

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019
CITY COUNCIL

WORK SESSION: Discussion on Municipal Code 9.16.040 & 9.16.050, 6:30 pm
Staff: Police Chief Norm Miller

Present: Mayor Scott Burge, Council President Patrick Kessi, Councilor Megan Greisen, Councilor Joel Haugen, Councilor Josh Poling, Councilor Brandon Lesowske, City Manager Michael Sykes, Police Chief Norm Miller, City Recorder Susan Reeves, Legal Counsel Peter Watts and Intern Noah Johnson. Anna with the Columbia County Spotlight arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Police Chief Miller explained one of the things that keeps coming up is playing basketball or football in the streets and per our municipal code you are not allowed to. He explained citizens have come in and asked staff to look at this. He explained he brought this up to the Traffic Safety Committee about a month ago and they agreed to look at this and see if maybe we can address it. He went over the current code. He also went over the examples he provided for this work session. He would like to get Councils thoughts on this before he researches it a little bit further.

Councilor Poling explained personally he likes the idea of Tualatin's code. He is in support of kids playing outside. He explained anything that we can do and still have freedom to allow that, but have rules and restrictions as well, would be good.

Councilor Haugen asked Chief Miller what he sees is the major problem with the current language?

Chief Miller replied he doesn't see anything wrong with the current language, it is just as our City grows and subdivisions come in more and more kids are going to want to be outside playing. He explained there is a subdivision that has a pocket park and that works out great and it gets used quite a bit. He explained if you drive around the City you will see lots of basketball hoops and we don't allow them to be in the street or on the sidewalk. He explained his biggest concern is with the City streets that get a lot of traffic.

Legal Counsel Watts explained the issue that he has noticed most is with basketball, it is not playing in the street that is the biggest issue, it is the noise complaints received and there are some cities where it is the number one noise complaint they get. He stated he would draw the same conclusion that Chief Miller did, you have to look at the street and how much traffic it is getting. He explained his one concern with the code is it might be difficult for people to understand where they could put a basketball hoop. He explained the goal would be that they play in parks because it is safer. He stated there are some sports like soccer and football that are not appropriate in the streets because people are moving a lot more and if you are looking at the ball you are not looking for cars.

Councilor Haugen stated we could clean up our current code, so it covers things we want it to and is simple to understand. He stated Tualatin does a great job of their articulation, but it is pretty cumbersome.

Legal Counsel Watts asked Chief Miller if the people who brought this to your attention were wanting to be able to play basketball in the streets?

Chief Miller replied yes, and football. He explained there is actually a league in Scappoose that has been playing on the streets for several years.

Councilor Haugen asked would it help if there was a permit that was for a specified period of time ?

Chief Miller replied he is just looking for direction from Council on how they would like him to address this so he can start putting something together with Legal Counsel Peter Watts.

Councilor Haugen asked Chief Miller if that would fix his issue with people coming in if there was a permit process?

Chief Miller replied sure.

Council President Kessi talked about the obstruction of streets, the basketball hoops, and that he likes Tualatin's way of handling this. He explained the way our current code reads; it really limits kids going out with their parents and playing in the streets or playing with the neighbors. He thinks we want to have a sense of community and a lot of time we don't have a park close by for people to go play in. He explained we want to encourage people get outside of their house and he thinks it is safer for kids to be in the street than in someone's yard of a person they don't know. He thinks those are things we need to think about.

Councilor Greisen stated when this came up in the Traffic Safety Committee meeting it just seemed bizarre to them that you can't play on the street. She explained not everyone has a park accessible to them. She has a hard time saying you can't do anything in the street, and she thinks that needs to be allowed. She explained the football league seemed extremely well put together.

Chief Miller stated we didn't even know it was happening year after year until a new home owner moved in. He explained the football league was very organized.

Councilor Poling asked Chief Miller what he sees as some of the biggest issues?

Chief Miller replied traffic and parents not supervising their kids.

Councilor Lesowske stated he would ask that staff review the City code and look at adding in more ability for families and citizens to participate in some type of activities in the streets. He agrees that there are parks and we are growing our park acreage but not all kids are in proximity to a park. He feels when the kids are playing on the street it increases safety because they have parents keeping an eye on their children. He would ask staff to review and look to incorporate some type of language that permits these types of activities.

City Manager Sykes talked about when our Public Works sweeps the streets and there are basketball hoops in the streets.

Councilor Greisen asked what is the difference between having a basketball hoop in the street compared to a parked car?

Chief Miller replied the basketball hoop would be taken to a parking spot.

Legal Counsel Peter Watts asked Council if they have any thoughts as to what type of street to allow the activities on?

Councilor Lesowske replied he thinks we should be looking at streets with low vehicle counts.

Councilor Haugen replied arterials, collectors and highways would be off the table.

Councilor Poling likes the idea of moving the hoops out and then moving them back in when they are done.

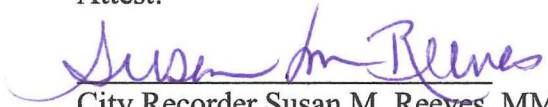
Mayor Burge stated he feels you can't have anything that obstructs the street.

Councilor Greisen stated she feels we want people to be outside in the street, just simple rules to follow, you remove your equipment and stay within these boundaries, just keep it simple.

Mayor Burge adjourned the work session at 6:56 p.m.


Mayor Scott Burge

Attest:


City Recorder Susan M. Reeves, MMC