

**October 19, 2022**

## **A Bit of “Housekeeping”**

**As we’re moving closer to ballot delivery (ballots start getting mailed this yesterday!) I thought this might be a good time to provide some info for a couple of Carlton-specific items on this year’s ballot and updates on a couple of city projects that don’t require a vote.**

### **Let’s go with the ballot measures first:**

#### **1. Updating the Carlton City Charter (Ballot Measure 36-213)**

This is a housekeeping measure.

Most cities have a municipal charter that establishes the town, includes its boundaries, and covers the municipality's form of government, elected and administrative officials, and municipal elections. It defines the town's boards, commissions, and committees, how governing bodies (including the city council & mayor) are elected or appointed, and the length of terms in office.

It also outlines the handling of public services and deals with financial matters, such as the power to tax. Periodically the Charter needs to be modernized – which is what is being done this year. It’s an update that reflects current state law and follows the guidance of the League of Oregon Cities’ Model Charter. This year we’re mostly updating language, but I encourage you to read through and if you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact me or the city staff for clarification.

It has NO fiscal impact!

#### **2. Psilocybin Treatment Centers: Ballot Measure (Ballot Measure 36-220)**

This is a proposal for a 2-year moratorium on psilocybin treatment centers in the city. You may recall in 2020, Oregon voters passed a ballot initiative that made psilocybin legal for mental health treatment **in supervised settings**. Cities have the option this year of authorizing the treatment centers, implementing an outright ban, or putting in place a 2-year moratorium, then revisiting the issue. This is NOT an across-the-board, forever ban on these facilities, nor does it allow the centers. It IS a “breather.”

When new programs such as this are approved, the enabling bill generally doesn’t get into the details of how the provisions of the bill will be enacted: how the facilities will function, where they will be allowed (distance from schools, operating hours, etc.) The rules governing operations are generally developed by staff who work in the administrative agency overseeing the program – in this case, the Oregon Health Authority, which means their folks will be writing the enacting rules and regulations.

It's not uncommon when a new program or project is started that there are often bumps in the road – unforeseen issues, unexpected consequences of certain provisions in the law, etc. It can take a couple of years of tweaking and rewriting regulations before the “kinks” are worked out.

What our ballot measure does is put the implementation of this program, within our city limits, on hold for two years, which gives the health authority time to test out its rules and fine-tune or make needed changes – saving the city the confusion of dealing with any unintended consequences that may come to light. At the end of the two years, we'll have the option of allowing the new program or banning it completely; but we'll be doing this with information and experience already gained from other jurisdictions.

## Local, non-ballot questions:

**3.** I want to clarify some inaccurate information filtering onto social media regarding the new City Civic Center that we'll be starting construction on early next year. With the many starts and stops, information regarding the approval of this project has become a little tangled, and some confusion exists.

**To begin:** There has only been **one** vote regarding any new city business building in Carlton. That vote was taken in 2018 on a proposed bond measure to pay for a new public safety (police department) building.

That measure failed with only 50.76% or 745 of the city's 1,505 registered voters even casting a ballot.

That is the one and only time any vote was taken regarding any community office building.

(Bond trivia: a bond issue can be proposed only for buildings such as public safety i.e. police or fire departments, or special use such as the pool house. A bond measure cannot be passed for a general-use office building.)

After the 2018 vote failed, nothing more happened until a new building design was introduced in 2020. That project was put on hold by the city council because it was presented just as the Covid shutdown was put into place and the council was not willing to move forward on a multi-million-dollar project just as the country was going into uncertain health and financial period.

With administrative and council changes that year it wasn't until mid-2021 that we could get things re-started.

With a new city council & mayor (both of whom had strong reservations about the need for a new building), an intensive study was done evaluating the options of either remodeling the current 1974 CMU (Concrete Masonry Unit)-block structure with no rebar or putting up a new building. Engineering, audio-visual, heating-cooling companies, and our insurance providers were all consulted; their unanimous verdicts were that attempting to repair or update the current building would be throwing good money after bad, and we could be exposing the city to serious lawsuits covering everything from unsafe working conditions to lack of ADA accessibility and noncompliance with state laws.

The current structure has a long list of issues, including a lack of staff workspace, no accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges, broadcast blockage for city meetings (one of the reasons we can't have more than Council and 2 staff in the building during meetings); a CMU building with no reinforcement (in case of an earthquake it would likely be the first building in town to collapse), no emergency heating or cooling backup and a failing heating/cooling system.

After a number of intense discussions, the council voted to move forward on a new building.

Over the last several years the city has been a frugal and careful steward of public money and has been saving for the day we decide to either seriously remodel or build a new building – so we have a good financial base to start with, and we can show the banks that the city is financially strong and sound.

We're also looking at serious fundraising, grants for various building features, and any other funding options that come our way.

Given the amount of time and discussion that has surrounded this project, it's easy to think that there have been multiple votes and decisions, but that has not been the case.

**4. And finally: A Comprehensive Plan/Development Code update.**

After a flurry of meetings and discussions for the Envision Carlton project, it may seem that it's disappeared – but that's far from the case. The collection of all of the input from citizens who attended meetings and filled out questionnaires is now being collated and put into a draft updated Comprehensive Plan that will be presented for review and adoption in December 2022 or January 2023. Once that goal is passed, staff will begin drafting revisions to our city development code based on the Comp Plan goals, and you can expect to be asked to participate in more discussions to ensure those goals are accurately reflected in the Development Code requirements. The plan is to have this all completed by the end of 2023.

Remember: These two documents are the foundation for determining what growth and development in Carlton will look like, and it's been two decades since they were last updated. Some priorities have changed, some have become more important, and these projects are your opportunity to ensure we have the best possible outcomes for Carlton's next 20 years.

## **In closing**

Many thanks and kudos to all of the folks who made Wednesday evening's Highway 47 discussion such a success. The fire hall was close to standing room only, and we owe a huge vote of appreciation to our Carlton Fire Department for their generosity in letting us use it.

And special thanks to Carlton Corners and Carlton Fire Department for contributing their reader sign to ensure we got the word out for the meeting!

The conversation and comments all contributed to filling out our vision of what this project will look like. & kudos once again to City Manager Beaucaire on her adroit monitoring of the conversation -- keeping it moving while ensuring everyone who wanted to speak was listened to and respected. You gave our ODOT guests lots to think about.

Please mark your calendars for the next -- and final -- gathering: **November 9th, 6 pm at the Fire Hall**

Thank you all for your participation -- you are what makes Carlton our "Great Little town!"

Mayor Linda Watkins