

**COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
September 10, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Sinclair Room at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Gary Williams, City Councilors Mike Fleck, Thomas Munroe, Heather Murphy, Wayne Clark and Diane Conrad

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Richard Meyers, City Recorder Trudy Borrevik

CITY ATTORNEY: Sean Kelly

OTHERS PRESENT: Jon Stinnett - The Sentinel; Ward 2 Candidate Jeff Gowing

BUSINESS FROM THE CITY COUNCIL

(a) Interview of Ward 2 Candidate

Mayor Williams outlined the process that council would use for the interview.

Candidate Jeff Gowing was asked into the room and the Mayor thanked him for applying for the position and advised that each Councilor would be asking him several questions.

Councilor Murphy thanked Mr. Gowing for his application and asked if he had any specific leadership training and specifically did it include anything around dynamics.

Mr. Gowing said he started his leadership training in the Army, he was a squad leader and had completed two non-commissioned officer training schools and had been in charge of a platoon of tanks. He had been a member of the Cottage Grove and Creswell Jaycees and was a Past Management Vice-President of the Cottage Grove Chapter and Past President of the Creswell Chapter. He was currently the President of the Oregon Veteran's Motorcycle Association. He had been the plant safety steward for Weyerhaeuser and had to deal with different opinions of people and you don't always deal with your opinion when you are representing someone, you make sure that their opinions were represented.

Councilor Conrad thanked him for his application and asked him if he could talk more about his

comments in his application regarding the city attracting and supporting business; the city doing a better job in maintaining streets and city landscapes; and helping businesses maintain store fronts.

Mr. Gowing said the city needs to give people a reason to open a business in town and gave an example of someone who owned potential businesses on Main Street who had asked him if he was getting involved in City Council if he could do something that would give them a reason to prosper. Jeff said you look at downtown and there are a few good businesses and there are some potential buildings down there that could be bringing in a good revenue to the city. He stated he didn't like driving to Eugene to buy something, that he would rather pay a few dollars more than drive to Eugene and gave an example. He said we need to keep the money in town and give businesses a reason to be in town.

Councilor Fleck asked if he had read the city's budget and if there were changes he would propose and in general how does he feel about property taxes.

Mr. Gowing stated he didn't like paying property taxes. He had read through the budget and didn't completely understand it yet but will be exploring it more. His wife was an accountant and would be helping him with that. As far as what he had reviewed, none of council probably liked it but it is what they had to deal with. If citizens wanted more they would have to pay more taxes.

Councilor Clark asked what he thought reasonable growth was and what he thought about expanding the city limits, what way would he go, would he want to expand the city limits at some point and where are the natural spots to grow?

Mr. Gowing said he had thought about the city limits expanding with the industrial park and he thought that it was unofficial because the police patrol that area but it was not in the city limits. He didn't know if that was a good thing. He didn't want to see the town get so big that it was much bigger than what it was. He also wanted to see the businesses grow so he didn't know if there was a balance somewhere there. He liked a small community atmosphere, for example you go to the concerts in the park and there were a lot of people enjoying it which you won't get that if you grow too big, it gets too hectic. He didn't know if he completely answered the question or not, it is a balance and it was a hard one to call.

Councilor Clark said everyone was for reasonable growth but he wanted to know what Mr. Gowing thought.

Mr. Gowing said he didn't want Cottage Grove to get much bigger but yet he wanted businesses to prosper. They may not go together, you had to weigh which was more important.

Councilor Munroe said he saw on Jeff's resume that he talked about the Jaycees in Cottage Grove and Creswell and was a part of The Lemati Gang for Bohemia Mining Days. He asked

what other organizations Jeff had been involved in and were involved in now, local civic groups.

Mr. Gowing stated there were no other civic groups, just the two.

Mayor Williams stated a lot of things happen in Cottage Grove and some may be as unexciting as sewer issues and some things pretty exciting such as the prospect of buying the Armory, restoring Chambers Railroad Bridge and asked how important those were to him? Not so much the nuts and bolts of water and wastewater, but the historical aspects of things and those kinds of things where tax dollars are typically expended or grants are derived from taxes, federal or otherwise. How important were those structures and why.

Mr. Gowing stated that the history of Cottage Grove was very important to him. He had grown up here and remembered going to dances at the Armory when he was in junior high so he didn't want to see that go away because of the memories. His uncle has been a commanding officer at the Armory in the National Guard. As far as Chambers Bridge, his house was built by the Chambers Family so there was history there as well so the downtown history was very important to him, he wanted to see it maintained.

Councilor Murphy asked what he believed to be the role of a city councilor.

Mr. Gowing stated supporting the people. When people had concerns and talked to you about those concerns, he felt that they should be listened to. Getting to know who lived in the area that you represent so they had an avenue to address their issues to was important because not everyone could make a meeting but their concerns were valid.

Councilor Conrad asked Mr. Gowing how managed growth would come about or how do you do manage growth.

Mr. Gowing said he hadn't put a lot of thought into that so it was hard to answer. He did want to see things grow but didn't want to see the population of the town double in size within the next 5-10 years. He stated he had lived in the outskirts of Creswell for awhile and when he moved there it was around 2,000 people and now it is almost 5,000. It was still a small community but yet it had gotten really big, really fast. There growth was also residential not business.

Councilor Fleck gave Mr. Gowing a brief description of what SDC charges were and said that the city was starting to look at those charges and asked what he thought about those charges and what was a fair proportion for developers to pay.

Mr. Gowing said he wasn't familiar enough with SDC charges to comment, that he would have to do some research.

Councilor Fleck said he spent a lot of time on the planning commission and tends to be pretty heavy into the land use issues. The Department of Land Conservation and Development

(DLCD) tells cities how they are supposed to grow. A lot of what comes down from DLCD from the 1970s was trying to protect resource lands, farms, forest and etc. and part of that means that cities are supposed to in fill and grow at high densities. He asked Mr. Gowing how he felt about that.

Mr. Gowing said from what he knew about that he would like that, it should be a little slower.

Councilor Clark said in a community like ours, there is a population base who pay city taxes and then there are another 15,000 people who live outside the city who use the services and don't pay city taxes. He asked Mr. Gowing if he would rather see the population base grow outside the city and if he had an idea on how the city could capture money to help provide services that these people are using but not paying city taxes on such as the roads, parks, etc.

Mr. Gowing said the city currently covers approximately 4 square miles and if you doubled that to 8 square miles, your revenue goes up because you have more citizens paying city taxes, but also your expenses increase because you have more maintenance on the roads, water and wastewater services. Your police department also would have a larger patrol area, so more officers would have to be hired and you would have more wages that would have to be paid. It was a tough one to call and would take a lot of analyzing to determine if it was economically feasible.

Councilor Clark said the interviews always focus on the councilor's questions and concerns, but he would like to know what Mr. Gowing's interests were, what projects would he like to see accomplished in the city. Everyone has some kind of agenda when they want to be on city council and he would like to know about Mr. Gowing's agenda was.

Mr. Gowing said one thing that he had mentioned when he was being interviewed by Jon from The Sentinel, was last year when it was really cold, there was a retired National Guard veteran that died in the streets homeless and he would like to see the Armory developed into some kind of a shelter where homeless vets can come and get some food and warm clothes or a place to sleep when we are down to freezing temperatures. A lot of veterans have given a lot to their country and to have them die in the streets is not right.

Councilor Munroe asked what he felt about people who come from outside the tax base who try to testify and influence the outcome of the council agenda.

Mr. Gowing stated he had mixed feelings on that. They do have their right to an opinion but it would depend on the subject. He said there was an OLCC licensing issue several months back where people from outside the city limits testified. He felt their opinions were valid because they were going to frequent the establishments. If it were something like a water or sewer issue and didn't pertain to them, they didn't really have a right to testify because they didn't pay taxes. If it were something that had to do with the businesses, it might pertain to them if they lived outside the city limits because they shop here.

Mayor Williams said Mr. Gowing operated a Bed and Breakfast and he assumed he had guests from far and wide that are visitors to the community and that they had probably shared with him their thoughts about the community, something that might enhance the community, or maybe a deficiency in our community, something that we could use.

Mr. Gowing stated that he did have one guest who wrote a letter to the editor who was from the Napa Valley and looking to retire. He was very intelligent, a retired professor, about 80 years old and was looking at both Cottage Grove and Corvallis, to move to and downsize, he had 12 acres in the Napa Valley. He was in Cottage Grove 3 weeks and came to city council meetings, went to the library and told stories to kids, he played open mike night at the Axe & Fiddle, he did a lot while he was in town. He was from a town that wanted to grow and expand on tourism and they priced themselves out where most people couldn't afford to live there. He said be careful what you wish for because you might find yourself in trouble when you do that. It was a very interesting letter that he wrote and he had a lot of respect for him.

Mayor Williams said that was the last of the questions and asked Mr. Gowing to step out of the room while council had a discussion.

Councilor Murphy stated she liked Jeff, he was practical and they all had areas that they knew and those that they didn't. He was a business owner and had lived in Cottage Grove along time and cared about the community and was willing to put in the time on council.

Councilor Conrad said she had a concern about there being a huge learning curve for him to go through and didn't know if he had the temperament to sit and read, he said that his wife did the books for the business. Her other concern was that he had pride in the community, was a 2nd generation and he wanted his family and children to be able to stay here, however Cottage Grove like many other communities went through a lot of changes, there were people here that other people might consider alternative culture people and she wondered how readily or willing or able he would be to absorb those kind of changes in the community. She said these were only concerns, certainly not anything to say he's a bad candidate.

Councilor Fleck stated he was very pleased with the interview. He stated he had been on a lot of sub committees to appoint people to planning and budget committees and he would use questions to gain insight into whether someone had an axe to grind and he did not hear any of that from Jeff. He was very balanced and very thoughtful and the learning curve for any of them would be huge but he felt Jeff could pick that up. He felt Jeff would bring more diversity to the council.

Councilor Clark said he was qualified and would support appointing him.

Councilor Munroe said there was some concern about his growth knowledge and the SDCs, however they were all in the same boat but would be having a work session coming up. He found him to be very honest, very direct, if he didn't know the answer he was about to find out. I felt

he would be a great candidate.

Mayor Williams was impressed because he has been to about 95% of the council meetings since the first of the year, he was obviously interested . He was well versed on issues that are before us and also had an understanding of the council’s personalities and the folks that he will be working with but also that of staff and the whole structure of things. He felt he had a leg up simply by observing the process and the issues and he was comfortable with that. He also was pleased that Jeff had at least looked at the budget, that tells him that he probably had a fairly good understanding of the monies in and monies out and the different departments. He felt he interviewed about as well as anyone coming in out of the cold. He asked if there was any opposition to seating Jeff on the Council?

Councilor Murphy said the Mayor commented that Jeff had great insight into council’s individual personalities based on more than just the meetings, what were those?

Mayor Williams responded he felt that when you sit and observe people in a setting they can view the thought processes and those kind of things which he felt was beneficial in a team type setting.

Mr. Gowing was brought back into the room.

(b) Possible Appointment to Fill Vacant Ward 2 Position

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MUNROE TO APPOINT JEFF GOWING TO THE VACANT WARD 2 POSITION UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

VOTE	Councilor Fleck	Councilor Munroe	Councilor Murphy	Councilor Clark	Councilor Conrad	Mayor Williams
AYES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						

The City Attorney Sean Kelly swore Mr. Gowing into office.

(c) Re-schedule Work Session Date

Richard Meyers, City Manager, stated there was a work session scheduled for September 21, 2009 to receive the consultant's report on the SDC fees and water, wastewater and stormwater utility fees and it had come to staff's attention that Councilor Munroe was going to be out of town and not able to attend the meeting and staff felt that it was important that the entire council be present for the work session, it was going to be quite detailed. There were a number of potential changes from the current way we look at fees and schedules so we would like to reschedule and have contacted the consultant and have some dates available for Council to consider.

Discussion was held on what date would work for everyone on the council and it was decided to reschedule the meeting to Tuesday, October 27th at 6pm.

Councilor Murphy said that originally on the September 21st meeting, a discussion was going to be held about scheduling a retreat and she wondered about doing that this evening since they might not have time to do that on October 27th.

Richard advised that council may want to reschedule a retreat for after the work sessions on the SDC fees so that they can have discussions on the material presented at the work sessions.

Councilor Conrad said she felt a retreat was needed and that other issues be discussed besides the SDC fees, such as the goals of the council and roles of the council and councilors, group dynamics and problem solving techniques that council uses or doesn't use.

Discussion was held as to when the last retreat was held and Richard advised that last year the intent was to have the visioning serve as the retreat and now the vision was in place and council needed to step up and get the goals in line with that. It was decided to talk about scheduling a date at another meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilor Miller adjourned the regular meeting of the City Council at 7:45pm.

Trudy Borrevik, City Recorder

Gary Williams, Mayor