

City of Forks  
Council Meeting Minutes Regular Session  
City Council Chambers  
September 9, 2019 7:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Brager led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Fletcher then called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

Council members present: Preston, Brager, Soha, Hillcar, Weissenfels, and Mayor Fletcher. Staff present: Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer, Hampton, Public Works Director, Rowley, Police Chief, Fleck, Attorney/Planner.

**MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion** to approve the agenda as presented by Preston, second Brager, motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mark Soderlind spoke as a representative of The Mobile Home Courts of the Forks Prairie. Two weeks ago, he asked that the switch to the billing of mobile home parks based on their main meters be put on hold so owners could organize and meet with the Mayor and Council Members for an open discussion on the policy that will affect 1,000 people. He shared a story about mobile home park owners petitioning Governor Inslee to reimburse the State Patrol for travel and overtime expenses incurred during his presidential campaign. The governor's response was that he would follow the law, which ensures security for any governor traveling for any purpose. Mr. Soderlind claimed that his point was that just because something is legal doesn't mean it is right.

Darrell Conkling, who purchased the 73-space Castle Rock Mobile Home Park in 2007, described the park as being "dramatically different" than when he and his wife purchased it. They brought in 16 homes, and claim to have cleaned up the park and made it a lot nicer. He went on to claim that 95% of mobile home parks in the United States do not use the billing system to which the City will switch. He complained that the new system will transfer responsibility for billing tenants for water without providing the critical tool, which is the ability to shut a tenant's water off for lack of payment, as mobile home park owners are prevented by law from doing so. He also said that third-party billing systems are not a good option, and that the owner of Forks Mobile Home Park has found third-party billing to be ineffective and will no longer use it. Mobile home park owners in Forks work very hard to provide low-income housing, and the rent control he feels certain is coming in the next year and stricter large on-site sewage system (LOSS) standards enforced by the Department of Ecology, are making life very difficult for mobile home park owners. He further insists that mobile home parks will be clipped \$50,000 to \$100,000 in value. He feels like the City is imposing some form of eminent domain on mobile home park owners, and discouraging new low-income housing investment in Forks.

Ron Richards, who lives in Port Angeles and is chair of Save the Olympic Peninsula (STOP), addressed the Mayor regarding his post on social media describing those protesting the Navy's training and testing activities over the Olympic Peninsula as "hippies" who had littered and were unconcerned with the environment. He noted that STOP has 2,500 members, many of whom live in Forks. They aren't all hippies. He feels certain that the Mayor is in possession of stolen property that he would like to see returned, and reminded the Mayor that accusing someone of a crime is libel. He went on to say that the Mayor is on the wrong side of this issue if he is against the work of STOP. Flights of the E-18G Growlers over the Olympic Peninsula will impact tourism and logging. People come to the Olympic Peninsula for the quiet as well as the beauty. Further, the biological assessment under which this electronic warfare was approved shows that populations of marbled murrelet are likely to be negatively affected, resulting in stricter regulations on logging. He would like the mayor to apologize for his comments about the protesters, take back his slander, and support their efforts.

Hope Olson, Forks' representative on Jet Complaints Over the Peninsula and a member of the National Parks Conservation Association, and several members of those organizations were in Forks to attend Congressman Kilmer's town hall meeting. The meeting, attended by County Commissioner Peach and only Attorney/Planner Fleck from the City, lasted about an hour and a half, but by the time she got home, social media was "blowing up" over an accusation by the Mayor that the "hippies" protesting the E-18G Growler training over the Olympic Peninsula had littered. She was appalled by the Mayor's behavior, as well as his failure to attend the meeting. He could have used it as an opportunity to speak with Congressman Kilmer about issues facing our community, including the economy and drug problem. She gave council members copies of a letter sent to the Peninsula Daily News providing a "more accurate version of events" than was posted on social media.

Berlinda James has lived on the West End for 24 years. She was not part of the group that protested, but saw Facebook "blowing up" over the Mayor's post calling the protesters "hippies" and accusing them of littering. She then saw approximately 60 posts dividing the community worse than she's ever seen, followed by an additional 156 posts stemming from that initial post. She felt that the mayor's actions were divisive. Her husband has been called a communist because he cares about the noise made by the Navy jets, and she says that stems from the Mayor's post on social media.

Janice Barrera lives outside city limits, but wanted to provide some balance to the room. She does not feel that a single comment can or should define a person's life or career, or everything that the City Council does.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Motion** to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting held August 26, 2019 by Soha, second Preston, motion carried 4-1 with Brager abstaining.

**2. Motion** to approve manual checks 37247 and 37294 for \$153,050.46, payroll checks 37295 through 37312 for \$111,750.85, claim checks 37313 through 37342 and EFTs 82419 and 0919 for \$39,576.99, and travel checks 3532 through 3541 for \$1,381.52 by Hillcar, second Weissenfels, motion carried.

### 3. Parker/Broadview Annexation Proceedings

Attorney/Planner Fleck received a 10% petition requesting the commencement of annexation proceedings for Broadview Mobile Home Park consisting of four parcels owned by Harold and J. Lynn Parker. The petitioners were informed that annexation would mean that City zoning code would apply to their property. There is no indebtedness associated with the property. The next step is for the council to authorize the City to issue the 60% petition. When the signed petition is returned, it is certified by the Clerk/Treasurer and sent to the Clallam County Boundary Review Board, which traditionally foregoes a hearing.

Council Member Brager asked if there were any reasons the petition should not be accepted. Attorney/Planner Fleck responded that as the properties are in our Urban Growth Area, they are properties we have been expecting to annex. This annexation, however, would leave a 30' gap between the edge of these parcels and Cook Road outside of the City limits. This gap, which is right-of-way for Cook Road, would probably be addressed at Council meetings in the next six to eight months.

Council Member Weissenfels asked Mr. Parker if he had looked into all the ramifications of being annexed into the City. He said that he had not, but that he would.

**Motion** to accept the proposed annexation and adopt the proposed zoning for the Parker/Broadview annexation by Weissenfels, second Brager, motion carried.

### 4. Public Hearing for Forks Urban Growth Area Comprehensive Plan Update

Attorney/Planner Fleck reminded the Council that the City has been working on the Comprehensive Plan for the last three years. There have been numerous public hearings on it, sometimes with the public's participation, sometimes not. Some minor amendments have been made, and the Planning Commission decided to send the Plan to the Council for adoption. This hearing is the final step before that adoption, hopefully in October of this year.

Mayor Fletcher opened the public hearing on the Forks Urban Growth Area Comprehensive Plan Update.

Tyler Ahlgren has recently read through the Plan for the first time, and noted a few items. The Water Plan cites statistics from 1987. Perhaps more current data is available. In addition, one of the goals stated is 72 hours of self-sufficiency in the event of an earthquake or other disaster. However, he was told by La Push Police Chief Bill Lyon that the Federal Emergency Management Agency told him, as a representative of law enforcement and emergency preparedness, that the community needs to be able to be "on its own for a year". In short, based on his 40 years' experience with municipal planning, much of the Plan seems to be *pro forma*, and not very informative simply because the data is so old.

Mayor Fletcher closed the public hearing.

Council Member Brager suggested a review of page 39 regarding housing goals and policies before the Plan is approved.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **1. Council Member Reports**

**Council Member Preston** will be retiring from the National Park Service in three weeks, and will be able to attend all of the Clallam Transit Service meetings for the remainder of his tenure as a council member.

**Council Member Brager** would be open to input from mobile home park owners regarding the new billing system. He would also like to have a discussion of the Municipal Code included on a Council meeting agenda. The current Code was written a number of years ago, and he feels that it needs to either be affirmed or changed. He would like that discussion to include input from mobile home park owners and City staff.

**Council Member Soha** has some questions regarding the policies and running of one of our local shelters that provides emergency and permanent housing for homeless veterans.

**Council Member Hillcar** agrees with Council Member Brager that mobile home park owners be included in a discussion of the new billing system, but feels that the discussion should be open to all ratepayers. He has heard from those not living in mobile home parks that this is a matter in which all ratepayers should have input. Business owners have asked if they must own a trailer park to get special consideration or forgiveness for a water leak.

**Council Member Weissenfels** stated that she hardly ever looks at Facebook. She finds it quite disturbing, and cautions all in public positions to not comment, especially when not in possession of all the facts.

### **2. Staff Reports**

**Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom** and staff are working on closing out the \$2,000,000 water tank rehab project funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and gearing up for the Quillayute Airport rehabilitation project. Each of these funding sources has its own unique financial drawdown system, which can be challenging. Also, department heads are currently formulating their budgets to be submitted for review.

**Public Works Director Hampton** reported that the 1MG tank cannot be restored to service until testing for volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) is complete. He, Joe Gaydeski, and Danny Wahlgren attended the Evergreen Rural Water conference. They spoke with a number of other water agencies on a variety of topics. Of particular interest was the fact that while our water department repairs leaks as they are found, Nob Hill in the Yakima area sends someone out with a sounder to look for leaks. Our water department has the same equipment, so he hopes to have one person spend about an hour a day looking for leaks. The public works crew has been working hard, and has fixed four or five major leaks, including one at the ICN building and another near Forks Family Dental in recent weeks.

**Police Chief Rowley** addressed recent drug arrests. Three officers are actively patrolling. Local law enforcement is making low-level arrests of users, almost on a daily basis, while the Olympic Peninsula Narcotics Enforcement Team (OPNET) is taking out the upper-level dealers. The team is comprised of federal and local officers from the county, Port Angeles, and Sequim. Arrests have been made and there are more to come.

He wants to address the revolving door that our legal system has become in this regard with drug users arrested, released, and arrested again, almost immediately. FPD is trying to assist with the recovery process by guiding users to treatment through Phil Sifuentes with the Hoh Tribe and Sally Heath with the Quileute Tribe.

Miles Lawson with the U.S. Concealed Carry Association will be teaching two Concealed Carry & Home Defense Fundamentals courses in Forks, one on September 28 and another on November 3. As a law enforcement officer, Police Chief Rowley is a huge proponent of this sort of education.

**Attorney/Planner Fleck** missed the last Council meeting. In the past two weeks, he has had many meetings, including one with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the quarterly timber harvest report, a kick-off meeting with Lexipol, the police policies and procedure company with which the police department has contracted, the Board for Judicial Administration's Court Security Task Force's quarterly meeting that he attends as the AWC's representative, a meeting that was an effort to host the Coast Economic Resiliency Workshop in May, and a pre-con meeting for the Quillayute Airport rehabilitation project that got underway today. Quillayute Airport will be closed for the next five weeks.

Additional work with the DNR includes the Board of Natural Resources meeting where he raised some questions regarding The Solutions Table that Commissioner Franz chairs, as well as the lack of a detailed economic analysis on the long-term marbled murrelet conservation strategy. He will also attend a pre-meeting and then a meeting to be held in October regarding the rewriting of the Olympic Experimental State Forest Land Plan by Conservation Northwest.

He was with Congressman Kilmer's group at Peninsula College for the pinning ceremony to which veterans of the Vietnam War were invited as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War. Ninety-three pins were given out to veterans and/or their spouses or family members. He then introduced Congressman Kilmer at the Town Hall meeting that followed. On September 5, he attended a meeting of the AWC Legislative Priorities Committee where the Committee makes its recommendations regarding next year's legislative agenda to the AWC Board of Directors. One of the topics was Seattle's attempt to make medically assisted treatment programs mandatory in jail facilities. Representatives from smaller communities with smaller budgets pointed out a lack of financial and staffing resources to achieve this, so one of the AWC's lobbyists will be visiting our jail to discuss the issues raised at the meeting. That night he attended the public hearing on the DNR's proposed peninsula land exchange, which includes State Forest Land Trust lands, in Port Angeles. The



impact of this on junior taxing districts is an issue. He will be spending the latter part of the week helping to decorate the Rainforest Arts Center for the Forever Twilight in Forks festival.

### **3. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Fletcher participated in the pinning ceremony with Congressman Kilmer. Shaking the veterans' hands, thanking them for their service, and pinning a few who were his good friends was a rewarding experience. He had a productive one-on-one conversation with the Congressman and was able to share some of the community's concerns. He helped prepare the ball fields for the West End Co-ed Softball Tournament, for which the City crew received the tournament MVP award, and resolved some timing issues with the race track system. He agrees that all ratepayers need to be given a voice in the mobile home park billing issue.

### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn by Preston, second Soha, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



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Tim Fletcher, Mayor



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Audrey Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer