

**MERRIAM CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
CITY HALL  
9001 WEST 62<sup>ND</sup> STREET  
November 8, 2021  
7:00 P.M.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bob Pape called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Scott Diebold  
Chris Evans Hands  
Bruce Kaldahl  
Brian Knaff  
David Neal  
Bob Pape  
Jason Silvers via telephone  
Whitney Yadrich

Staff present:, Ryan Denk, City Attorney; Chris Engel, City Administrator; Jennifer Jones-Lacy, Assistant City Administrator; Jim MacDonald, Public Works Director; Jenna Gant, Communication and Public Engagement Manager; Bryan Dyer, Community Development Director; Anna Slocum, Parks & Recreation Director; Darren McLaughlin, Police Chief and Juli Pinnick, City Clerk.

**III. PUBLIC ITEMS**

Members of the public are encouraged to use this time to make comments about matters that do not appear on the agenda. Comments about items on the regular agenda will be taken as each item is considered. ***Please note: individuals making Public Comments will be limited to 5 minutes.*** In accordance with the *Governing Body Rules of Procedure*, the City reserves the right to refuse Public Comments that are personal, impertinent or slanderous.

Michael Gieseke, 9701 W. 56<sup>th</sup> Ter., commented that his neighbor has a lot of items stored on his property and the problem has been going on over 20 years. The fence is in disrepair and the yard and garage are full of stuff. He has contacted the city codes department and while some things have been cleaned up over the years, it continues to be a problem.

#### **IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

All items listed under the heading are considered to be routine by the City Council and may be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember so requests, in which case that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separate.

1. Consider approval of the minutes of the City Council meeting held October 25, 2021.
2. Consider approval of the 2022 Schedule of Fees.
3. Consider endorsement of United Community Service funding recommendations.

**COUNCILMEMBER HANDS MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 1-3. COUNCILMEMBER YADRICH SECONDED AND THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

#### **V. MAYOR'S REPORT**

1. Announcement of Ward 4 vacancy.

City Administrator Chris Engel provided the background for this item.

On October 31, 2021 Mayor Ken Sissom formally resigned his position as Mayor. Per Merriam City Code Sec. 2-26, City Council President Bob Pape was sworn in as Mayor on November 1, 2021 which created a vacancy in the position of Ward 4 Council Representative.

Per Merriam City Code Sec 2-27, the City Council must appoint a new City Council Representative from Ward 4 to serve out the balance of the unexpired term set to end in December 2023.

City Code has a detailed process to guide City Council in filling the vacancy

In brief, the Ward 4 vacancy will be announced on Monday, November 8 and advertised through our various communication channels for 30 days, until December 8 at 4:30pm. During that time, residents of Ward 4 interested in the vacant City Council position may submit their letter of interest and statement of qualifications. The newly sworn-in City Council will interview all potential candidates at the December 13 City Council meeting. The information provided by each candidate will be part of that meeting's agenda packet. After interviews, the City Council will vote to narrow the candidate

pool to a single candidate to fill the vacant position. All interviews and voting will occur in open session.

When the City Council last interviewed candidates for a Council vacancy (February 2017 and January 2019), interested parties were provided the following set of questions in advance of the interviews:

What do you think is the most important issue facing the City in the next two years?

What skills or talents would you bring to the City Council?

Do you have any closing comments for the City Council to consider?

## 2. Election of Council President.

City Administrator Chris Engel provided the background for this item.

On October 31, 2021 Mayor Ken Sissom formally resigned his position as Mayor. Per Merriam City Code Sec. 2-26, City Council President Bob Pape was sworn in as Mayor on November 1, 2021 which created a vacancy in the position of City Council President. Mayor Pape was (re)elected on November 2, 2021 to an additional four-year term as Merriam Mayor.

Per Merriam City Code Sec 2-28, the City Council must elect a new City Council President to fill the remainder of the vacated two-year term which will end in January 2022.

There is no formal process to guide City Council in electing their Council President. However, past practice has included interested parties sharing their interest and qualifications followed by voting by ballot for the interested parties. The candidate receiving the most votes will be elected Council President.

Per City Code, the Vice President will remain in their current position until the end of the current term unless they are elected the new Council President. In that occurrence, there would be an additional ballot process for the position of Vice President.

The current two-year term of the Council President and Vice President will expire in January 2022.

Councilmember Diebold nominated Councilmember Hands for Council President.

Councilmember Yadrich commented that she was interested in serving as Council President.

Councilmember Yadrich and Hands stated reasons they felt they would be a good Council President.

Each councilmember was provided an index card to indicate their selection for Council President. Councilmember Silvers, attending the meeting by phone was instructed to send a text to the City Clerk indicating his selection for Council president.

The index cards were collected and presented to the City Clerk to tally the votes. With 6 votes for Councilmember Hands and 1 vote for Councilmember Yadrich, Councilmember Hands was elected Council President to serve until January 2022.

## **VI. COUNCIL ITEMS**

1. Consider approval of honorary renaming of W. 62<sup>nd</sup> Street between the Police station and Merriam City Hall as Ken Sissom Way.

City Administrator Chris Engel provided the background for this item.

On October 31, 2021 Mayor Ken Sissom retired after 12 years as Mayor. He was the second longest serving Mayor in Merriam history after former Mayor Irene B. French. Prior to being elected Mayor in 2009, Sissom spent over 25 years with the Police Department including his last 13 years as Police Chief.

To honor his dedicated service to the community, it is recommended the section of West 62<sup>nd</sup> Street between the Police Department and City Hall receive an honorary renaming to Ken Sissom Way. Because the renaming is honorary, both City Hall and the Police Department will still address off of West 62<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The City Council has the ability to permanently rename streets within city limits by ordinance. This process has been used in the past to rename Carmax Drive and Ikea Way. However, there is no policy that governs the honorary renaming of streets so a simple majority vote of the City Council is sufficient.

**COUNCILMEMBER YADRICH MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE THE HONORARY RENAMING OF W. 62<sup>ND</sup> ST. BETWEEN THE POLICE STATION AND CITY HALL AS KEN SISSOM WAY. COUNCILMEMBER NEAL SECONDED AND TH MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

2. Consider approval of a resolution setting a Public Hearing date of December 13, 2021 to consider amending the I-35 Redevelopment District.

Community Development Director Bryan Dyer presented the background for this item.

In August 1994, the City of Merriam established a Redevelopment District, now known as the I-35 Redevelopment District, and adopted a district plan identifying proposed redevelopment project areas within the Redevelopment District. The district plan generally identifies improvements proposed to occur within each project area. The improvements generally consist of buildings, facilities and other developments.

Since the adoption of the I-35 Redevelopment District Plan, the Plan has been amended six separate times. The most recent amendment occurred in May 2021 when the District Plan was amended by adding the Kmart redevelopment area.

Block and Company submitted an application for public financing for the redevelopment of the Taco Bell property located at 8800 Shawnee Mission Parkway. The proposed project will involve rezoning and platting the property in addition to demolition of the building and site. Additional extraordinary costs include removing and replacing the existing stormwater system that is discharging onto neighboring properties. The amendment to the District plan is adding Project Area N that will encompass the properties to be redeveloped.

The first step in amending the I-35 Redevelopment District Plan is for the City Council to set a date for the Public Hearing to consider the amended plan. The attached resolution sets the City Council meeting to be held on December 13, 2021 at 7:00PM, as the date and time for that hearing. The statutorily required detailed project plan for Project Area N is scheduled to be presented to the Council in January.

Councilmember Neal asked if the applicant, Block and Company, had paid their delinquent taxes on the old Kmart property and what dollar amount of TIF assistance are they asking for on this project

Mr. Dyer stated that he does not believe those taxes had been paid and the amount of assistance that is being requested is \$300,000.

Councilmember Neal then asked the amount of the delinquent taxes owed on the old Kmart property.

City Administrator Chris Engel indicated that the amount of delinquent taxes on the old Kmart property is approximately \$450,000.

Councilmember Neal indicated that he feels that in an effort to send a message to Block and Company that considerations need to be made on the other properties they own and owe taxes on, so he will be not voting in favor of the resolution.

Councilmember Silvers echoed Councilmember Neal's comment and would also not vote in favor.

Councilmember Yadrich commented that she as well echoes the sentiment expressed by Councilmembers Neal and Silvers, but, since this is just the first step in the project and there are potential opportunities to rectify the tax situation, she will be voting in favor of the resolution.

**COUNCILMEMBER HANDS MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE AN ORDINANCE SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING DATE OF DECEMBER 13, 2022 TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE I-35 REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT. COUNCILMEMBER YADRICH SECONDED AND THE MOTION WAS APPROVED. COUNCILMEMBERS NEAL AND SILVERS VOTED NAY.**

3. CIP Update.

Public Works Director Jim MacDonald provide the following CIP Updates:

2021 Street Improvement Project has been completed and final payment for that project will be requested at the next council meeting.

The West Vernon Place Preliminary Engineering Study (PES) is complete. The engineer has provided staff with several improvement options. Placement of this project will be discussed at the CIP work session early next year.

The Miscellaneous Storm Pipe Lining project is underway and will likely start late November with a 60-day completion timeframe. Weather temperatures will not affect this project, as long as the weather is dry, they can continue to work.

**VII. STAFF ITEMS**

City Administrator Chris Engel commented that conversations with Drake Development for redevelopment of the old Kmart property are no longer occurring. They have formally withdrawn their interest in the site. They have indicated there is still some interest in the site with a different project, however, if a new project is proposed, the process will start all over.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE COUNCIL, COUNCILMEMBER HANDS MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:45 PM. COUNCILMEMBER YADRICH SECONDED AND THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

APPROVED: November 22, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

*Juliana Pinnick*

City Clerk