

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2018

**WORK SESSION ~ DISCUSSION REGARDING FRIENDS OF SCAPPOOSE PARKS,
6:30 PM**

**Scappoose Council Chambers
33568 East Columbia Avenue**

Mayor Burge called the Work Session to order at 6:30 p.m.

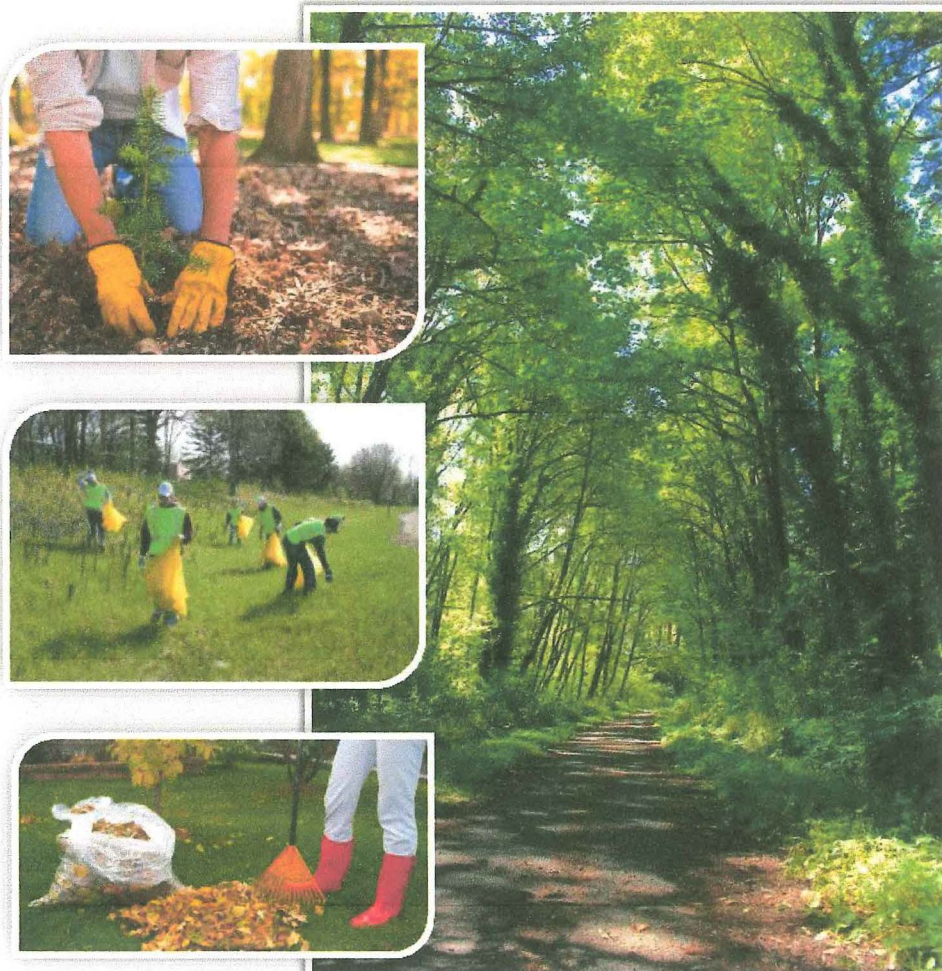
Present: Mayor Scott Burge, Councilor Megan Greisen, Councilor Joel Haugen, City Manager Michael Sykes, City Recorder Susan Reeves, City Planner Laurie Oliver, Legal Counsel Peter Watts, and AmeriCorps RARE Participant Garrett Peterson.

City Manager Sykes explained tonight we are having a work session because this concept is something staff would like to push forward to the Parks and Recreation Committee, and possibly to discuss at the Annual Town Meeting. He explained it's not a City Council goal, but staff thought it was important to share this concept with Council to make sure Council is supportive of it, and felt it had merit to have staff move this through the process. He explained the concept is Friends of Scappoose Parks. He explained one thing we recognized is our parks are fairly short staffed. He explained there is a lot of opportunity for funding to help develop our parks. He stated tonight we have Garrett and Laurie here to talk about the program to get Councils feedback. He explained the information is in the packet and it is very well done.

AmeriCorps RARE Participant Garrett Peterson explained the Friends of Scappoose Parks (FSP) program is an opportunity for residents, businesses, local organizations, City Council, Parks Committee and City Staff to communicate and collaborate with each other for the purpose of developing park improvements and beautification projects in the City's current and future parks. The FSP would act as a catalyst between these important stakeholders to help reach common goals and objectives related to the park system. The FSP would be led by members of the Parks Committee, and other members of the community, who would work to identify strategies and projects to implement these goals and objectives in the most effective and efficient manner. Proposed projects and tasks would be organized into four categories: community outreach, fundraising, Adopt-a-Park Program, and volunteer events. After FSP has presented proposed projects to the Parks Committee, the approved project proposals would then be presented to City Staff and City Council to gain final approval. This process would ensure that all necessary stakeholders have been consulted which would increase the overall success of the proposed project. The FSP Program is designed to encourage community volunteers and stakeholders to work hands-on to help keep Scappoose's parks clean, attractive and safe for everyone. Reaching out to the community provides the City with much-needed volunteers who can perform some of the maintenance duties of the City Park Staff whose time and resources are already limited. Through FSP, there would also be more community ownership and respect for the parks and an increased willingness to contribute to future park projects. Staff is hoping Council will approve City Staff and Parks Committee to move forward with developing a Friends of Scappoose Parks program that would focus on researching and implementing park improvement projects.

Garrett Peterson went over the handout in the packet ~

Friends of Scappoose Parks



Project Proposal



What is “Friends of Scappoose Parks?”

According to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, the City has conducted four different park surveys in 1991, 2000, 2002, and 2016. All surveys found that the community would like to see more park development, and that the community felt underserved by the parks Scappoose currently offers. Generally, there was excitement and strong support for park development, and Scappoose residents were eager to put their time and money towards forming partnerships with different community groups to reach their park related goals. This was supported by the 2017 Annual Town Meeting data when only 28% of the attendees said Scappoose’s Park System met their needs. Of that same group, 92% said they were willing to help pay for the development of the parks (Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, pg. 34). In addition, creating a community based volunteer parks program would meet many of the Goals and Implementation objectives listed in the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, most notably the following:

Implementation 5.73: Increase community stewardship

- Develop and maintain a public online database of projects which need volunteer assistance or could be completed by volunteers.
- Develop a volunteer program for maintaining parks and trails.
- Establish a formal "Friends of the Parks" program and develop a contract with guidelines and expectations.
- Establish a formal "Adopt-A-Park" program and develop a contract with guidelines and expectations.

The Friends of Scappoose Parks (FSP) program is an opportunity for residents, local businesses and organizations to form partnerships in order to improve and maintain the City’s current and future parks. The FSP Program is designed to encourage community volunteers to work hands-on to help keep Scappoose’s parks clean, attractive and safe for everyone. Reaching out to the community provides the City with much-needed volunteers who can perform some of the maintenance duties of the City Park Staff whose time and resources are already limited.

Since there are many people in the community who care about the parks system, the FSP would provide a framework for all of the relevant stakeholders to communicate and collaborate with each other for the purpose of developing park improvement and beautification projects. The FSP would act as a facilitator between the community, businesses, City, Park Staff, and Parks Committee to help reach common goals and objectives related to the parks. The FSP would then identify strategies to implement these goals and objectives in the most effective and efficient manner. Proposed projects and tasks would be organized into four categories: community outreach, fundraising, Adopt-a-Park Program, and volunteer events. Separating projects and tasks into categories would create structure and streamline the decision-making process.

The purpose of the report is to explain the general function and structure of the proposed Friends of Scappoose Parks Program. Research for the development of a FSP Program has been tentatively approved by the City Manager, City Mayor, City Council, and Parks Committee. This report aims to assist the aforementioned policy makers come to a decision on whether to adopt such a program.

FSP Program Overview & Roles

Friends of Scappoose Park

- Organize a community-based group
- Conduct outreach and encourage park users and neighbors to get involved
- Serve as a community stakeholder for the park
- Fundraise to help fund new park projects
- Reach out to local businesses to develop partnership opportunities
- Administer an Adopt-a-Park Program where a specific neighborhood group or organization would be in charge of maintaining a park or section of a certain park

Scappoose Parks Committee

- Provide oversight
- Review and collaborate on volunteer and park improvement projects
- Communicate about plans for the park

City of Scappoose

- Provide tools, materials and supplies
- Provide grant opportunities
- Provide technical assistance and education

Decision Making Process of the FSP Program

The FSP Program was developed as a sub-committee to the Parks Committee. The subcommittee was developed to explore possible park improvement projects and then present the findings to the Parks Committee. The subcommittee is needed because the Parks Committee only meets once a month and has a limited amount of time to focus on specific issues, making most project related research burdensome. The FSP would help streamline the decision making process by presenting ideas that have already been properly researched and vetted. The FSP would be led by members of the Parks Committee, and other members of the community, who are consistently available to commit to the research, planning, and management of projects.

After FSP has presented to the Parks Committee, the approved project proposals would then be presented to City Staff and City Council to gain final approval. This process would ensure that all necessary stakeholders have been consulted which would increase the overall success of the proposed project. FSP would then act as the vehicle to implement the approved plans by developing methods and strategies to accomplish the set goals. FSP would reach out to the community for support of the project and tap into their established volunteer and business relationships. All stakeholders would be notified during the implementation process and given the opportunity to contribute time and/or resources.

Financial Structure of FSP

Individuals, groups, or businesses may choose to participate in the Friends of Scappoose Parks Program by making a donation to one of the designated projects, such as Adopt-a-Park or naming rights for a park feature. Since many people who give donations do so to receive a tax write off, it is imperative for FSP to figure out a method to offer that option to incentivize local businesses and residents to donate. Properly developing a financial structure should be one of the first steps taken to protect the City from future liabilities. This is critical because the mismanagement of donations can lead to the following problems:

- Money can be lost through mismanagement or poor recordkeeping
- Liability can be incurred if funds are misused
- Money in your possession can be lost or stolen
- Donors can be harmed by loss of privacy or loss of charitable donation status for their gift
- Donor confidence can be lost if funds are mismanaged

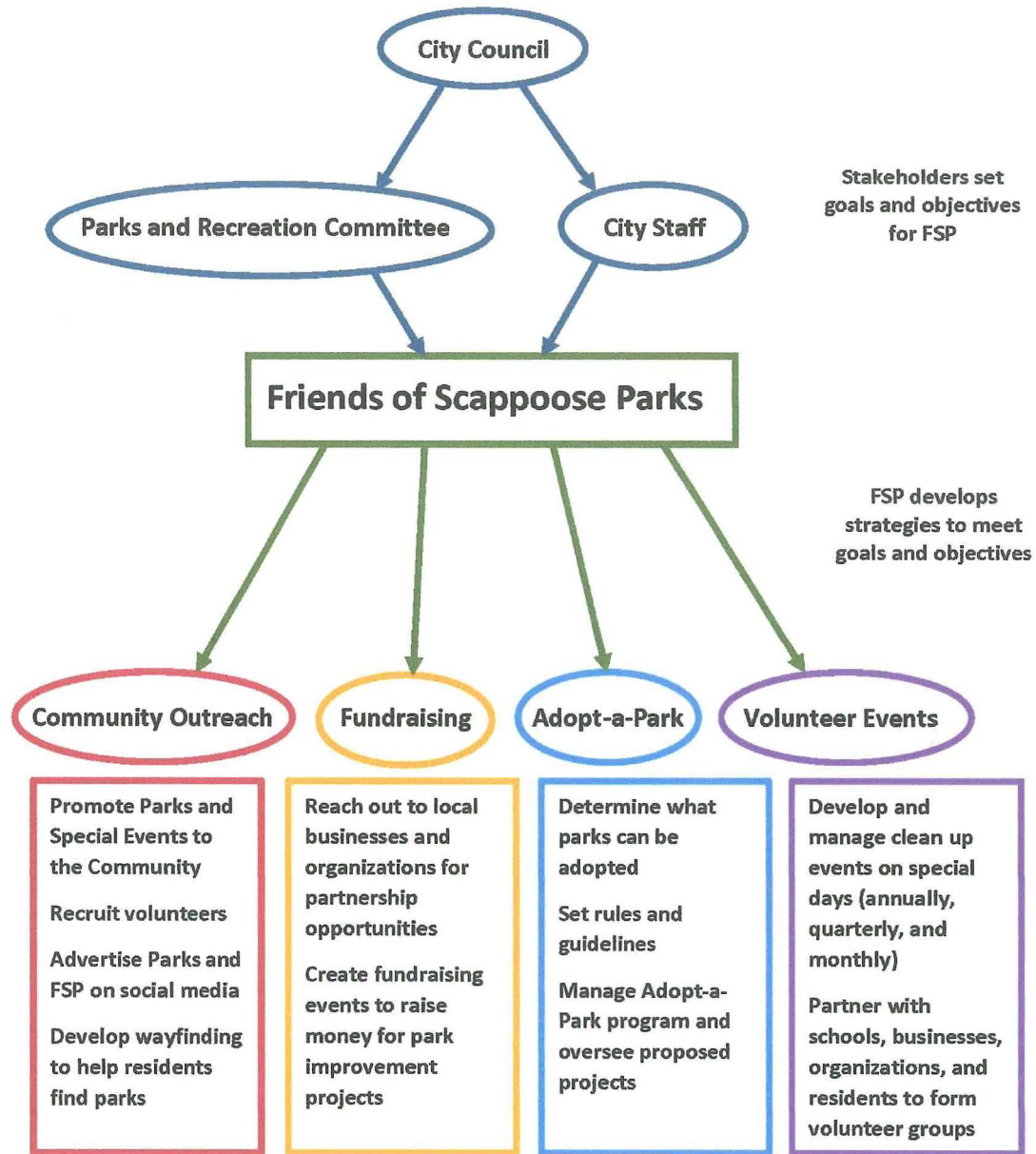
To solve these issues, it is important that the FSP create a strong financial structure in the beginning to avoid confusion and mistakes. This can be achieved in multiple ways:

- Have the donations go directly to the City
- Form a non-profit
- Partner with an existing non-profit like the Community Club

Partnering with an outside group like the Community Club may answer the financial problem, but may add additional obstacles. The biggest issue may be that the organization does not want to participate or has a different vision for the FSP. For that reason, it might be more beneficial for the City to retain control of the program to ensure that the goals and objectives of the City are properly met. Although forming a non-profit specifically for the FSP would be the most ideal, this option would be more expensive and may prove to be burdensome. Furthermore, forming a non-profit may be premature at this given time, but may be a better option if the program proves to be successful and expands in scale in a few years.

Currently, residents are able to donate directly to the City for various reasons and receive a tax write-off. The easiest solution would be to continue to work under the City's umbrella and have donations go directly to the City earmarked for the FSP. For example, other Adopt-a-Park programs in the City of Portland and Clatsop County, route donations directly to the City/County or to a designated department in the City, like the Parks Department. This method could be easily duplicated to solve many of the legal and logistical issues involved with the other options.

Structure and Decision Making Process of FSP



FSP Project Categories

Proposed projects and tasks would be organized into four categories: community outreach, fundraising, Adopt-a-Park Program, and volunteer events. Separating projects and tasks into categories would create structure and streamline the decision-making process.

Community Outreach

According to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, "Veterans Park and the Crown-Zellerbach Trail were the most popular park facilities. Many people did not know where Creekview Park and Miller Park were located, indicating a greater need for communication and marketing for parks and recreation opportunities (pg. 48)" Friends of Scappoose Parks would help solve this issue by focusing on community outreach to promote the park system and developing methods for residents to get more involved. FSP would develop an active social media presence (website, Facebook, Instagram) and advertise events through other mediums (newspapers, flyers, etc.). FSP could also serve as the main contact or 'face' of the park system at local events like the Annual Town Meeting or Farmers Market.

Community outreach is the most important aspect of the FSP Program because it helps lay the foundation for volunteer recruitment, business sponsorships, and donations.

Fundraising

Park and recreation services are funded by the City's General Fund, which receives its revenue primarily from property taxes, but also includes grants, fees and charges. The General Fund is the primary source of funding for ongoing parks maintenance and operations. Currently, the City and Park Staff struggle to find the time and money to maintain the City's parks, let alone to develop new parks or park improvements. Fundraising through FSP would allow the City to raise additional funds through business partnerships and donations from the public. Developing a new funding stream would go a long way in maintaining and creating new parks given the budget constraints of the City. For example, the FSP could help the City raise the additional funds needed to pay for features at the new 'Seely Park.'

Basic Roles and Functions:

- Compiling a list of prospective supporters and stakeholders
- Determining how donors will be thanked and recognized
- Communicating with City in advance to coordinate a donor recognition plan for the park
- Creating a communication plan that covers outreach to donors as well as recognition
- Writing and submitting grant applications
- Creating a website and keeping it up to date with park project news and action items
- Creating a buzz about your park and the fundraising campaign
- Making the ask
- Thanking and recognizing donors

Potential Fundraising Methods

- Naming rights for park features (benches, gazebo, basketball courts, etc.)
- Sections of CZ trail adopted by businesses
- Community projects

Community Projects

Community projects could provide an opportunity for FSP to raise funds and in-kind contributions to implement park improvement projects that are aligned with City goals and meet community priorities. FSP would collaborate with groups to initiate, resource and execute park improvements projects that are evenly distributed throughout the park system.

There are a wide range of community projects from low complexity projects, such as installing park furnishings, to medium complexity options, like installing a picnic pavilion, and up to highly complex projects like a playground replacement or major park renovation. These projects typically involve design, permitting and construction. Community projects may also focus on tree planting, habitat restoration and nature trail installation.

Adopt-a-Park

The Adopt-a-Park Program allows residents, business owners, and other organizations the opportunity to make a difference in how their local parks and trails look and operate. The Adopt-a-Parks Program offers a great opportunity for volunteers to assist the Parks staff with routine maintenance, clean up, and beautification of parks, open spaces, and trails. The program also aims to educate Scappoose residents about the importance of our parks system. By participating in the Adopt-A-Park program, volunteers will gain a sense of pride and ownership in their community while enhancing the vitality of the local park system.

Adopt-A-Park Projects generally fall into two categories, Volunteer Projects and Park Development projects. Volunteer Projects would focus on cleaning or maintaining parks while Park Development would focus on improving the parks by developing new features or amenities.

Creating Bylaws

Building structure for the Adopt-a-Park program would help foster commitment and accountability for everyone involved. Bylaws should be created to serve as the guide or “rule book” by which each Adopt-a-Park group runs its overall affairs. Bylaws may be very simple, but go a long way in setting expectations for the group. When disagreements or questions arise concerning certain matters of governance, it is often very helpful to be able to reference the group’s bylaws for direction.

Duties & Responsibilities

Volunteers can help keep the parks at a high level of quality by “adopting” the park of their choice. Participants would complete basic maintenance tasks such as raking leaves and wood chips, picking up litter, cleaning equipment, removing weeds and invasive plants, and working on other projects that keep the parks looking their best.

The Adopt-A-Park group leaders will meet with the representatives of Friends of Scappoose Parks to discuss approved work in their park and required safety measures to meet City standards.

Developing Projects

Friends of Scappoose Parks will work with the City Council, City Staff, and Parks and Recreation Committee to determine what parks should be eligible for park adoption. All of the parks have the potential to be adopted fully or sectioned into smaller areas. Portions of the CZ Trail may also be divided into increments that may be adopted by local residents, businesses, and organizations. FSP will develop a list of approved tasks and projects that the Adopt-a-Park Program participants can complete independently from City Staff.

Examples of basic maintenance projects include:

- Mulching, Weeding, Watering
- Gardening/Landscaping
- Litter Cleanup
- Painting, graffiti removal, minor repairs
- Manual invasive removal and habitat restoration

All projects done on park property require advance permission from the City's Park Staff. The following types of projects are common and generally allowed in most parks with City approval:

- Tree mulching
- Root-collar clearing
- Litter cleanups
- Painting of benches, tables, grills
- Graffiti removal

These types of projects require additional advance planning and permission from the City:

- Trail building, repair or maintenance
- Tree (seedling or sapling) plantings
- Invasive species removal
- Native plantings
- Wildflower seedings

These projects require additional permission from the City:

- Plantings/habitat restoration along creeks/within the riparian zone
- Invasive species removal within the riparian zone

Project Restrictions

Volunteers would work under the oversight of FSP staff with tasks typically falling into the category of basic maintenance. Most projects would be activities that have a very low risk to cause bodily injury to the volunteers. FSP would not allow volunteers to use power tools or chemicals, nor would FSP allow volunteers to do tree pruning or other tree work. When volunteer groups would like to accomplish projects that require power tools and, or chemicals, such as

chain saws and herbicides, or tree pruning and care projects, the volunteer group must hire a professional or partner with Park Staff to complete the task.

Recognizing Adopt-a-Park Participants

The City can recognize the contributions of the Adopt-a-Parks program in various ways that can be decided on a later a date. A few common methods are found below:

- Personalized sign in the adopted park identifying the name of the Adopt-a-Park group
- A certificate of appreciation from FSP and the City
- Coverage, when possible, of their efforts in social media.

Time Commitment

Adopt-A-Park groups can choose dates and times that works best for their volunteers. The recommended time commitment from other similar programs is a minimum commitment of six months or longer, at least twice a month for 2-3 hours at a time.

Volunteer Events

Volunteer events are routine and basic maintenance-related projects. Projects are often completed in a single workday, but can also be done on a regular and recurring basis. Volunteer projects generally do not require permitting or City staff involvement.

These events are a great opportunity for local residents to give back to the community. These volunteer events can be held annually, quarterly, or monthly, depending on the goals and needs of the parks. Volunteer events can follow the seasons or be held in partnership with other events, such as a cleanup day before and after a social event.

Additionally, the FSP can host volunteer events on special days and holidays, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Earth Day and National Public Lands Day. FSP can also provide volunteer opportunities for corporate groups, students and service organizations throughout the year.

Depending on the scope of the volunteer workday, Park Staff may be required to be present to assist the volunteers with challenging tasks. Park Staff may also lend tools or expertise to the volunteers during the events.

Conclusion

The Friends of Scappoose Parks Program offers a great opportunity to bring the community together in efforts to improve the City's parks. Utilizing volunteers and fundraising to complete park related projects is a great way to relieve some of the budget and time constraints on the City's Parks Staff. Through FSP, there would be more community ownership and respect for the parks and an increased willingness to contribute to future park projects. Concentrating the goals and objectives of multiple stakeholders into one entity would improve the efficiency of the decision making and project implementation process.

Councilor Haugen asked if this organization would be a 501C3?

Legal Counsel Peter Watts replied whether it is a donation to a City or a 501C3 organization it would be deductible to individuals. He stated where he really sees a benefit with an organization, like Friends of Parks, and if Council would want to do this we would have to talk about governance, and who is on the board, and how do those funds get designated and how does it work in tandem, but whether you are going for a State Parks Grant, or something through one of the many trusts or other fundraising vehicles, often times one of the things that they look for is how many community stakeholders are participating. He explained there are expenses with the 501C3, costs associated with setting it up, which is not a huge expense, then you are having to follow the charitable guidelines for an IRS recognized charity and guidelines for a City are different.

City Manager Sykes explained he doesn't know of a lot of successful 501C3 organizations in town. He thinks the key for this to be successful is to have this organization answer to the Parks & Rec Committee, which answers to the City Council, so we can kind of help guide the direction and provide staff support because without that he doesn't know if it will be very successful.

City Planner Laurie Oliver explained their thought is to just keep this really small to begin with and gauge the level of interest and let it grow organically on its own and if it developed into something separate then that would be great.

Councilor Greisen thanked Garrett for the visual. She explained she loves that the committee and staff are more seen as equal. She thinks there are a lot of big assets on the Parks & Rec Committee, and it is good that they are recognized as having a vital opinion and role. She asked if there will be information gathered at the Annual Town Meeting for those who might be interested in this.

Garrett Peterson replied at the Annual Town Meeting he plans on giving a presentation informing the public about this new program. Also, some of the questions asked at the Annual Town Meeting will tie into this.

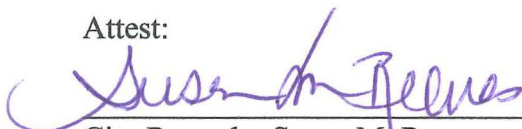
Council thanked Garrett and Laurie for this information.

Mayor Burge adjourned the Work Session at 6:59 pm.



Mayor Scott Burge

Attest:



City Recorder Susan M. Reeves