

**CITY OF RUSTON  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**Tuesday, May 7, 2024**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

At 7:00PM Mayor Hopkins called the regular Council Meeting to order. Councilmembers present were Councilmember Hedrick, Councilmember Syler, and Councilmember Jensen. Councilmember Huson was excused. Following the flag salute, Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the agenda, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

**MINUTES** - Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the regular Council Meeting of April 16, 2024, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

**STAFF REPORT** –

None at this time

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS** –

**Talia Thepvongsa** – She mentioned information on the marketing company she works for in providing planning for the Council Retreat at a discounted rate.

**Maryann Bell** – She had some concerns regarding parking on streets where no parking will be allowed and how the overflow parking throughout the city streets.

**Ray Johnson** – He expressed his gratitude to Mayor Hopkins and his fellow co-workers, Councilmembers, and residents of the City of Ruston. He was proud to serve the City of Ruston and is looking forward to the future of the city.

**BUSINESS**

**ORD 1579 – Establishing new reduced speed limits to 20 miles per hour on specific city streets.**

Under Chapter 16.06 of the Ruston Municipal Code (RMC), Ruston adopted the Washington Model Traffic Ordinance (Ch. 46.90 RCW and Chapter 308-330 WAC). Under RCW 46.61.415(3) and WAC 308-330-270, the City Council may change a speed limit to 20 miles per hour (“MPH”). Given that Ruston is becoming more dense with increasing pedestrian traffic, the Mayor’s office requested that an ordinance to reduce speed limits on most Ruston streets be brought forward. Lower speed limits support and encourage motor vehicle travel at lower and more appropriate travel speeds and lower travel speeds for motor vehicles lead to reduced risk of motor vehicle crashes, reduced severity of injuries for crashes that do occur, and a reduced risk that such crashes will result in fatal injury for all road users. In addition, crashes involving pedestrians are more survivable the lower the speed of the traveling vehicle. In order to reduce speed limits, RMC 16.01.020 which establishes a speed limit within the City needs to be amended to reduce speed limits on certain streets.

Currently, the city-wide speed limit is 25 MPH with 30 MPH on Pearl Street (a State highway), 15 MPH in the former Ruston Tunnel and in alleys, and 20 MPH on Commercial Street between Winnifred and Baltimore. If approved, Ordinance No. 1579 would remove the redundant reference to the Ruston Tunnel, clean up language to change “town” to “city” and would set 20 MPH as the speed limit on the following streets:

1. N. 49th Street;
2. N. 50th Street;
3. N. 51st Street;
4. N. 52nd Street;
5. N. 53rd Street;
6. N. Baltimore Street;
7. N. Highland Street;
8. N. Shirley Street;
9. N. Winnifred Street; and
10. Park Avenue.

All alleys would remain at 15 MPH limits with any other streets remaining at 25 MPH, except Pearl Street which would remain at 30 MPH. The City cannot change the speed limit on state highways without the approval of the Washington State Secretary of Transportation.

Councilmember Hedrick was curious as to why the reduction in the speed limit. He would like input from the Ruston Police Department. Mayor Hopkins said the courts allow 5 mph over the speed limit so this would bring the speed limit to 25 mph versus 30 mph. Councilmember Syler would also like input from the Police Department to see how this will work. Councilmember Jensen will wait for the input from the Police Department. Mayor Hopkins is also considering speed bumps in the city for traffic calming.

**ORD 1580 –Charges for sanitary sewer services within the City of Ruston, amending section 20.02.020 of the Ruston Municipal Code.**

Under state law (Chapter 35.67 RCW) the City is authorized to provide stormwater services to properties within the City. Under RCW 35.67.020, the City has the authority to establish charges for the stormwater facilities and under RCW 35.67.190, the City has the authority to fix the rates for stormwater services. Ruston has not increased its stormwater rates since 2005 while the costs of delivering stormwater services is increasing and additional revenue is needed to sustain the City’s stormwater utility. The proposed Ordinance No. 1580 updates the stormwater rate from \$5.00 per lot to \$12.00 per lot in order to keep up with the increased costs of the stormwater program.

This is called the “Stormwater Fixed Fee” That change would take effect on June 1, 2024. In addition, since all lots do not produce the same level of stormwater, a variable rate will also apply starting April 1, 2025, which will take into account the size and use of the lot. This is called the “Stormwater Rate.” Many cities vary the stormwater charges in this matter, including the City of Tacoma. This way, customers that create more stormwater runoff pay more than customers that create less stormwater runoff. The Stormwater Rate is established per every 500 square feet of property on the lot and classification is based on the range of overall parcel runoff.

<b>BASIC CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>RANGE OF OVERALL PARCEL RUNOFF FACTORS</b>	<b>STORMWATER RATE PER 500 SQUARE FEET</b>
(a) Undeveloped	0 to 0.22	\$0.3192 for one acre or less; if over one acre, additional area is charged \$0.0706
(b) Light	0.23 to 0.39	\$1.0287
(c) Moderate	0.40 to 0.56	\$1.4142
(d) Heavy	0.57 to 0.79	\$2.0765
(e) Very Heavy	0.80 to 1	\$2.8086

Single family homes and duplexes would typically be moderate, whereas triplex, more dense residential, and commercial would typically be heavy, unless the City determine that “very heavy” is appropriate based on runoff.

In addition to establishing the new rate and rate structure in RMC 20.02.020, two new code sections are recommended. These are 20.02.024 and 20.02.026. RMC 20.02.024 allows owners to request a City review of the rates if the owner believes that the rates are incorrect based on the lot density, classification, or runoff rate. RMC 20.02.026 provides that stormwater fees are not levied on the City’s roads, streets, alleys, or right of way when the City is accepting the runoff from those roads into the City’s stormwater system.

Mayor Hopkins said there has not been an increase in storm rates since 2005. We will need this increase to maintain the storm system going forward. Councilmember Hedrick would like to change the dates listed on page 5 of the Ordinance to read April 21, 2024 to match the billing cycle and to remove item (b) Light, and item (e) Very Heavy from the rate table and update item (c) Moderate as new item (b) and (d) Heavy as new item (c). Councilmember Jensen feels this is a huge increase for the residents. Mayor Hopkins said this will help from potential liability in the future.

**ORD – 1581 – Amending section 16.03.0509(e) to allow parking on certain city streets.**

The Planning Director and Mayor recommend that the City update RMC 16.03.050(e) to delete the following parking restrictions:

- East side of Baltimore Street between North 49th Street and the south city limits; and
- South side of Park Avenue between Pearl Street and Bennett Street

The attached ordinance makes those changes to the Ruston Municipal Code.

Councilmember Hedrick requested to remove Gallagher Street on page 2 of the Ordinance. Councilmember Jensen referred to Maryann Bell's comments and would like to know why now. Mayor Hopkins said the attorney is cleaning up the Ordinance and it is based on Park Avenue. The Planning Commission is making decisions due to the middle housing and parking will be an issue.

**RES 791 – Appointing Talia Thepvongsa to the Ruston Planning Commission Position No. 3 for a 6-year term**

Mike Wagner was reappointed to the Planning Commission on July 17, 2018 with a term expiring June 30, 2024, however, Mr. Wagner has moved out of Ruston which rendered his position on the Planning Commission vacant. In accordance with RMC 1.07.020 the Mayor of Ruston recommends the appointment of Talia Thepvongsa to fill Position No. 3 for the remaining portion of the 6-year term which will expire on June 30, 2024, and recommends she be appointed to the subsequent full 6-year term which expires on June 30, 2030. Ms. Thepvongsa desires to be appointed and is willing to serve both the unexpired term and the full term to follow. In accordance with RMC 1.07.020, the process for appointing new Planning Commissioners is an appointment by the mayor and confirmation by the Council. The attached Resolution appoints Ms. Thepvongsa to Position No. 3 for a new 6-year term. With no further discussion, Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution No. 791, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

**CLAIMS/PAYROLL** – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims for May 7, 2024, and Payroll for April 20, 2024, and May 5, 2024, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

**MAYOR'S TIME** – Nothing at this time.

**Councilmember Hedrick** –He thanked Ray for his service to the city. He also thanked Councilmember Holland , who recently resigned, for all of her dedicated service to the City of Ruston.

**Councilmember Syler** – She said thank you to Ray and Councilmember Holland for the service.


**Councilmember Huson** – Was excused.

**Councilmember Jensen** – She thanked “Ruston Ray” for his service to the City of Ruston and also thanked Talia Thepvongsa for joining the Planning Commission. She said there will be a blood drive next Monday at the Yacht Club.

**MEETING AJOURNED** – At 7:42PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

  
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Mayor Hopkins

ATTEST:

  
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Laurie Cassell