

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
HELD SEPTEMBER 17, 2018**

**Regular Meeting - Transact Routine Business**

Mayor Barnhart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with roll call as follows:

PRESENT: Mayor Barnhart  
COUNCIL: Karper, Shepard, Fisher, Lovering, Piper and Robinson  
ABSENT: None

**ROLL CALL**

Also present were City Manager Nicosia, City Clerk Staland, City Attorney Breck, Police Chief Peters and City Planner Mulcahy.

Pledge of Allegiance

**PLEDGE**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Mayor Barnhart requested a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Lovering moved to approve the agenda, second by Councilman Robinson and the motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA  
APPROVAL**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Councilman Karper moved to approve the consent agenda noting that all claims appeared to be in order, second by Councilman Fisher and the motion carried unanimously.

**CONSENT  
AGENDA  
APPROVAL**

- A. Approval of Claims - \$ 186,471.35 - September 17, 2018
- B. Approval of Payroll Claims - \$101,962.39 - September 7, 2018
- C. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes - September 4, 2018

**VISITOR/PUBLIC COMMENT:** (Items not on agenda)

None.

**VISITOR/PUBLIC  
COMMENT**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. Public Hearing:**

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board held a public hearing for the following items at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers of City Hall, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana. The Columbia Falls City Council will hold a subsequent hearing on September 17, 2018 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

**Request by the City of Columbia Falls for a text amendment to the manufacturing/warehouse use parking standards:**

**Text Amendment  
Parking Standards**

Mayor Barnhart read the hearing notice: The City of Columbia Falls is requesting a Zoning Text amendment in the Columbia Falls Zoning Regulations. Current zoning regulations require one parking space per 800 square feet of gross floor area. Manufacturing is in a state of change with the

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advancement in robotics and digital technology. The result is there are fewer workers needed in these manufacturing plants to create a unit of product and the result is less need for parking.

City Planner Mulcahy presented Staff Report CZTA-18-02 to amend the industrial zone parking code. Mulcahy said at this time city code requires one space per two employees at maximum shift but not less than one space per 800 sq. ft. of gross area. Staff is proposing to allow one space per employee and not less than one space for every two thousand sq. ft. of gross floor area. The Planning Board reviewed the proposal and after discussion approved it. Mulcahy said staff recommends approval of the text amendment.

Mayor Barnhart opened the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Karl Sorenson, 210 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. West, Columbia Falls said his home is a block away from the said property. Mr. Sorenson said we are talking about the difference between 19 companies versus one company and asked if we can consider putting a rider on the proposal? Can they contain any future problems with parking within the confines of their property? Mr. Sorenson said what he doesn't want is the employees parking in front of his residence and walking to work.

Mayor Barnhart closed the Public Hearing at 7:07 p.m.

Mayor Barnhart asked if they need more parking for new employees how that will that handled. Mulcahy said we are looking at each building on its own. The code is in two parts, one component basis is per employee, the other is on building size. The larger the building the more parking spaces required. Additionally, parking requirements are reviewed based on maximum employees and not start-up or current employees.

Councilman Piper made motion to adopt Staff Report CZTA-18-02 as findings of fact, second by Councilman Lovering and the motion carried with Council voting as follows. AYES: Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher and Barnhart. NOES: None. ABSENT: None.

Councilman Piper motioned to approve the Text Amendment, second by Councilman Robinson with Council voting as follows. AYES: Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, Karper and Barnhart. NOES: None. ABSENT: None.

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**Request for a major subdivision in the Columbia Falls Planning Jurisdiction for the Columbia Rising Industrial Park:**

**Request for Major Subdivision in the Columbia Rising Industrial Park**

Mayor Barnhart read the hearing notice: Columbia Rising, LLC is requesting approval of a 19 lot industrial park. The property is located along Truck Route and was the site of the Weyerhaeuser Stud Mill and surrounding properties consisting of a total of 36.58 acres. The property is described as Assessor's Tracts 7J, 7EA, 7EB, 7K, 7K4, and 11 in Section 8, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County. Access will be provided by existing public streets and proposed private roads. The parcels are within the City Limits of Columbia Falls and will utilize municipal sewer and water services.

City Planner Mulcahy presented Staff Report CPP-18-01. Mulcahy said the property is designated in our Growth Policy as Industrial. The property size is 36.5 acres and is annexed into the city which will be serviced with city water, sewer, Police and Fire Departments. The applicants are proposing to complete the project in phases. There are fourteen conditions the Planning Board recommended. The Planning Board has given approval of this project.

Casey Malmquist said he was in attendance representing the applicants, Columbia Rising LLC, owned by Mick Ruis, John and Dave Lesar. Mr. Malmquist stated they are excited to bring a modern industrial park to Columbia Falls. Mr. Malmquist said he served several years on MWED and knows first-hand how difficult it is to find industrial locations. Based on Mr. Malmquist's past experience, part of the idea here is to have a plug and play place to do business here in Columbia Falls. Mr. Malmquist believes Columbia Falls is a great place to do business.

Mayor Barnhart opened the Public Hearing at 7:23 p.m.

Mayor Barnhart asked if there was any other public comment. Mulcahy said there was a phone call from neighbor Rose Bruce, with concern that it would be noisier than the Plum Creek Mill. She mentioned she had some sort of fiber in her home and Mulcahy referred her to Environmental Health and Air Quality for a consult. Mulcahy said otherwise she did not seem to object to the subdivision and liked the idea of fixing some of the intersections on Truck Route and the vegetative buffer.

Mayor Barnhart closed the Public Hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Councilman Karper motioned to adopt Staff Report CPP-18-01 as findings of fact, second by Councilman Lovering with Council voting as follows. AYES: Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, Karper, Lovering and Barnhart. NOES:

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None. ABSENT: None.

Councilman Fisher motioned to approve Preliminary Plat with Conditions, second by Councilman Robinson with Council voting as follows. AYES: Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, Karper, Lovering, Piper and Barnhart. NOES: None. ABSENT: None.

**PRESENTATION:**

A. MT Department of Transportation – Justun Juelfs, Maintenance Chief – Winter Snow Removal - Hwy 2 and Nucleus Ave. was unable to attend the meeting. Mayor Barnhart asked for public comment on winter snow removal.

Mark Johnson, 1902 Riverwood Lane, President of Glacier Bank said it would be ideal to get the berms on Nucleus Ave. removed in a timely manner. His concern is customers cannot egress or ingress the bank parking area with the berms on Nucleus Ave. Mr. Johnson said for safety concerns he would like to see them do something different on Nucleus Ave rather than leaving the berms in the center of the road for days. Mr. Johnson said it was problematic to get the snow removed on the sidewalks within the time frame required by the city. Johnson said they paid to have the triangle by the highway up to the waterfall cleared even though it is technically not owned by Glacier Bank, it was difficult with the amount of snow we had last year.

Mike Burr, 560 Talbot Road, Whitefish Credit Union, said at both building locations he echoes Mr. Johnson about the berm on Nucleus Ave. Mr. Burr said they have developed a snow plow plan for this winter for the new location on Highway 2; however, the sidewalk remains to be a big deal for them. It would be nice to know what the state is going to do; if there will be assistance with the sidewalks or not.

James Druyvestein, representing Three Rivers Dental, 160 Nucleus Ave., said he agrees with Mr. Johnson on Nucleus Ave. concerning the berms. It is frustrating to leave the berms on the street as it is not easy or safe to turn into businesses.

Glenda Bosworth, owner of Glacier Travel Inn, said she was attendance to hear what the state had planned for snow plowing this year. She said the State basically does the same thing in the heights with the berm on Highway 2. People were parking on the streets and climbing over the ice berms. Ms. Bosworth said this is a safety concern as emergency vehicle would have a difficult time getting through. She was hoping to hear from MDOT on this issue. This does cause a safety issue.

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Mayor Barnhart said the City has had several discussions at Council meetings on concerns of getting the sidewalks cleared. Mayor Barnhart asked for clarification on the city code. City Manager Nicosia said throughout the entire city, not just Hwy 2 and Nucleus Ave, every sidewalk is to be cleared by noon following accumulation. Nicosia noted that last year was particularly problematic with the amount of snow received. Last year MDOT tried to windrow the snow along the edge which narrowed the driving lanes.

Mayor Barnhart said on Highway 2 some business owners did a good job on keeping their sidewalks cleared and some didn't. One thought was to hire a person through the city and charge the property owners. It is unfortunate that Mr. Juelfs isn't here to discuss the winter snow plowing plan.

Karl Sorenson said he agrees with getting the sidewalks cleared, but what frustrates him is DOT plows the snow on the sidewalk and he has to pay to have it removed. This can occur a couple times a day when the state plows the roads, and then it gets harder to clear the sidewalks when it gets icy. Mr. Burr said there is nowhere to put the snow. It is one thing to clear the sidewalk from snow fall but then the state plows the highway snow onto the sidewalk and we are required to remove it. Chris Petersen said there are certain sections of sidewalks that don't get cleared. Mayor Barnhart said we should lobby our State Senators and Representatives for a solution.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**UNFINISHED  
BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS**

A. First Reading - Ordinance #780 - An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Amending Section 18.520 Manufacturing and Warehousing Parking in Title 18 of the Columbia Falls Municipal Zoning Code.

**First Reading  
Ordinance #780**

Councilman Robinson made motion to approve the First Reading of Ordinance #780, second by Councilman Lovering and the motion passed.

B. Resolution # 1783 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Conditionally Approving the Preliminary Plat of Columbia Rising Industrial Park, A 19-Lot Industrial Subdivision Described as Assessor Tracts 7J, 7EA, 7EB, 7K, 7K4 And 11 all in Section 8, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County, Montana.

**Resolution #1783  
Preliminary Plat of  
Columbia Rising  
Industrial Park**

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Councilman Lovering motioned to approve Resolution #1783, second by Councilman Robinson with Council voting as follows. AYES: Fisher, Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard and Barnhart. NOES: None. ABSENT: None.

**REPORTS/BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL:**

Councilman Lovering said some residents are concerned about the bike rack located at River's Edge Park and the possibility of the bikes ending up in the river. Lovering said she thought the new coffee shop at O'Brien's' Liquor Store was going to have an access off 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. W. Nicosia said the Highway 2 access was approved by the Department of Transportation. Lovering said she is excited about the bump outs on Nucleus Ave. but two different businesses would have liked to have notice of when the project was going to take place.

**REPORTS FROM  
MAYOR AND  
COUNCIL**

Councilman Karper believes the City is going to have to step up and clear the snow from the sidewalks if we want it done in a timely manner. Councilman Robinson said they talked to Justin Juelfs with DOT about pieces of equipment and the potential of renting them to clear the snow from the sidewalks. City Attorney Breck said he goes to the mountain for skiing and Whitefish has a Kubota with a five foot blower that goes up the sidewalk.

Mayor Barnhart asked where we are on the fishing pond. Nicosia said the committee had a meeting and we are waiting to hear when the excavator will be available. Barnhart also said the welcome sign looks nice at the Marantette Park location. Nicosia said the city is adding a light and landscaping.

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:**

None.

**CITY ATTORNEY  
REPORT**

**CITY MANAGER:**

Nicosia said she and City Attorney Breck reviewed the lighting district requirements and the City will have to have 50% of the residents agree to have the light installed at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. East. Nicosia noted that there are 2 new owners and she will contact them to see if they are interested before the City starts a legal process.

**CITY MANAGER  
REPORT**

Nicosia reported that the MT League of Cities and Towns joined the National League of Cities and Towns and consequently, Columbia Falls is also a member; allowing us to take advantage of their national programs, including service line warranties for our citizens.

The City was not successful on the FEMA grant for the SCBA's. The Fire Chief requested the Rural Fire District Board to authorize purchase of two SCBA's which will be about \$16,000. The Association also voted to purchase two and the Chief would like the City to purchase one. RES completed an

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inspection on the quint in Utah. The fire department is asking \$79,000 for the truck and the City will have a full report when Kyle returns. Nicosia reminded Council that we will be holding the Columbia Rising TEDD hearings on October 15<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Nicosia reviewed the water main break on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E on Friday September 14<sup>th</sup>. The break dropped the pressure city-wide until the crew got the valves turned off.

Nicosia reported on the Nucleus and 6<sup>th</sup> Street project. During demolition, the crew uncovered an opening. The architecture was consistent with the age of the building, 1905, and would've provided light into the basement of the building. Nicosia noted that the address file and Council minutes note that the issue was brought up in 1975 and 1976 and in 1980-81 with the MDOT project on Nucleus. The City is working with Morrison and Maierle and Knife River to keep moving forward on the project and to review solutions on how to repair the opening.

**INFORMATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE** - List available for Review

A. REPORTS:

- a. Finance - activity YTD thru August
- b. Police - August activity
- c. Fire - Calendar YTD activity

**CORRESPONDENCE  
and REPORTS**

**ADJOURN:** Upon motion duly made by Councilman Lovering and seconded by Councilman Robinson the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

**ADJOURN**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ACTION: October 15, 2018