MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF PULLMAN
MARCH 4, 2008

Roll Call

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Pullman was held on March 4, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall, Pullman, Washington with the following present:

Glenn A. Johnson	Mayor
Troy Woo	Finance Director
Francis Benjamin	Councilmember
Keith Bloom	Councilmember
Ann Heath	Councilmember
Bill Paul	Councilmember
Barney Waldrop	Councilmember
Nathan Weller	Councilmember
Pat Wright	Councilmember

Call to Order

Mayor Johnson called the regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Announcements

There were two announcements.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Approval of Recommendations of Consent Agenda Items

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Johnson reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda with the Council and audience. He stated that the items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted by a single motion of the Council without separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by Council request. Councilmember Wright moved, Councilmember Benjamin seconded to read the items on the Consent Agenda by title only.

Motion Carried.

City Attorney McAloon read the items on the Consent Agenda by title only. Mayor Johnson asked if there were any requests for removal of items from the Consent Agenda from either the Council or audience. Councilmember Waldrop requested that item No. 4 be removed for separate discussion. Councilmember Weller moved, Councilmember Bloom seconded to adopt items 1 through 3 and 5 through 11 on the Consent Agenda.

Motion Carried.

Motions

Minutes - February 20, 2008

1. The Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the special meeting of February 20, 2008, and approved them as submitted.

Minutes - February 26, 2008

2. The Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 26, 2008, and approved them as submitted.

Accounts Payable, Payroll, and Electronic Transfers -

3. The Council approved disbursements represented by accounts payable checks numbered _____ through _____ totaling $ inclusive, payroll checks numbered

March		through _____ totaling $_____ inclusive, and electronic transfers totaling _____ and directed that they be paid upon approval of the Auditing Officer and Audit Committee.
Claim for Damages - Schmidt	5.	The Council referred a Claim for Damages submitted by Kyle Taylor Schmidt for the sum of $216.32 to the insurance carrier.
Claim for Damages - Berner	6.	The Council referred a Claim for Damages submitted by Marc Ryan Berner for the sum of $175.17 to the insurance carrier.
Claim for Damages - YCC International	7.	The Council referred a Claim for Damages submitted by Lihua Wang for YCC International Corp. For the sum of $2,506.35 to Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP).
Claim for Damages - Enterprise	8.	The Council referred a Claim for Damages submitted by Steven Palmer for Enterprise Leasing Company for an undetermined amount to Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA).
Kamiaken/High Street Sewer Complete	9.	The Council accepted as complete Contract No. 06-05, Kamiaken/High Street Sewer.
Transit Facility Bus Storage Addition Complete	10.	The Council accepted as complete Contract No. 05-02, Transit Facility Bus Storage Addition Project.

Resolution

Resolution No. R-22-08 - RV Park Sewer	11.	Resolution No. R-22-08 A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF ATLAS SAND & ROCK FOR RV PARK SEWER AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF THE CONTRACT FOR SAID PROJECT. Resolution No. R-22-08 was adopted unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion

Claim for Damages - Ji	4.	Mayor Johnson announced that this item had been removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of Councilmember Waldrop. Councilmember Waldrop asked if the vehicle involved in the accident was responding to an alarm. Fire Chief Wilkins responded. Councilmember Waldrop moved to move the item to a future agenda to discuss safety and operational issues for fire vehicles. Councilmember Bloom seconded the motion. City Attorney McAloon advised the Council of the need to refer the claim to the insurance carrier. Councilmember Waldrop amended his motion to refer the item to the insurance carrier and to discuss the issue at the next City Council meeting. City Attorney McAloon and Mayor Johnson commented. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Meeting

Rental Inspections	12.	Mayor Johnson announced that a public meeting is scheduled on rental inspections. City Supervisor Sherman presented the staff report which included background information, summaries of past meetings and discussions, a summary of the rental inspection options that the Council moved forward, and suggested that April 8 be scheduled

for the public meeting on business registration. Councilmember Wright asked what criteria is used to identify problem properties. City Supervisor Sherman responded. Councilmember Wright asked once a property is identified as a problem property, is the City allowed to conduct followup inspections. City Supervisor Sherman and City Attorney McAloon responded. Councilmember Paul noted there were two inspection checklists included in the agenda packet and asked where the second checklist is used. Public Works Director Workman responded.

Mayor Johnson opened the public meeting. Mel Taylor, Executive Director of Real Estate and External Affairs at WSU, commented on the WSU Preferred Housing List and stated that landlords and owners need to be included when developing the list. Councilmember Heath noted that the intent of the Preferred Housing List is to direct renters to properties and asked how effective a preferred housing list might be. Mr. Taylor responded.

Allison Munch-Rotolo, 635 NE Illinois, College Hill Association, noted that this has been a concern for 15 years and that there are many dangerous rental properties in Pullman. Ms. Munch-Rotolo stated that the Preferred Housing List would not be effective because problem properties would not go away and that the voluntary rental inspection program is not effective because it does not help prospective tenants. Ms. Munch-Rotolo urged the Council to support the registration of rentals and require periodic inspections especially as properties get older.

Councilmember Heath, City Attorney McAloon, and City Supervisor Sherman discussed limiting the mandatory inspection requirements to properties of certain ages.

Anita Hornbeck, 405 NW North Street, stated she does not support the WSU Housing Office option because it would not help non-student renters. Ms. Hornbeck noted that the voluntary certification program would only work if renters refused to rent non-certified properties. Ms. Hornbeck stated she was not in favor of the current rate structure proposal for business registration and inspections and would like to see a financial analysis of the proposal. Councilmember Bloom, Mayor Johnson, and Ms. Hornbeck discussed the possibility of WSU enforcing housing issues such as late rent and options for the Preferred Housing List that include internet access, advertising, and listing of vacant properties. Councilmember Bloom and Ms. Hornbeck discussed passing on the mandatory inspection costs to renters and how that impacts affordable housing. Ms. Hornbeck noted that there are other costs associated with inspection fees such as landlord's staff time to help administer the inspections. Councilmember Heath noted there is not a system such as the Better Business Bureau for housing and that the WSU Housing Office could track complaints, hear landlord responses, and provide that information to consumers. Mel Taylor agreed and stated that the University wants to work with landlords.

Eileen Macoll, 1165 S. Grand, Pullman Landlord Association, described outreach efforts by the Association and stated that its intent is to protect basic rights of renters. Ms. Macoll noted that rent can only be reduced so much because of mortgages on rental properties and that she would like to see a cost analysis on all options.

Alex Hammond, 1110 NE Indiana, College Hill Association, seconded the comments made by Ms. Munch-Rotolo and presented housing statistics from the Comprehensive Plan that show that many of Pullman's properties are at least 18-years old and that the City should ensure that older properties are up to standard.

Evan Laubach, 248 NW Sunrise, stated that the financial issues should be addressed and from his experience in the home inspection business that rigorous guidelines are needed for the inspections because different inspectors will inspect at different levels.

Lynn Myers, Whitman County Landlord-Tenant Association, stated that many renters don't know where to go to get help with rental issues and that the students need help with those issues, so the focus should be on educating students.

Councilmember Bloom noted that the education of students will need to happen each year because of incoming students and asked if the associations would be willing to help with the continuing education of those students and how do we get both to look at the issues each year without an inspection program. Lynn Myers responded. Mayor Johnson asked how many Whitman County Landlord-Tenant Association members were there and what percentage of the landlords belong to the Association. Ms. Myers responded.

Alice Schroeder, 145 SW Arbor, League of Women Voters, expressed her appreciation that the City is addressing this issue, spoke in favor of registration and safety inspections, stated that the cost of the registration and safety inspections would not be a significant increase to rents, and that the tenants and landlords are a very diverse group. Councilmember Waldrop asked if the League of Women Voters makes a distinction between owner occupied properties and non-owner occupied properties. Ms. Schroeder responded.

Bob Cady, 900 NE Colorado, stated it never hurts to advertise the use of existing ordinances, that he supports the WSU Housing Office, that grants should be pursued to help with the issue, and that a grading system should be used instead of just meeting minimum standards. Councilmember Weller noted this was a difficult issue and that in his experience landlords have been more responsive because the rental housing issues are at the forefront and that he would like to hear from more student renters.

Justin Rogers, 2355 NW Ridge Line, stated he hopes that the City would do anything and everything before passing new legislation and that he does not want to see good landlords penalized. Awareness needs to be improved and

perhaps a mandatory disclosure requirement would be helpful. Councilmember Heath commented on the mandatory disclosure requirement.

Dorothy Swanson, 1055 NE Creston Land, stated there is a difference between owner occupied properties and non-owner occupied properties and that ongoing inspections would be unnecessary for owner occupied properties. Councilmember Waldrop asked Ms. Swanson what her opinion was on requiring registration for owner occupied properties. Ms. Swanson responded.

Jeff Guyett, 725 SE Jackson, stated that he did not have a problem with mandatory inspections but the problem seems to be with identifying landlords and the enforcement of the registration and inspection. Mr. Guyett hoped that the costs associated with the inspection program would be reasonable. Councilmember Bloom responded.

Councilmember Benjamin stated that he was in favor with continuing with the four options. Councilmember Waldrop suggested adding a cost-benefit analysis to each of the options. City Council concurred. The City Council concurred to conduct a public meeting on business registration on April 8. City Attorney McAloon clarified her position regarding exempting properties from the registration and licensing requirements and the inspection requirements. City Supervisor Sherman noted that the WSU Off-Campus Housing Office and the Preferred Housing List are works in progress and that a further update would be presented on April 8.

Councilmember Paul noted that the rental registration and business registration are inter-related and should be discussed concurrently. Councilmember Wright asked what the timeline was for implementation of business registration. City Supervisor Sherman responded.

Ordinance

Ordinance No. 08-4 - Zoning

13. Mayor Johnson announced that an ordinance had been prepared relating to zoning. Planning Director Dickinson presented the staff report which included a background report and the staff recommendation. Councilmember Bloom noted that the property owners involved did not comment during the public hearings and asked if their position was known. Planning Director Dickinson responded.

Ordinance No. 08-4 by title only reads as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PULLMAN, WHITMAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON, RELATING TO ZONING, AMENDING SECTION 17.30.030, USE CHARTS, OF THE PULLMAN CITY CODE AND PULLMAN CITY ORDINANCES NOS. 87-9 §1 (1987), 91-11 §1 (1991), 92-29 §2 (1992), 96-19 §3 (1996), 98-23 §1 (1998), 99-49 §2 (1999), 00-3 §3 (2000), 00-08 §7 (2000), 00-20 §1 (2000), 00-22 §22 (2000), 01-5 §9 (2001), 03-33 §30 (2003) OF THE PULLMAN CITY CODE AND OTHER MATTERS PROPERLY RELATED THERETO.

Councilmember Benjamin moved, Councilmember Waldrop seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 08-4. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution and Ordinance

Resolution No. R-23-08 and Ordinance No. 08-5 - Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment and Amending the Prezone Classification of Property

14. Mayor Johnson announced that a resolution and ordinance had been prepared relating to 9,000 square feet of property located west of Sunnyside Park and North of Wawawai Road. Planning Director Dickinson presented the staff report. There were no questions from the Council or audience on his report. Councilmember Waldrop moved, Councilmember Bloom seconded to adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. R-23-08 by title only reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION GRANTING THE REQUEST TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP OF THE CITY OF PULLMAN FROM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO COMMERCIAL FOR THE REAL ESTATE HEREIN DESCRIBED CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 9,000 SQUARE FEET LOCATED WEST OF SUNNYSIDE PARK AND NORTH OF WAWAWAI ROAD.

Councilmember Waldrop moved, Councilmember Benjamin seconded to adopt Resolution No. R-23-08. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 08-5 by title only reads as follows:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PREZONE CLASSIFICATION FROM R2 TO C1 FOR THE REAL ESTATE HEREIN DESCRIBED CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 9,000 SQUARE FEET LOCATED WEST OF SUNNYSIDE PARK AND NORTH OF WAWAWAI ROAD.

Councilmember Benjamin moved, Councilmember Waldrop seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 08-5. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussions

Downtown Parking

15. Mayor Johnson announced that a discussion is scheduled on downtown parking and thanked the Planning Commission for all of its hard work on the issue. Planning Director Dickinson presented the staff report which included a description of the Planning Commission's recommendations. Councilmember Benjamin asked for comments regarding ADA requirements for parking. Planning Director Dickinson responded. Councilmember Waldrop asked how the City can distinguish the difference for the one space per bedroom requirement for College Hill and not having the same requirement for downtown. Planning Director Dickinson responded. Councilmember Heath noted there may be a conflict in the Comprehensive Plan regarding residential housing downtown as well as providing adequate parking for businesses. Councilmember Heath noted that the business needs, residential needs, and parking requirements all can't be addressed. Steven Garl, Chair of the Planning Commission, responded. Councilmember Bloom stated he did not think there is a benefit to having parking if there are no people or businesses able to locate in the downtown area and he is in favor of more consistent parking enforcement and park-and-ride lots. Councilmember Bloom and Mayor Johnson

stated they were impressed with the process and the Planning Commission recommendations. Mr. Garl responded.

Justin Rogers, 2355 NW Ridge Line and a downtown business owner, stated the City should not settle for too narrow of a focus and that the downtown area needs a vision, advertising and brand, and a non-biased third party should look at the vision for downtown.

Jim Hill, 550 SE High, expressed concern with long-term parking overflow from the downtown to Pioneer Hill and stated that the City Council should keep in mind the vacant property located on the outskirts of downtown and the impacts on parking. Mr. Hill noted that the Planning Commission should not be addressing these detailed issues and that the City should explore the possibility of developing a parking committee.

Evan Laubach, 248 NW Sunrise, stated he has developed sites in the downtown and does not want to loose the momentum that has been gained in the downtown area. Mr. Laubach noted that residential use of the upper levels is cost effective for downtown development and that providing parking spaces will take away from the cozy feeling of downtown. Councilmember Waldrop asked Mr. Laubach's opinion on having parking provided outside of the downtown area. Mr. Laubach responded. Councilmember Heath asked Mr. Laubach's opinion on starting the parking requirements with ten units or more. Mr. Laubach responded.

Todd Butler, 610 SE High, thanked the Planning Commission for its efforts and stated that the recommendation is a vision for downtown and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Butler noted that parking is access for the downtown area and it is important for those business owners.

Mike Yates, 107 S. Grand, thanked the Planning Department and Planning Commission for its efforts on the issue and thought the proposal would work for him personally and commented on the fact that one proposed development caused a knee-jerk reaction on the parking issue. Mr. Yates stated it was important to have more people living downtown to support downtown businesses. Councilmember Bloom requested more time to review the issue before making any decisions. Mayor Johnson suggested that the item be included on the April 8 agenda. City Council concurred.

Summary of Property Tax Levies

16. Mayor Johnson announced that a discussion is scheduled on a summary of property tax levies. Finance Director Woo presented the staff report. Councilmember Heath asked for a description of the voter-approved levies. Finance Director Woo responded.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Waldrop moved, Councilmember Benjamin seconded to adjourn the regular meeting of the City Council.

Motion Carried.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the regular meeting of the City Council at 9:51 p.m.