

CASTLE ROCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of Regular Meeting

November 10, 2010

MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

Mike Vorse, President Chamber of Commerce; Carolyn Kennington, Vice-President; Jacqueline Hergert Castle Rock High School FBLA Advisor; Danielle St. Germain Castle Rock High School FBLA Student Representative; Myron Nelson and Georgia Cox, Castle Rock Senior Center; Mark Plotkin, Cowlitz County Tourism; Teresa Bergman, Cowlitz River Dahlias; Gina Kolhage and Kim Collucci Town CRier News; Ryana Covington, City of Castle Rock; Wayne Lunday, High Cascades Agency; Roy Henson, DetermiNation; Steve Lafady, Cowlitz PUD; Susan Barker, Castle Rock School District; Andrea Gebhardt, Heritage Bank; Carrie Yeager, Fibre Federal Credit Union and Karen Johnson, Castle Rock Visitor's Center and Exhibit Hall.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Vorse at 8:31 a.m.

GUEST SPEAKER: David Vorse, Public Works Director for the City of Castle Rock provided a summary of the Cowlitz Street West reconstruction project and proposed project sequencing plan. This project encompasses the entire downtown district and includes 1st Avenue SW and Cowlitz Street West; including the Huntington Avenue intersection. Currently the city is waiting for final approval from Washington State Department of Transportation before they can solicit bids for the project. Construction will include upgrades to sewer, water and catch basins, replacement of street lights, new sidewalks and new road base. Total project cost is estimated to be \$1.8 million, funded by several grants. Sequencing will include: Phase 1 – construction at west end of Cowlitz Street, between 2nd Avenue and 1st Avenue. Phase 2 – construction between Huntington Avenue and 1st. This will require a temporary reversal of the traffic flow on 1st Avenue. Phase 3 – completion of 1st Avenue, which includes installation of a pedestrian activated signal at 1st/A Street. Vorse emphasized that the phasing is intended to allow pedestrian access to businesses during construction and to reduce impacts to businesses. The city hopes to begin the project in February 2011 and be completed with a majority of the work by July.

Vorse also provided a summary of other upcoming city projects:

- * Extension of the Riverfront Trail which will include a paved, lighted trail from Shintaffer to the railroad bridge. This also includes rebuilding the access ramp at Shintaffer, development of trailhead parking and cutting of selected trees to restore views of the river. The creek restoration work will involve students, in an 'outdoor classroom' setting.
- * Pending award of grant funds, several sidewalk projects have been identified including sidewalk/bike lanes for grade school students.
- * A Pavement Preservation grant from the State has been submitted by the city. If awarded, Washington State Department of Transportation will identify which city streets will be completed.
- * The city has been working to update the Park Plan. They will be requesting citizen participation in surveys and meetings to set goals and identify projects. This plan is required to be updated periodically to allow the city to qualify for grant funding of recreational projects. Vorse noted that the city's recreational opportunities are helping to structure the city as an outdoor recreation area.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the October 14, 2010 meeting as presented. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

A Treasurer's Report dated November 9, 2010 was prepared by Andrea Gebhardt. The report indicated a balance of \$3,196.57. Checks and deposits were indicated. A motion was made by Wayne Lunday, second by Steve Lafady to accept the Treasurers Report as presented. Motion passed.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Andrea Gebhardt presented a list of current chamber members. It was noted that membership has reduced since last year. Mike Vorse presented an example of the membership plaque that will be sent to members. Wayne Lunday stated that some may have forgotten to send in their memberships this year. Development of a membership committee was discussed. Jacqueline Hergert offered to check with the High School to see if they could design next year's plaques.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Community Garage Sale

Funds have yet to be collected from the project. Wayne Lunday stated he worked on the committee, along with Barbara Mask and Teresa Bergman. He noted that all participant proceeds were turned over to Barbara Mask and he would contact her for an accounting of the expenses. Lunday indicated there are plans to do the project again in 2011 during Mountain Mania weekend. Kim Collucci, Town Crier offered to publish the garage sale maps along with their special section on Mountain Mania.

- Boulevard Banners

People have requested banners, however no additional purchases have been made. Cost is \$100 for the advertising and approximately \$40 to have the 24" x 30" banner made. These personalized business banners hang below the large banners located along Huntington Avenue.

- Exhibit Hall Business Card Holder

Andrea Gebhardt stated this has been ordered. The cost was approximately \$90.

- Budget Committee Report

The committee was unable to meet prior to this meeting. A report and recommendation will be available at the January 13, 2011 chamber meeting.

- Economic Development

Ron Marshall, Cowlitz County Civil Attorney and the Cowlitz County Commissioners have advised they will need more time to review options to assist or partner with the city and chamber for allocation of up to \$50,000 to hire a lead/director to facilitate the implementation of the strategic marketing plan. The chamber still would like to reserve the option of having input on the selection of the consultant. The county plans to meet in December, therefore progress to obtain a marketing consultant will be delayed until the beginning of next year. The Strategic Marketing Plan can be found on the City of Castle Rock website.

- Lion's Park

Karen Johnson is still working with TJ Keiran to develop the comprehensive map to be included in the display. The map could become the central graphic with events and services displayed on the same page.

- Business Connection Newsletter

Requested a volunteer to write articles on behalf of the chamber to be included in this publication.

- Exhibit Hall Request For Chamber To Assist With Hi-Speed Internet Costs

Cascade Networks could provide Hi-Speed Internet services for approximately \$49/month. The cost for ComCast would be approximately \$69/month. Mark Plotkin suggested the chamber include this cost as an operating expense and include WiFi capabilities. He suggested the chamber could sell advertisement on WiFi to help defray the service cost. The Exhibit Hall serves as the information center for visitors, persons relocating to the area and business information. Plotkin feels the internet upgrade and WiFi

capabilities are essential to being able to promote the community.

- Advertising In The AWESOME Brochure

Mark Plotkin reported that the city will be participating in the AWESOME brochure, at a reduced contribution rate. He acknowledged that chamber revenues are down and local projects such as Internet for the Exhibit Hall are of high priority. He is requesting consideration of a reduced contribution of \$250 for the upcoming brochure.

- Upcoming Business Exposition Opportunity

Sponsorship packages and vendor options are still available for the *Cruise To Success* Business Exposition, February 25, 2011 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Cowlitz Regional Exposition Center, with an after-hours event scheduled from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. This is a multi-partner event between tourism, businesses, schools, ports, municipalities and local Chambers. More information is available at: www.cowlitzcountybizexpo.com Reservations for vendor participants will be taken until the end of January.

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION:

- Gina Kolhage, Town Crier stated their goal is to fill the community's needs for a weekly newspaper. She stated many people still miss the local news provided by the original Advocate. As of August, their goal is to have postal delivery to 5200 homes. Their newspaper can also be accessed via Internet at www.flannerypubs.com Organizations or persons wishing to submit news articles must do so by each Friday; with publication on Mondays. In addition to coverage for Castle Rock, the Town Crier also includes news from Winlock, Toledo and Vader areas. Advertising opportunities are also available by calling 888-820-6012 or via email: towncrier@flannerypubs.com

REMINDERS:

- Next meeting: **December 9, 2010, 8:30 a.m.** at the Exhibit Hall.

ADJOURN:

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am.