

October 22, 2023

Response to Barbara Sherman's request for a statement

Good afternoon Barbara. Gregg passed on your request for information regarding the effort to recall six of the seven King City City Councilors. The City Councilors subject to the recall effort are: Mayor Jaimie Fender, Councilor Kate Mohr, Councilor Laurie Petrie, Councilor Marc Manelis, Councilor Micah Paulsen and Counselor Smart Ochoi. The King City Recall Committee has prepared the following statement;

A recall petition was filed and approved by King City on 9/19/23 to remove 6 of the 7 Councilors to include Mayor Fender. Signature gathering began but was halted on October 5th after the city clerk revoked the petition. At the time of revocation, King City would not provide specific information as to why the petition was revoked and suggested we contact an attorney for legal advice. It is our understanding the Secretary of State's office sent a letter to King City on October 11th recommending they rescind the decision to revoke their approval of the petition and have it reinstated. We are seeking clarification from the Secretary of State and legal counsel.

The Chief Petitioner Randall Olsen made the following statement to the City Council on October 18th;

I think most of you are aware I'm the Chief Petitioner for the recall petition but several of you are my neighbors; you live about a dozen houses away; Smart lives across the alleyway and I know him to be a really decent man and a really nice family. So I just wanted to say you know being an unpaid volunteer can feel like a thankless job. I want to thank you for the time and hard work you all put into managing the city and planning for its future. I think you are all good people volunteering to serve your city and doing the best job that you can. I want to assure you that the recall is nothing personal. Its simply we have repeatedly voiced our opposition to the Fischer Road extension as planned and feel the recall is our only remaining option.

After the Chief Petitioner's statement, Mayor Fender characterized the recall petition as cowardly and personal. Although we regret the reaction of the Mayor, recalls are a necessary mechanism that allows a change of leadership when the interests of the citizens are not being represented. An overwhelming majority of those testifying at the public hearings and meetings for the Kingston Terrace Transportation System Plan and Master Plan were opposed.

Mayor Fender and other councilors opined that if a change of leadership was desired it should have been done at last November's election. The approval of the plans didn't happen until just recently. Last November we were hopeful the Council would listen to the concerns of the community and amend the plans being presented but unfortunately that did not happen.

Councilor Shawna Thompson voted no on the Transportation System Plan, and abstained on the Kingston Terrace Master Plan. We applaud and appreciate her vote and support her continuing to serve as City Councilor. Councilor Thompson said the following during the discussion of the Transportation System Plan:

“Speaking from my heart, on paper it looks like the best alternative, but my job - our job - is to listen to community members. With over 600 letters on record against this alternative, I have no other choice than to vote no. There are too many community members who are absolutely against it, and it will impact too many negatively.”

“With my real estate background, there may be a lot of financial loss to these homeowners, and I don’t want any community member to suffer a loss based on my decision. We should vote on what we would want if we were in our community members’ shoes. These are our neighbors and they have valid concerns. They don’t want a thoroughfare in front of their house.”

The primary concern from the beginning of this process was the planned Fischer Road extension that directly links Roy Rogers Road to 99W, through the Bankston Nature Preserve (a conservation easement), within several hundred feet of the Tualatin River, and through the heart of established communities to include Edgewater. The city’s consultants project an average of 8,600 vehicles per day west of 131st and 12,900 east of 131st on this planned extension (projections are for the year 2040) 40% cut through. For a comparison, the Washington County 2022 traffic count for Beef Bend Road at 119th Avenue measured 9,476 vehicles.

The citizens did not have the opportunity to vote on doubling the size of King City with the Kingston Terrace expansion and the resultant impacts. The Council had the opportunity to listen to and vote in response to the concerns of the community. Councilor Thompson listened. A recall election will provide an opportunity for all King City voters to be heard.