



City of Tigard Special Town Hall Meeting -- Minutes

TIGARD CITY COUNCIL & TIGARD STATE SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVES

MEETING DATE/TIME: October 13, 2009/7 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION: City of Tigard – Town Hall, 13125 SW Hall Blvd., Tigard, OR 97223

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Mayor Dirksen called the meeting to order.

City Council present: Mayor Dirksen, Council President Wilson, Councilor Buehner, Councilor Henderson, Councilor Webb

State Legislators Present: Senator Burdick, Past Representative Galizio, Representative Doherty

Staff: City Recorder Wheatley

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Mayor Dirksen announced that this is special meeting with no agenda items listed for City Council discussion. This is an open forum and members of the community are invited to discuss matters with the City Council. Cards were available for people to sign in to note their question or the topic they would like to address.
- Barbara Stevens, 12160 SW King Richard Drive, King City OR 97224 advised she is investigating three locations in downtown Tigard for a business she is interested in starting. She asked how much a business license would cost and what other expenses would there be for City of Tigard permits, etc. Mayor Dirksen said he assumed that since the business will be downtown, the land use and zoning are probably already appropriate. Staff can contact Ms. Stevens regarding the cost of a business license.

Ms. Stevens identified the potential locations for her new business:

1. A vacant bank building on Main Street near Value Village.
2. A building next to Crown Carpets
3. A building for sale on Main Street

Ms. Stevens said her proposed business is a design boutique for home, fashion and furniture.

Mayor Dirksen said he was pleased Ms. Stevens was interested in opening a business.

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- Senator Burdick reflected on the events of the last legislative session:
 - The last legislative session occurred during the “roughest” economic times she could remember.
 - She chaired the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee.
 - Representative Galizio was on the House Ways and Means Committee.
 - Her concern during the session was to preserve an adequate level of education funding. A number of strategies were employed to deal with the economic crisis. She conjectured there was no one in the room who has not been affected in some way by the economic circumstances we are facing in Oregon.
 - A provider tax was passed, which allowed the State to attract Federal money – about \$1 billion – to expand healthcare coverage for children. About 80,000 more children will have healthcare coverage. Thousands of additional adults will be able to enroll in the Oregon Health Plan.
 - A transportation funding program was adopted this session after a number of attempts in previous legislative sessions. The program involves a gas tax increase and some fee increases. It will do a lot to improve the “crumbling transportation infrastructure” and will provide jobs.
 - The legislature adopted a number of consumer protection measures.
 - The initiative system was amended with language intended to counteract some of the abuses experienced in the initiative process.
 - The two tax measures adopted by the legislature will be on the January ballot for Oregonians to consider.
 - There was an approximate \$4 billion shortfall in the budget. With spending cuts and stimulus money, there was still a deficit. There were “just some cuts that we could not in any good conscience make to education, public safety, and the public safety-net programs, especially in this time of need.”
 - The two measures on the January ballot will 1) apply primarily to business 2) apply to high-income Oregonians. If approved, these measures will raise about \$732 million to help fill some of the deficit.

- Representative Galizio reflected on the events of the last legislative session:
 - Thanked the members of the City Council, the Mayor, and staff of the City of Tigard for all of their great work. He said he wanted the people of Tigard to know the extent to which the City Council members and staff members came to Salem to talk to the legislators and to lobby on behalf of Tigard citizens. He said, “We’ve developed a much better relationship and partnership...that’s been a goal of the City Council and they have done a phenomenal job...”
 - Thanked Senator Burdick for her willingness to share her extensive knowledge of the legislative process during the five years he served in the Legislature.
 - Thanked the citizens of Tigard who supported him during his service. He said he appreciated hearing from everyone including those who might not have initially supported him. In comparison to many other states, Oregon legislators are accessible. Citizens can have a strong voice and he urged people to become involved in the process to the extent possible.
 - Extended congratulatory remarks to Representative Doherty, recently appointed to fill his position in House District No. 35.

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- There were large budget cuts this last legislative session – almost \$1 billion. These were painful reductions that occurred in the three areas the State government focuses upon: public education (head start through the university system); public safety (police, fire); and human services.
 - Revenue is required. Voters will decide whether the measures adopted by the Legislature were wise decisions.
 - The Federal stimulus money was important to the State of Oregon. Without this money, devastating cuts would have been necessary. “We’re not necessarily going to have this kind of Federal stimulus money going forward. So, we still have a lot of difficult work to do.”
 - He served on the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee and they tried to prevent drastic cuts to public education. They made large investments in capital construction and work is underway on campuses throughout the state.
 - As much as possible, he urged everyone to avoid political advertising in the coming months. On January 26, 2010, voters will have an important decision to make regarding \$732 million affecting public education, public safety, and human services.
 - He recounted the process for the appointment of Representative Doherty to the seat he vacated to take a position with the Oregon university system. [7:23:31 PM](#)
- Representative Doherty commented on her recent appointment to the legislature.
 - The citizens of Tigard have been well represented – Senator Burdick and Representative Galizio are highly respected legislators.
 - The Legislature will meet in February 2010 for one month. She will serve on the Transportation Committee and on the Human Services Committee.
 - She is looking forward to serving. She noted the City of Tigard has worked hard to have Tigard citizens’ wishes be known in Salem.
 - Unrelated to the legislative position, she advised she volunteers at the Library supervising high school and middle school students fulfilling their community service obligations assigned by Peer Court.
- Council President Wilson commented on some upcoming City issues:
 - There is a \$20 million park bond measure on the November 3 ballot. It is a good time to buy property because of the current market conditions.
 - The City is embarking on a process to acquire a high-capacity transit corridor designation on Highway 99W including Barbur Boulevard from downtown Portland to Sherwood. This could eventually mean light rail through the City of Tigard.
 - Last year, the City finalized an agreement with the City of Lake Oswego to bring Clackamas River water to the City of Tigard. For the first time, we will have our own water source.
- Councilor Webb commented on the upcoming election:
 - With regard to the upcoming bond measure, she noted that passage would help the City leverage money collected from System Development Charges thereby allowing the City to do more.

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- Mayor Dirksen commented on City-related issues:
 - Tigard has been “behind the curve” on the number of acres of parkland within the City. In the past, Tigard was more rural and there was no urgency to tie up open space into public ownership preservation. For the last few years, the City has been trying to bring the amount of acreage for parks up to a “reasonable standard.” It is desirable, by federal standards, to have approximately 11 acres of parkland for every 1,000 citizens in the community. In Tigard, we have about 8 acres per 1,000. The slower economy will give the City an opportunity to purchase and preserve land that would otherwise be lost.
 - The City has worked aggressively to improve traffic conditions on Highway 99W and elsewhere. Several projects were identified for the next several years to improve traffic flow on 99W, including improvements and expansions of intersections (99W and Hall Boulevard, Greenburg Road, McDonald Street). The City will also review the land use along Highway 99W to determine whether zoning changes and land use changes might allow better traffic flow and improve business opportunities. The corridor is so busy that it is to the point where people are choosing to avoid this highway and, thereby, avoiding the businesses along 99W as well.
 - The City has big plans for the downtown area. On October 20, 2009, 3 p.m., the official groundbreaking ceremony will occur for the reconstruction and improvement of Burnham Street. The newly constructed, environmentally “green” street will help encourage development and spur economic development in the downtown area.

- Councilor Buehner addressed the high school students attending the meeting:
 - She referred to the upcoming election on the tax measures on January 26. One is eligible to vote if he or she is 18 on or before January 26.
 - Senator Burdick added that one must register 21 days before the election. Therefore, if you are going to be 18 on January 26, you can register now.

- Bob Brennan, 13520 SW Fern Street, Tigard, OR 97223, said, “...I love my library. I do a lot of business with them...” He reported there were flyers all over the Library about an event there tomorrow. He talked to Library staff member Len Anderson regarding the event. Mr. Brennan referred to the current state of healthcare reform and said “...to have someone come in from AARP and try to explain myths and facts about this – I think the timing is extremely wrong. United Health Care is a big part of AARP. I had no idea how much money is tossed around by these insurance companies. The CEO of United Health Care makes more in a week than the President of the United States makes in a year...” He advised the library staff member was gracious and understanding about Mr. Brennan’s concerns. He said he is a member of AARP and believes they do a large amount of good for the community; however, “the timing on this is just all wrong.” Mr. Brennan does not believe the City of Tigard should pick up the expenses for this as this organization has the financial wherewithal to do it themselves.
 - Mayor Dirksen said he appreciated that Mr. Brennan came to express his concerns. The Mayor said he understands that the discussion that will take place tomorrow at the library is not about the issues of Federal healthcare reform, but more with the importance of having good healthcare when one reaches the senior years. Mayor

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Dirksen said AARP is recognized for their expertise in the area of senior care. He agreed with Mr. Brennan that AARP offers insurance. Mayor Dirksen said he did not believe there would be insurance sales at this meeting.

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Mayor Dirksen asked for comments from those in attendance regarding issues or questions they might have. No questions were forthcoming.

- Senator Burdick inquired of the students in attendance if there were any good plays or musicals coming up for Tigard High School.
 - A student (Nicky) advised that auditions are currently underway for *Hello Dolly*, the Tigard High winter performance.
 - In response to an inquiry from Representative Galizio, the student reported that she and the students in the room were attending this meeting as an assignment from their Senior Seminar Class. After the meeting, each student is required to write a reflection paper.
- Mayor Dirksen advised it was a goal of the City Council to engage more with the young people in Tigard. The City Council created a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and those members are welcome to attend City Council meetings and to sit on boards and commissions within the City. The City Council interacts with the YAC on a regular basis. He encouraged the students to engage in local and state government so they will have a say in their future.

Mayor Dirksen recounted how a group of students attended a City Council meeting about two years ago and suggested crosswalk installation at the High School across Durham Road. As a result, the new crosswalk at the Deb Fennell Auditorium on Durham Road was constructed.

- Senator Burdick said she sponsored the law requiring cars to stop before the crosswalk and remain stopped until the pedestrian was across the road (rather than just “yield to pedestrians”). She asked for comments on how the crosswalk at Durham Road is working.
 - Student Ashley Johnson said she just obtained her driver’s license. She thought the crosswalk was a good idea because many people were jaywalking and it was unsafe. She advised there is a problem for drivers with the crosswalk because when the light starts flashing, pedestrians start crossing immediately. It does not give drivers a chance to slow down and stop before the pedestrians start across. Once the pedestrians are across, then the lights remain blinking for awhile.
 - Student Kevin McFarland said the crosswalk is more noticeable and, therefore, more effective in the evening hours. Mr. McFarland reported that the yellow light does not seem to signify to the drivers to “stop,” and offered it might be good to have a red “stop” signal. Mayor Dirksen said it sounds as if we need to resolve the daytime visibility issues.
 - Student Adriana Flores noted her appreciation for the crosswalk and the increased safety over the previous situation before the crosswalk. She said she thought it was “genius.”
 - Representative Doherty noted the students’ comments were very appropriate – especially regarding how quickly the light comes on for the crosswalk and pedestrians start to cross. She has witnessed many cars go through the yellow blinking lights because they did not see them. She complimented the students who are using the crosswalk.

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- Mayor Dirksen reported two second-grade classes toured City Hall today. One of the questions asked was, “How old do you have to be to be the Mayor of Tigard?” The requirements for running for Mayor are that you must be 18 years old, a registered voter, and a resident of Tigard for at least a year. Senator Burdick reported that one could not run for the State Legislature until one is at least 21 years. She advised her daughter testified about this law and they attempted to have this changed; however, it did not go through.
 - Councilor Buehner pointed out that a Tualatin High senior (Councilor Scott Burgess) ran for and was elected to the Tualatin City Council
- Councilor Buehner noted the City is reviewing the City Transportation Plan and if anyone wants to give input on long-term changes for local streets, to check the City website.
- Senator Burdick commented that in the previous legislative session, a law was passed disallowing cell phone use by young people while driving a vehicle (both talking and sending text messages). She carried a bill this session prohibiting cell phone use by adults as well, unless there is a hands-free set up. The legislature adopted the bill.

Mayor Dirksen said Senator Burdick asked him his opinion regarding the prohibition of cell phone use while driving. He said he was initially opposed to a law that would prevent people from talking on their cell phone while driving, but acquiesced if hand-free cell phone usage was allowable. Senator Burdick educated those present that the data shows that even with a hands-free cell phone device, safe driving is impaired. The problem is not the mechanical act of talking into the cell phone; it is the distraction and the changes that take place in the brain when you are focused on something that has nothing to do with your driving. You are four-times as likely to get involved in a crash when you are using your cell phone regardless of whether it is hands-free or hand-held. You are 26-times more likely to get into a crash if you are texting. It is comparable to driving with .08 alcohol present in the bloodstream. The restricted cell phone use law is effective January 1, 2010.

There are exceptions to the cell phone restrictions in a vehicle. One exception is that you can use a cell phone in the course of your employment. Another is you can use the phone to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency.

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- Linli Pao, 7444 SW Ashford Street, Tigard, OR 97224 referred to the earlier conversation regarding involving young people. She asked if the elected officials were on Facebook, Twitter, and My Space as these are the venues that younger people enjoy using on a frequent basis. Mass media advertising has shifted to these communication formats. She commented on her use of this new media format among her Tigard friends.

Ms. Pao said from her perspective, the forefront of discussion at this time (both on a national and local level) is the healthcare reform issue. This relates to people of all ages. She related her experiences with the healthcare forums she has attended. So far, these events were some distance away from Tigard and there have been long waits in lines to find out if

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she could get into these forums. She asked if the City of Tigard was hosting any discussions on this topic so members of the local community can talk to and ask questions of legislators. Representative Doherty advised that the Oregon House Democrats have their own Facebook Page with daily postings on activities. She said there is not much activity on Twitter. Many legislators have a Facebook Page including herself. This is an important way to communicate with constituents of all ages.

Councilor Webb said the email addresses of the City Council members are on Tigard's website. She said she believes that the state legislators would agree with her, that if anyone makes contact, they are listened to and they receive a response.

Councilor Henderson said there is an enormous amount of information on the Tigard website. He referred to the Neighborhood Program and the websites for each of the city's neighborhood areas. Utilizing this tool is a great way to communicate. He added that the website contains information about rules and regulations; in fact, "you can find just about anything, including how to start a new business."

Mayor Dirksen said the year before last there was a national study completed regarding government communications. The City of Tigard was named as one of the top ten local government websites in the entire United States. Mayor Dirksen said he is on Facebook.

Councilor Buehner said she belongs the Oregon State Bar and the Bar has not given their permission for its members to use these social networking tools.

With regard to communications, Representative Galizio said that nothing replaces face-to-face communication, as is being done right now in this forum tonight. He noted people often choose to write emails these days, but when you get a letter in the U.S. Mail, it is noteworthy. Councilor Buehner said she thinks a letter receives more attention. He noted his experience in California and he believes elected officials are more accessible in the State of Oregon. He urged that to the extent possible, people should have face-to-face meetings.

With regard to Ms. Pao's request for Tigard to host a healthcare forum in Tigard, Mayor Dirksen said that while this is more of a federal issue, insomuch as the City could facilitate the discussion, we would be willing to do so. Council President Wilson agreed that we would always be willing to host any of our Federal representatives if they are willing to come here. "We have a great library for something like that..."

Councilor Buehner called attention to the City's insurance program for discounts on prescriptions. Tigard residents are eligible to receive a prescription card, regardless of whether you have other insurance. You can order your card through the City of Tigard; information is on the Tigard website. The National League of Cities sponsors this program and the City of Tigard was the first city in Oregon to offer it.

Mayor Dirksen educated those present regarding the Oregon model of government. Cities are not the primary purveyor of social services. Social services are provided by the state

government and even more so by the counties in Oregon. Traditionally, in Oregon, cities provide services such as libraries, parks, police, water, sewer, streets and roads.

- Tigard High School Student (Nicky) noted that many of those present tonight are high school seniors who are looking at attending college. A big issue is how are they going to pay for this higher education? She asked if Oregon was doing anything to help; i.e., scholarships? Representative Galizio acknowledged that this is a critical question. The average college student today is graduating with \$25,000 in debt; this is something that represents a struggle for many. In the 2007 Legislative Session, the Oregon Opportunity Grant was created. He reviewed the eligibility requirements for this grant. About \$30 million in grant money was disbursed to students who qualified (including some family-income restrictions). The Federal Pell Grant offering has increased significantly. He advised the best option is to contact high school counselors who help individuals focus on potential scholarship opportunities. He also suggested contacting the colleges to determine if they have financial aid. Representative Galizio noted there is some frustration with regard to the current funding situation for higher education; it is quite a challenge. He said he and the other elected officials would be glad to talk to anyone individually.

Councilor Buehner noted there are a number of organizations (i.e., Kiwanis, Rotary, agricultural industry, business groups) that offer scholarships every year.

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Mayor Dirksen added that state schools are generally less expensive, but added that students should not discount the concept of going to a private school. Private schools typically have higher tuition upfront; however, at most private schools the opportunity to find grants or scholarships is better than at state schools.

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Council President Wilson mentioned the option of attending a community college for the first two years, which is the least expensive option.

- Representative Doherty offered to attend high school classes to talk about the Oregon system of governance and how it can be accessed. She said that, while she is new to the legislature, she would gain some experience in February.

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- Ms. Pao said she graduated from Tigard High School and she had a comment for the seniors. There are quite a few scholarships that the school counselors can access. For some of these opportunities, the counselors must nominate students to receive the scholarship. She gave as an example the Harvard Book Scholarship, which is a scholarship that pays for all textbooks. There is also a Principal Scholarship as well as others, including “memorial” scholarships.

Ms. Pao asked a question about the traffic light on Bonita Road placed just before the railroad tracks. During rush hour, often the light that allows people to turn left to the side street will be “paused” for a long time. Often she cannot make a right turn on Bonita

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