

**CITY OF WEST RICHLAND
REMOTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

- 1. Call to Order** – Mayor Brent Gerry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call** –

Present:

Mayor Brent Gerry	
Mayor Pro Tem Fred Brink	
Councilmember Richard Bloom (6:12pm)	Police Chief Ben Majetich
Councilmember Gail Brown	Finance Director Erin Gwinn
Councilmember Rich Buel	Public Works Director Roscoe Slade
Councilmember David Fetto	Comm. Dev. Director Eric Mendenhall
Councilmember Kate Moran	Associate Planner Elisha Ransom
Councilmember John Smart	City Clerk Stephanie Haug
	City Attorney Bronson Brown

- 3. Pledge of Allegiance** –
Mayor Brent Gerry led the council, staff, and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. Approval of Agenda** –
Upon motion by Mayor Pro Tem Brink, seconded by Councilor Moran, Council unanimously approved the agenda.
- 5. Presentation**- There were no presentations.
- 6. Consent Agenda** – Mayor Brent Gerry read the consent agenda titles for consideration.
 - a.** Approve Minutes- Regular Meeting January 19, 2021
 - b.** Motion to approved Ken Harper’s Contract for Legal Services
Upon motion by Councilmember Moran and seconded by Councilor Brown Council unanimously approved the consent agenda.
- 7. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, MOTIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS-**
 - a. Public Hearing- Utility and Access Easement Vacation (EV 2020-17)**
Associate Planner Elisha Ransom presented an ordinance and a resolution for public hearing and action to vacate the north 23 feet, the south 10 feet and the east 23 feet of the access and utility easement lying within Lot 3 and the north 23 feet, the south 10 feet of the access and utility easement lying within Lot 4, except any portion of that access and utility easement as described in City of West Richland Ordinance 10-20 (historical offers of dedication). Staff completed all procedural requirements and recommends approval of both the ordinance and the resolution.

Mayor Brent Gerry opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

There were no comments.

Mayor Brent Gerry closed the hearing at 6:09 p.m.
 - b. RES. 04-21- Utility Easement Vacation (EV 2020-17)**
RESOLUTION NO. 04-21- A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WEST RICHLAND, WASHINGTON, VACATING A PORTION OF THE 33 FOOT WIDE PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS LOCATED ON SHORT PLAT 1950 LOTS 3 AND 4, PARCEL NUMBERS 1-0898-401-1950-003 AND 1-0898-401-1950-004.

Councilmember Moran moved to approve Resolution 04-21. It was seconded by Councilmember Smart. Council unanimously approved Resolution 04-21.

(Councilmember Bloom joined the meeting at this time.)

c. ORD. 07-21 - Access Easement Vacation (EV 2020-17)

ORDINANCE 07-21- AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WEST RICHLAND, WASHINGTON, VACATING A PORTION OF THE 33 FOOT WIDE ACCESS EASEMENTS LOCATED ON SHORT PLAT 1950 LOTS 3 AND 4, PARCEL NUMBERS 1-0898-401-1950-003 AND 1-0898-401-1950-004.

Councilmember Moran moved to approve Ordinance 07-21. It was seconded by Councilmember Smart. Council unanimously approved Ordinance 07-21.

d. 1st Discussion- Motion to execute cell tower site lease – Vertical Bridge

Public Works Director Roscoe Slade presented a staff report regarding a cell tower site lease to Vertical Bridge. This item was on the agenda for discussion only. Councilmember Brown stated that she felt like the terms of this lease went on forever. Councilmember Smart asked about changing the lease rate to tie it to the CPI, and also inquired about the wear and tear on Astoria Road. Mr. Slade provided a brief history to Council on the attempted improvements via LID for that road. Mayor Pro Tem Brink inquired about the delay in the requirement to build the block wall and to perform other site mitigation, and indicated he felt it to be too generous. Mr. Slade indicated it had to do with the merger of Sprint and T-Mobile. Councilmember Bloom inquired about generators, and Councilmember Brown asked if the money from the lease went into the general fund. Mr. Slade explained that the money goes into the utility account, as it's on property owned by the utility. This item will be on the consent agenda on February 16th for approval.

e. Public Hearing - Amending 2021 – 2026 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Public Works Director Slade presented information regarding the proposed 2021-2026 TIP amendment. The original plan was adopted in June 2020, and the proposed amendment includes a project to convert the Bombing Range/Keene road roundabout to a signaled intersection. The project must be on the TIP to accept grant funding for the project and project design.

Mayor Brent Gerry opened the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

City Clerk Haug read the following written comments into the record:

Carl Baker/Kim Lessor- 4501 W Lattin- I have lived at 4501 W Lattin since 1998, at which time W Lattin intersected directly with Bombing Range via a Stop sign controlled intersection. When the configuration was changed to the current design, the North part of my property was regraded to accommodate the current intersection between W Lattin and Keene. In the intervening years, congestion has developed and it has become more difficult to negotiate the roundabout at Keene and Bombing Range. I do not favor a traffic light as the best means to address this congestion. I regularly negotiate this intersection in a very large 5 horse trailer pulled by a medium duty truck. The roundabout is easier and safer to negotiate than a light-controlled intersection. If more capacity is needed (and I believe it is) perhaps some of the adjacent landowners could be approached for purchase of some or all of their properties in order to provide additional bypass lanes. Alternatively, perhaps we could act to reduce the number of cars traversing that intersection by enhancing bicycling and pedestrian access or by developing other routes so that this intersection becomes less of a choke point. I believe that these approaches offer more durable solutions that also

contribute to quality of life and are less costly.

Lisa Nelson- My husband and four children live on Bird Hill, just off of Blue Heron. We are all unequivocally against the installation of a signaled intersection at this spot. Our family travels this route, conservatively, 5-6 times a day. I have two teen drivers. Road safety in this community is of utmost importance to me. I watched the J-U-B presentation at the last council meeting. I had Stephanie send me the slides, so that I could go over them and discuss them with family members and neighbors. We feel that J-U-B downplayed the increased traffic accident risks in studies that are highly accepted amongst their traffic engineer peers. Why was collision data from the Keene/Duportail intersection versus the Keene Bombing Range intersection not presented? Your constituents would like to see this considered before a signaled intersection is even considered.

Maricela Sanchez- Dear City Council of West Richland, I am a physician at Kadlec Regional Medical Center and frequently care for victims of car crashes in our region. It has come to my attention that the city of West Richland is considering replacing the traffic circle at Bombing Range and Keene with a signalized intersection. I strongly recommend the city council to reconsider this proposal. Multiple traffic studies have demonstrated significant safety advantages of traffic circles. There is a 75% reduction in injuries and a 90% reduction in fatalities at roundabouts compared to signalized intersections. Please make a responsible, evidence-based decision that helps keep people safe in our region.

Amanda Sperry- As a resident of West Richland I'm opposed to a traffic light. Roundabouts are much safer, and cities all over the US are shifting lights and 4 way stops to roundabouts. We obviously got this right the first time, so let's not make the mistake of stepping backwards in time. (A link to an article was provided in the email sent to Council.)

The following individual spoke during the meeting:

Ginger Wireman - 2435 Michael- Richland, WA –Travels out Keene quite often to visit friends or to go buy chickens and is opposed to a signal. They are noisy, with stop and go traffic. She lives near an intersection and can hear the crossing beeper from quite far away. There are more traffic accidents here than in Brooklyn, NY. She also spoke of concern for the neighboring property owner, and the possibility of shifting the intersection north, away from their property. She stated that she wasn't sure why anyone would want to live that close.

Mayor Brent Gerry closed the hearing at 6:48 p.m.

f. RES. 05-21- Amending 2021 – 2026 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Councilmember Smart moved to approve Resolution 05-21. It was seconded by Councilmember Brown.

Councilmember Brown asked to view the map that was presented at the last meeting to determine how much property would be needed in order to expand the roundabout. Discussion on if it could be shifted to the north occurred, although moving it would affect connections with other neighboring roads, including E Lattin Road. Councilmember Brown inquired if anyone had spoken to the homeowner. Roscoe said no, but that this is a federal project and there are many regulations involved with condemnation of property. Mayor Pro Tem Brink appreciated the comments made by the public. He spoke in favor of the signaled intersection as it will have less impact on the surrounding neighborhood. He also has concerns with an enlarged roundabout and the fact that vehicles do not come to a complete stop, impacting pedestrians and cyclists using the regional trail adjacent to Keene Road trying to cross the proposed 6 lanes of traffic.

Councilmember Moran thanked the commenters, and spoke of her concerns with the proposed signaled intersection. She inquired if it needed to happen right now and asked if more research could be done to make a traffic circle work. She hopes that we can find a way to make that happen.

Councilmember Bloom is concerned that we haven't thought about other aspects of road improvements for the future. He believes the traffic study underestimates the desire to have access to Interstate 84 and for future growth for the growth happening in Richland. He is skeptical about creating anything that is a bottleneck, regardless if it's a circle or an intersection. He would need to see more assumptions as to why we have the traffic and the impacts. People will find an alternative path. He also expressed concerns about the impact to the adjacent property owner with a circle or an intersection. He suggested another option could be found, including a possible realignment of E Lattin. He'd like to see other options.

Councilmember Smart indicated that he was rooting for a metered roundabout, but that the experts indicated that it wouldn't have sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated growth. He doesn't think he's heard a solution yet for the double roundabout that would address the issue of traffic flow at rush hour, and traffic would still back up. In his mind, we either need a traffic light or a successful metered roundabout. He also thinks we should ask the people living on the corner their thoughts, and in our society today, upgrading intersections is part of growth. He also agreed that a double roundabout doesn't mix well with the pedestrian path. (Mr. Slade provided a quick reminder of what JUB presented regarding metered intersections, how the traffic studies were conducted, alternate routes and future changes to a double roundabout as traffic patterns change.)

Councilmember Fetto thanked the public for the comments. He spoke in favor of the transition to the intersection for the safety of those using the path and that the safety comparison between a signaled intersection and a single lane roundabout isn't a true comparison as he is certain the numbers for a double roundabout are different. He hopes people using the intersection would be cautious and follow traffic laws, as when those are not followed is when accidents occur.

Councilmember Moran spoke to the idea that if more traffic is allowed through, then more traffic will come. She also thinks we should move forward with contacting the adjacent property owner to hear their thoughts and so that they are aware of what is happening.

Councilmember Brown responded that we want traffic to go on the main streets.

Councilmember Bloom suggested that we do nothing and accept a level F level of service at certain times.

Public Works Director Slade explained that Growth Management requires us to maintain a certain level of service, and doing nothing would mean that no further develop could be approved. He suggested that the Council postpone a decision on amending the TIP until March 2nd so that staff can research and address many of the concerns that were brought up during discussion.

Council asked to have information regarding warning lights, mapping, and the monetary impact to shift the intersection.

Councilmember Brown moved to postpone the question until March 2nd when additional information can be provided. Councilmember Fetto seconded the motion. Mayor Gerry called for a roll call vote: Buel- Yay, Smart – Nay, Moran- Yay, Fetto- Yay, Brink- Yay, Bloom- Yay, Brown- Yay. The motion to postpone passed and this agenda item will be brought back before

the Council on March 2nd.

8. Unfinished Business – Mayor Gerry presented an updated COVID-19 Operational Plan that was amended to reflect updates to the COVID situation, including removing the Health Officer Emergency declaration date and the mandated vaccinations requirement for employees.

9. New Business – There was no new business.

10. Citizen Public Comments- No citizens provided comment at or for this meeting.

11. Announcements, Reports & Comments

a. Staff Reports

Police Chief Majetich reported that he had received the second shot of his COVID-19 vaccination series and he had no side effects. He indicated that some of the other staff members had experienced minor side effects, but nothing major. He also reported that the groundbreaking for the new PD facility will be February 4th at 2pm and it will be virtual due to COVID-19 restrictions. The ribbon cutting will be a big event.

Public Works Director Slade reported that he has had several legislative meetings West Richland transportation projects. He also had a meeting on the Well 10 ASP project. He is thankful for the help of REA's lobbyist Patt Dunn for opening doors for the City in Olympia.

b. Council Reports

Councilmember Moran reported that she hadn't had any meetings, however she has been staying up to date with legislative priorities, and encouraged the City Council to put their voice behind bills that could impact the City. She also inquired about a City priorities list.

Mayor Pro Tem Brink provided updates on the Emergency Management meeting that he will be attending on behalf of AWC as well as the upcoming City Action Days that he will be attending later in February.

Councilmember Bloom asked Chief Majetich if he had received the Pfizer shot (yes), and that he was scheduled to receive his shot on Friday.

Councilmember Brown reported that she is following housing and transportation legislative activities and that there is a lot to follow. There are a lot of law enforcement bills coming through. Everything is virtual, so it is easier to access. She echoed Kate's inquiry about an updated City legislative priority list.

Mayor Gerry informed Council that the Tri-City Legislative Council maintains a list that includes West Richland priorities.

Chief Majetich spoke on some of the law enforcement legislative items before the legislature during this session.

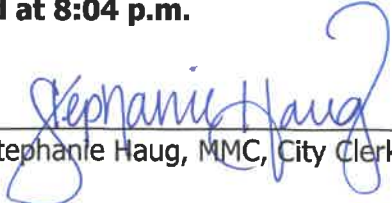
Mayor Gerry provided a COVID update on the regional mass vaccination site. It is currently outshining all of the other sites in the state. They are working on the second shot information and it should be released shortly. Individuals should not mix injection types for their second shot. The second Pfizer shot can be administered between 3 to 8 weeks from the initial shot. The Yakima site is not competing for vaccine allotment with the Tri-City site.

12. Executive Session – There was no executive session.

13. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.



Brent Gerry, Mayor



Stephanie Haug, MMC, City Clerk

