



MINUTES

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

City Council Workshop - 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Richardson called the workshop meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Mayor Richardson	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Kent	Absent
Councilmember Jones	Absent
Councilmember Lukson	Present
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember VanDyke	Present
Councilmember Whitten	Present

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, Fire Chief Huntington, Chief of Police Pilcher, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Public Works Director D'Alessandro, and City Clerk Rogers.

Agenda Items

1. Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan - Communications Assessment Report Overview and Next Steps

Communications & Marketing Manager Alexander stated that based on the 2022 National Survey findings, the Richland City Council adopted the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan which included specific goals to increase public engagement and public information. The City engaged Tripepi Smith & Associates, Inc. ("Tripepi") to review the City's externally facing communications, specifically the City's existing platforms and digital and print materials.

Communications & Marketing Manager Alexander introduced Tripepi's President, Ryder Smith, and Sydni Overly, Senior Business Analyst and Project Manager, to present Tripepi's initial findings and summarize recommendations of the assessment along with upcoming community engagement opportunities.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with Mr. Smith and Ms. Overly throughout the presentation.

2. Downtown Connectivity Public Outreach and Engagement Plan

Communications & Marketing Manager Alexander stated that the City extended its contract with Tripepi to develop a public outreach and engagement plan for the pre-construction and post-groundbreaking phases of the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project.

Public Works Director D'Alessandro stated that the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project will enable enhancements to pedestrian, bicycle, and on-street parking as well as improve transportation flow in the downtown area. A key element of the initiative is the conversion of George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue into a one-way couplet between Symons Street and their southern intersection. This reconfiguration will direct northbound traffic onto George Washington Way and southbound traffic onto Jadwin Avenue.

The Project is currently in the design phase with construction expected to begin in 2025. The improvements are part of the City's broader effort to increase economic vitality by enhancing walkability and connectivity in the downtown area. The Project aligns with the City's Vision Zero goal of eliminating serious injuries and fatalities on City streets by 2035. Public Works Director D'Alessandro provided an overview of the planning, design concept, and agency support/funding for the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project.

Following Director D'Alessandro's summary, Ryder Smith and Sydni Overly of Tripepi Smith & Associates, Inc. presented an overview of the recommended outreach efforts for the Project. The presentation included project background, outreach and engagement goals, proposed scope of work, and projected timeline.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with Mr. Smith and Ms. Overly throughout the presentation.

3. False Alarm Reduction Program Presentation

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Chief of Police Pilcher highlighted the impact of false alarm calls on Richland Police Department (RPD) resources. In 2024, RPD responded to 1,509 alarm calls, of which only 356 required emergency response. Each false alarm requires approximately twenty (20) minutes of police time, and there is no cost recovery for responding to false alarms.

Most false alarms in the City originate from commercial properties, often due to equipment malfunctions, operator errors, or various other factors. Currently, the City of Richland does not have an Alarm Ordinance, which could help reduce the frequency of such incidents.

If adopted, an Alarm Ordinance would require alarm permits, annual renewals, enhanced call verification, and a tiered fine system starting at \$50 for a second false alarm and increasing to \$100 for repeated occurrences. The primary goals of the ordinance are to reduce the number of false alarms and to recover costs associated with law enforcement responses to such incidents. Enforcement options include managing the program internally or contracting with an external provider to track alarm calls, issue fines, and handle collections.

Council provided comments and engaged in a question-and-answer session with staff throughout the presentation.

City Manager Amundson stated that, based on feedback received from tonight's discussion, additional information will be shared with Council in the future to provide context, possibly at the same time as first reading of an Alarm Ordinance. Adjustments driven by Council feedback at first reading would be incorporated prior to second reading.

Closing Comments

City Manager Amundson announced that recent executive orders to temporarily block disbursement of federal grants are impacting certain federally funded projects, which could potentially affect City of Richland projects. However, earlier in the day, a federal judge issued a stay against the directive, leaving the situation in flux. City staff have identified potentially impacted federally funded initiatives such as transportation and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects and will monitor developments closely. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

Future Workshop Agenda Items

None.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.


Theresa Richardson, Mayor


Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

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