

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

PULLMAN CITY COUNCIL MEETING: FEBRUARY 23, 2021

OBSERVER: Libby Walker

LENGTH OF MEETING: 2 hours

ATTENDING: Mayor Glenn Johnson, Council members Brandon Chapman, Ann Parks, Eileen Macoll, Pat Wright, Al Sorensen, Dan Records, and Nathan Weller.

OTHERS: Laura McAloon, City Attorney; Dee Stiles-Elliott, City Clerk; Mike Urban, City Administrator; Joanna Bailey, Neill Public Library Director and staff to the Pullman Arts Commission; RJ Lott, Director of Planning, and Cara Haley, City Engineer.

Guests via zoom: Anthony Haynes, Rob Ndambuki, Carol Ndambuki, and Ivy Ndambuki all from Black Lives Matter.

Announcements: MAYOR JOHNSON thanked the hospitals and SEL for assistance fighting **COVID**. A total of 43 people have died from COVID in Whitman County.

There was a **90 minutes discussion of the Black Lives Matter mural**. Before JOANNA BAILEY reported on the Pullman Arts Commission and the status of the BLM mural, CITY ADMINISTRATOR MIKE URBAN clarified that the City Council has not already made a decision about the mural. The recommendation from the Commission is to extend the submission date. If that is not approved, the PAC recommends that submission #5 - "End Racism Now - Black Lives Matter - be accepted.

Testimony was received from Anthony Hayne on the background of the local BLM organization. Rob Ndambuki testified about numerous incidences of racism in Pullman that he personally experienced. Carol Ndambuki reported that adults do not know what is going on in schools and cafeterias in Pullman regarding racism. Ivy Ndambuki also commented on the status quo in Pullman.

COUNCIL MEMBER MACOLL shared her concerns with the process for selecting the mural and stated that the City needs a policy. She said that the process "has gotten away from us." COUNCILMEMBER CHAPMAN explained that a popular vote is not involved in the selection of the mural. The PAC makes a recommendation to the Council which approves or does not approve. COUNCILMEMBER RECORDS acknowledged that there is a history of racism in Pullman and asked how we can facilitate a discussion rather than have this discussion online only. "The mural should be the beginning of the conversation." "Should a Council on Equity be created?"

COUNCILMEMBER PAT WRIGHT recognized the tremendous work of volunteers on many committees in Pullman. She is distressed that three members of the PAC have resigned and said this is a dangerous trend. She clarified how the process should have been conducted.

COUNCILMEMBER RECORDS called for a one-month extension of the call for submissions.

COUNCILMEMBER MACOLL insisted that the call for submissions be redone with more clarity. It was agreed to create a Council committee of three people to revise the call for submissions. Those who agreed to serve include COUNCILMEMBERS MACOLL, RECORDS, AND WRIGHT. A report will be submitted to the Council at the March 9th meeting.

CITY ATTORNEY LAURA MCALOON pointed out that this action constitutes starting the process over. COUNCILMEMBERS CHAPMAN AND RECORDS voted nay regarding creating the committee and starting over. The other five Council members voted to approve.

The task is to clarify the process and objectives, create a theme of unity and harmony, and establish criteria for selection of the mural to be chosen. The Council would have to approve the theme.

REGULAR AGENDA:

PLANNING DIRECTOR RJ LOTT presented a resolution amending the **zoning classification** from R3 to C3 for 1.7 acres located southwest of the intersection of NW Albion Road and SR 27. Approved.

CITY ENGINEER CARA HALEY presented a resolution to accept a bid from Motley-Motley to **replace sewer pipes** that are over 100 years old near Encounter Ministries and on Skyline Drive. Approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.