

**City Council Work Session**  
**RV Ordinance**  
**May 20, 2020**  
**5:30PM City Hall**

Attendance: Mayor Mike Wisdom, Councilors Joyce Lawyer, David “Shorty” Schwehr, Mike (Big Mike) Morse, and Logan McCrae, City Recorder Beth Wendt, and Community members Vickie Townsend and Dennis Lefever.

Mayor Mike has started to put together a citation booklet. Pendleton ESD will print them for us. He hopes to have a sample for the June 1<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting. The citation will have a number and note the date, person, and the violation. When issued, a copy of the citation will be sent to the Union County Justice Court and with a date as to when to appear in court. The court meets 2 evenings a month and they ask that we set our dates at least 30 days out so they can schedule accordingly. Mayor Mike has also started to frame a letter to be sent to all property owners in North Powder with the results of the changes being made to the RV ordinance.

Mayor Mike noted that we had a response from Patty Mulvihill, at the League of Oregon Cities and she felt we should consider working on our zoning ordinance. Her interpretation was that RV’s could park in any zone and could move from lot to lot every 14 days and never have to get a permit of any kind. She also felt it was reasonable to assume a property owner is not obligated to seek a permit. Shorty felt it should be the property owner’s responsibility. Mayor Mike commented that some cities require a placard to be placed somewhere visible so we can tell when the meter has started. He added that Patty has offered to help and we still have several hours of legal service available. Shorty wondered why Ordinance 1997-1 refers to Ordinance 1983-3. Beth clarified that 1983-3 is the Zoning Ordinance. The section of the Zoning Ordinance that was repealed in 1997-1 was regarding a Mobile Home Park. Mayor Mike suggested we eliminate the end of the first sentence of the RV Section so that it doesn’t refer to a specific zone. We also should change the first paragraph in Section 1.18 to say a “maximum” of 14 days instead of a minimum of 14 days before a permit must be obtained. Logan remarked that the committee discussed making the cost of an RV permit high enough to provide an incentive to use the trailer park. The RV Park charges \$225 and includes water and sewer. Currently we have a \$10 application fee. He suggested striking paragraph A of Section 1.18 and rewriting it to say a property owner shall submit an application for a 30 day permit and the fee for the permit will be set by resolution of the City Council. Mayor Mike clarified that the application fee is non-refundable. Logan added that the committee also discussed tying the permit fee to the property owner instead of the person living in the RV. Mayor Mike agreed and felt any citations should be first given to a property owner. It would be up the court to pull the trailer owner/resident into it. Shorty interjected that Ordinance 1997-1 allows an owner to occupy a trailer for up to 6 months with no fee. It also says that you can’t park a trailer without the express consent of the property owner. Logan agreed that it should be the property owner who is responsible for obtaining a permit and seeing that all fees are paid. The committee also discussed the option of having water turned off to a property if the permit fees were not paid or a permit was not sought. The rate should be at least \$300 per month. That would include water and sewer whether it is used or not. This is for RV’s only and does not include a mobile home. Joyce was concerned about people parking on a city easement. Logan thought would be covered in an ordinance regarding easements. Mayor Mike added that he would like to see it be limited to one RV per lot. Logan wanted to have a clear list of expectations that have to be met so that Beth could approve applications without the City Council having to be a part of approving every application. Shorty felt having adequate disposal facilities and having electrical connections meet code and be property grounded should be part of the requirements. Logan thought we should eliminate the part about the electrical connections.

Mayor Mike wasn't fond of having a city employee responsible for approving a permit. He didn't want anything to come back on the employees. Logan felt it was no different than what was done for truck parking permits. There would be a specific list of criteria that have to be met before a permit is approved. Besides, there would be no way to approve a permit between Council meetings. Mayor Mike conceded that as long as there is detailed list criteria that has to be met. Beth interjected that Mayor Mike wanted to have something ready for the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting but reminded that once the ordinance is passed it won't take affect for 30 days. Joyce wondered if an RV could use a clean out to dump gray water. Logan suggested that the \$300 permit fee should include turn on fees and usage. Vickie interjected that she was on the Council when Ordinance 1997-1 was done and she felt it was a good ordinance. Logan commented that there is a lot of gray area, such as no repercussions to land owners. Mayor Mike noted that an approved permit can be up to 30 days and can be renewed. Logan felt that as long as the requirements were being met, it could bring in as much as \$3600 per year per lot. Mayor Mike didn't want the city to turn into a "KOA Campground". He cares more about the appearance of the town than the money it would bring in. Beth suggested sending out a survey to ask for community opinion. She also noted that in updating the ordinance, we should deal with tiny homes because they can now be classified as RVs. Logan reiterated that if we up the cost of a permit and impose stricter requirements it might encourage people to buy a house instead of living in an RV. Beth wondered if there would be a maximum number of times a permit could be renewed. Mayor Mike wondered if a citation is issued under the current ordinance, who gets cited and who serves the citation. Logan thought it could be posted on the trailer and a copy sent to the land owner. Shorty asked how it would affect a renter allowing a visitor. Logan thought it would still go back to the property owner. Big Mike wondered if we could bring the Sheriff in on enforcement. Mayor Mike added that we have a current situation where the property owner was unaware that people were living in RVs on his property until the Mayor called him. He doesn't know what to do to get them out. Shorty thought that would be a situation for the court. Mayor Mike noted that once a citation is mailed to La Grande it is out of our hands and up to the court to decide whether to suspend, reduce or set fines. He added that Ordinance 1997-1 says if somebody is in violation, a will be sent allowing 7 days to respond plus 14 days to comply. Should that mean fines will commence on the 15<sup>th</sup> day or the 22<sup>nd</sup> day? The Council seemed to think it should be the 22<sup>nd</sup> day. Beth asked if the Council wanted to just tweak the current ordinance or re-write it. As much as he would like to get this done, Mayor Mike felt we should pause and send out some surveys. Logan wanted to see the "squatting" issue cleaned up. He agreed that if we draw up a draft of the proposed changes and note why they were made, then maybe we could get some community feedback. Mayor Mike thought that might help people to know that we are serious about this issue. Logan reiterated that having a draft that the Council could look at would be a good idea. Beth verified that the main points were that the land owner would be responsible for the permit and we want to stop "lot hopping". Permits could be approved for up to 30 days at a time and the minimum fee would be \$300. The survey would ask how many times in a 12 month period a 30 day permit could be renewed. Logan felt once we have the proposed changes in place, the only thing left is to develop a permit. Big Mike wanted time to read the ordinances from other cities and think about them. Logan thought we could just change a few paragraphs of Ordinance 1997-1. Beth will make up a survey to include with the next billing cycle.

Meeting adjourned at 8PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Beth Wendt  
City Recorder