testimony received follows:

Shannon Adair, 1188 Brewing

Attended all city council meetings over the last several months; understands the City’s perspective. As far as closing Thursday, it did have an impact on our business, we still had a good day, people did find us, but it was more from people who settle for the day. People who typically stop were not stopping. We also have more of an issue on our side of the street with Elks lodge closed and nothing in the back, there is really no room. People have to park 2-3 blocks away to come to our place. I feel it is a tradeoff.

Sherrie Rininger, Etc. & John Day Resident

Was on the side of closing for several reasons. Cars park and traffic cannot get past. Emergency vehicles cannot get through. It was done too soon, but it is a necessity. I understand the plight of the restaurants and I am in sympathy with you, but the small businesses have to make it too. When the restaurant parking starts up, we do not have parking for our customers, so we have been suffering for months.

Brian Hubbard, Ugly Truth

I think it’s crazy man. We are losing a lot of business. You couldn’t have put no RV parking but you are taking money out of everyone’s pockets. Make big ‘ol signs, “No RV parking / No Truck parking”. We have three spots behind our place. Handicap van had to park a block and a half away to go to the Radio Shack. We are going to be the ones getting screwed.

Carole Thompson, Grubsteak

Spent a lot of money on supplies getting ready and now her parking is gone. Compared John Day to Sisters (they do not block their parking). Can see the problem with the intersection and does not see a problem with no parking within a few blocks of the intersection.

Tia Varrietua, Outpost

Seeing cars there is no way to stop. We had to put up a sign saying we have parking in the back. It feels like the businesses are all closed. It’s dead.

Heather Rookstool, Java Jungle

Understands need of severity of space, but could we open one side of the street for emergency vehicles to get through? Also, monitor RV’s parking there. There are ways to move traffic (i.e. one-hour parking) either or, don’t care. At least then we would have some on street traffic of parking. Understand the need for emergency vehicles. Business yesterday was dramatically lower.

Jeanette Hueckman, State Farm

Limited businesses that have their own lots, Greg and Marla, I have parking, Mosier’s might have a spot or two, but we are taking it all so they can frequent the variety stores or the restaurants. I feel sorry for these guys. I know the money they have spent to provide for the number of people. I am fine, but everyone is geared up for this, but there should be a solution for emergency vehicles with an hourly or a No-parking restriction, but it is worse than expected.

Dusty, State Farm

Why is there no parking only from Dayton to Bridge Street?

Judy Lenz, John Day Resident

Why is it an issue now, but it was not for the Rainbow People?

Greg Armstrong, Lens

The whole community is reacting to what the City has done in protectionism. We are sending a signal that we do not want people to stop here. A lot of residents are not happy about the parking out front and having to park a different way. People in John Day are not used to walking. The community wants to know why, because they do not understand it either. We do have a good-sized parking lot, but the expected traffic just did not happen. We did a lot of work to create that lot and spent a lot of money to create that lot, and to be seeing it constantly used outside of our own businesses is difficult. We don't mind when customers park and shop downtown, but when employees park there and they are there all day it hurts all the businesses. People coming from out of town are not going to make or break John Day.

Dale Mosier, Furniture Store

Compromise is two-hour parking, no oversize limit. He has heard the issues too.

Pete Teague, John Day Dairy Queen

Took a big hit yesterday too. People who park at the other businesses walk over to Dairy Queen. That was not an option, so that was a problem for me yesterday. We obviously have a serious parking problem on a normal day. I do not know what the solution is, but we really need that downtown parking because we do not have a lot of parking. Parking we do have that was created for the event doesn't help because our people driving through do not know where the parking lots are and the locals filled it up. All of us have our employees that have to park some place.

Katie Piazza, House to Home

Asked about the parking lot across from the old junior high. Can we make that a free public parking area? Can we make it available? (Owned by Melisa Estes). When people park in front of your store you have nothing, no open sign, I am wondering if that lot is a solution.

Mayor Lundbom closed the Public Hearing at 12:23 PM after all who wished to speak were given the opportunity. Council then deliberated.

Mayor Lundbom stated I wish we had a crystal ball. We saw what was happening in Prineville yesterday and we saw what was happening there, but we were not sure if it would happen here or not. Our concern was the RV parking in front of the stores and just staying there all weekend. We have no police to monitor or police that. Any parking signs have to be policed by someone, and we were worried that people would just say 'cite me' because it is cheaper to pay the ticket than to pay for somewhere to stay.

City Manager Green thanked the business owners for coming. He stated we know it is not the most ideal situation, but we have done so much behind the scenes to get ready for this event and drive people to your establishments. He wanted to make the business owners aware, because they probably do not know that only 5% of our campsite guests have checked in. We are expecting 2,000-3,000 guests to arrive just at our campsites over the next two days. They are not here yet, but they are coming.

He also stated we have two People Mover routes servicing the city campsites every 20-30 minutes. He said our hope was to create a pedestrian friendly environment in addition to keeping the intersection clear. He acknowledged that the No Parking signs look uninviting and that we may have jumped the gun by doing the restrictions on Thursday, but we were monitoring what happened in Prineville with cars backed up for hours in their downtown and not moving and we were concerned it would happen here.

He also reiterated that we only have two officers on duty because we brought in extra police from outside our County and the City does not own any tow trucks. If we remove the parking restrictions, we cannot

tow vehicles. We were also concerned about the Farmer’s Market not having anywhere to set up on Saturday because if we do not restrict parking we cannot guarantee them space.

Green addressed the two questions raised during the public hearing. We did a lot of work behind the scenes to address the Rainbow Gathering, but we were fortunate that they were not planning to stay in John Day, so we did not need to restrict parking. We limited the parking restrictions to Bridge Street because we wanted it to have the most minimal footprint possible while still keeping traffic flowing through the intersection.

City Council members then deliberated and asked downtown merchants if they saw any room for compromise and if the statements from the City Manager had any influence on their thinking. Merchants did not see any need for the restrictions. After deliberating, Council Members re-stated their major concerns was the emergency response vehicles being able to get through the intersection and RVs parking and blocking Main Street storefronts.

Mayor Lundbom reminded the merchants that the city council held multiple meetings over a period of several months with regard to Main Street parking. He stated if you had come to the council meetings we would not be here right now. We would have heard what you have to say and we would have acted on that. We were responding to the feedback from the merchants group that did show up and were trying to put some rationale to what we thought was happening and when.

After deliberating, Council reached a consensus to remove all downtown parking restrictions effective immediately.


Adjourn

There being no further business before the Council, Councilor Haberly moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Weigum seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The session was adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Nicholas Green
City Manager

ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AUGUST 22, 2017



Mayor Ron Lundbom