

A Visit with the Mayor after the State of the City address

Publisher's Note: With the State of the City address last week, Mayor Lou Ogden delivered a speech assuring residents that Tualatin's future is bright. Tualatin Life had the opportunity to ask a few follow-up questions. -JC

TL - WITH ALL OF THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN TUALATIN CURRENTLY, WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ARE THE DEVELOPERS MAKING TO ACCOMMODATE THE ADDED TRAFFIC VOLUME THEY WILL BE CAUSING?

MAYOR OGDEN - Tualatin is very fortunate to have a long history of planning where appropriate land uses exist; industrial zones are centered around major transportation routes; neighborhoods are cloistered together around schools, parks and other amenities. When land uses were (or are) designated, the appropriate infrastructure gets identified to meet the needs of that particular land use (water pipes for instance are planned for differently in a manufacturing zone than they are in a low-density residential zone); that planning is done well in advance of development so that by the time a developer purchases a piece of property, they know what sorts of land uses can go on the site and what infrastructure they need to build to accommodate their use. Roads are part of that infrastructure planning. When planning takes place, the infrastructure needs get divided into public and private. For instance, a residential developer will know they are responsible to build the residential streets associated with their subdivision as well as pay fees to fund the public portion of the system. The Sagert Farm Sub-division for instance is responsible for building the internal streets associated with that development, plus, they pay a Transportation Development Tax (TDT) that goes toward the larger system of roads (such as 65th, Sagert, Borland, Tualatin-Sherwood Road). They are also required to improve the intersections at Sagert/65/Borland by adding a stop light and turning lane.

TL - WHO, OR WHAT ENTITY, IS IN CHARGE OF NEGOTIATING WITH DEVELOPERS TO GET THESE SORTS OF IMPROVEMENTS WHEN BEING PERMITTED, AND ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE JOB THEY ARE DOING?

MAYOR OGDEN - Infrastructure funding, as described in question #1, isn't a one-off negotiation with every developer who brings a project to the City; it's not like we look at one particular business and

say, "welcome to town, you look like you're doing okay, traffic is tough, we think you can afford to expand Tualatin-Sherwood Road and unless you do, you can't develop". Instead, we've already identified the needs well in advance; we improve the public system through a prioritized capital program that previous developments have paid into, together with the help of the County, Region, State and Fed if and when available. Every 10 years or so, we update our Transportation System Plan which helps us calibrate what has happened on the ground with the funding sources available. This is one of the reasons planning and public input are very important on the front end because once a land use gets set and systems are built to accommodate those land uses, we as a community and Council (and staff) have very little ability to impact growth and development. The industrial growth in Tualatin currently is building out planned areas; those businesses and developments are going into areas that were planned to accommodate them. They are required to build the infrastructure associated with their development - like development-specific streets and water and sewer and storm, and then they pay System Development Charges and Transportation Development Taxes that go into the pot that pays to enhance and improve the public system. Often, a specific development will exceed certain threshold impacts and be required to build specific public projects. For instance, Bridgeport Village was required to substantially improve the access from Lower Boones Ferry at the I-5 interchange and all the way up to Safeway. Nyberg Woods made improvements to the I-5 access at Nyberg, and the Nyberg Rivers development added an entirely new westbound lane on Nyberg St. However, in many cases funding follows development and lags in time as we build up funds paid by developers.

TL - WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON TERM LIMITS?

MAYOR OGDEN - Long before I was ever involved in local government, I never understood the need to eliminate long standing elected officials from the choice of the voters. When voters want a change in their elected officials, they have the opportunity to do that at every election. I grew up in Illinois in the 50's and 60's when Everett Dirksen was in Congress for many years bringing great value to the State and, because of his seniority, was instrumental in writing and passing the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and '68. Similarly, Chicago Mayor Daley was not only an icon for his city, but played a big role in the election of John Kennedy for President. And of course, Senator Edward Kennedy and Speaker Tip O'Neil both of

Massachusetts brought literally billions of dollars to Boston in infrastructure improvements. The lists go on, but consider our own Oregon. In the 1980's and '90's our Senators Hadfield and Packwood controlled both the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees. Oregon profits still today from the myriad investments of Federal funds in our state from their seniority and influence in Congress. Today, Senator Ron Wyden, and US Representatives DeFazio, Walden, and Blumenauer have consistently been able to lift Oregon above many states in the areas of transportation funding, and environmental policies. Locally, Tualatin's Richard Devlin is one of the most influential members of the Oregon Legislature and delivered tremendous benefits to our town. Former Tualatin Mayor Roy Rogers has served nearly 30 years on the Washington County Board of Commissioners and has been instrumental in the County investing millions in Tualatin such as the Ki-a-Kuts Bridge, I-5 at the Nyberg interchange, widening Tualatin Rd and Tualatin-Sherwood Rd, and the new Tualatin River Greenway Trail behind Cabelas. In my judgement, perhaps Tualatin's most productive mayor was Steve Stolze, who was instrumental in bringing hi-tech manufacturing to Tualatin, and championed the building of Tualatin Commons amidst a shrill minority opposition who tried to sour public opinion against it. Although Steve chose to vacate the mayor's seat after six years to run for County office, had he followed my urging to continue as mayor, I would still be voting for him. To gain the seniority and influence to effect those types of benefits for us takes years and as in some cases, decades. Perhaps at some point the voters may decide to elect someone to replace any of them. However, with the experience and advancement in service to their community of such elected officials, why would any voter want someone else to say they could no longer vote for a candidate of their preference simply because that official had served an arbitrary number of years?

TL - WHY DO YOU THINK SO MANY CITY OF TUALATIN EMPLOYEES ARE LEAVING SO SUDDENLY (INCLUDING BEN BRYANT, SARA SINGER, JIM SAYERS, AND SEVERAL KEY PLAYERS IN OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT)? IS THIS JUST A COINCIDENCE OR IS THERE MORE TO IT?

MAYOR OGDEN - There are a couple of things happening in the job market right now. First, with the economy picking up, there is more movement which has created greater opportunities for our talent. We have been very fortunate to be able to recruit top notch talent, especially over the last 5-8 years. I think



Mayor Ogden giving the State of the City Address last week.
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about Abigail Elder who was our Library Manager; an extraordinary team member! She was with us for almost 5 years and then the City of Beaverton recruited her to be their Library Director. It's a bigger position, more opportunities for her, and for us, we are proud to say that she came from Tualatin and are fortunate for the indelible mark she left on our organization. We hired Ben Bryant as an intern and benefited as he moved up in the organization. We were lucky to have him for five years and when the opportunity arose to become the Deputy City Manager in Happy Valley, of course he took it. We know we have found great talent when they grow and are actually recruited to higher positions in other entities. There are a number of people who we sort of feel like we launched their career or at the least, we gave them a great opportunity to learn and grow and develop their skills, and inevitably, they outgrew us when openings occur elsewhere. Similarly, we have benefited from bringing talent from other cities, such as our Public Works Director, City Attorney, Human Resources Director, City Engineer, Park and Recreation Manager and numerous police, library, planning, accounting and other professionals. The other thing that is happening is that people are retiring. I think of Kent Barker, the best Police Chief in the nation, whom we are incredibly fortunate to have as our chief. Larry Braaksma, Jim Noragon, Norm Tolleson, all solid police employees who have served Tualatin for decades, are ready to retire and move into the next phase of their lives. I think that reflects positively on Tualatin in that they chose to finish their distinguished careers here with us. Just like we've recruited talented performers before, these are opportunities for us to recruit the best again, and I believe we are doing that and that we will continue to have an organization that is focused on performance in a service-centric environment while having fun and enjoying life.