

City Council approves bike share and downtown handicap spaces

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

During the Monday, April 20, City Council meeting, the Welcoming City resolution was pulled from consideration, but the following items were approved:

*A resolution of support for the National Cycling Center, working with Zagster, to start a Bike Share Program. There are

10 planned bike share stations holding 50 rentable bikes across the city in the first phase. There's no cost to taxpayers, as the city will only provide minor site preparation and encroachment agreements. Initial sites include downtown, Salem Lake, Quarry Park and Old Salem.

*The placement of four on-street handicap parking spaces at the downtown intersection of Cherry and

Fourth Streets. While those with a handicap pass can park anywhere for free downtown, many aren't aware of this or have difficulty finding an unoccupied space. More on-street handicap spots may be added in the future.

*The creation of a nine-member Urban Food Policy Council, which will advocate for food policies that will help with hunger, food insecurity and lack of

access to healthy food in the city's urban core. Members of the council will be appointed by the mayor and approved by the City Council.

*The city will acquire the 165-acre property of the closed Long Creek Golf Course. The city will work with residents to figure out what kind of recreational purpose the land will have. The city will buy 100 acres for \$503,000

using park acquisition general obligation bond money. The remaining 65 acres will be purchased by The Conservation Fund for \$236,500 and donated to the city in 2018, after it receives a grant to reimburse the purchase.

*A loan ranging from \$400,000 to \$500,000 for construction of the Enclave II, a 96-unit apartment complex on Bethania

Station Road. A total of 24 units will be affordable to those making 30 percent of the area median income (AMI) and the rest will be affordable to those making 60 percent of AMI. The amortized loan has a proposed minimum term of 15 years. Financing for the project also includes a bank loan and state funds.



City Council Member Derwin Montgomery speaks at a rally for the Welcoming City resolution held in front of City Hall on Monday.



Photos by Todd Luck
Danny Timpona speaks at a rally for the Welcoming City resolution held in front of City Hall on Monday.

Welcoming

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scared off? They're scared of us. They're scared of power. They're scared we're coming together. They're scared we're paying attention."

Both City Council Members Dan Besse and Derwin Montgomery spoke strongly in support of the resolution.

"We have passed resolutions in the past that have said similar things to what we will say tonight and if there're members on the council tonight who decide not to vote, then we must ask ourselves the question: Did they lie on their last vote or is this one a lie tonight?" said Montgomery.

Besse said that when it became uncertain what the outcome of the vote would be, he decided to pull the resolution, rather than risk the message that a defeat would've sent immigrants and refugees in the community. However, it was pulled with only a vague explanation by Mayor Allen Joiner that Besse would continue working on the issue. Frustrated supporters used the comment session to accuse the council of choosing their fear of the General Assembly over their own constituents. Only after the comment session, did Besse and Montgomery reassure them the resolu-

tion wasn't dead and that they'd be working to garner support for it.




Besse said he believed that a larger coalition of supporters would make it harder for lawmakers to retaliate. He was unsure when the resolution would come back or even if it would still be a resolution or simply a joint statement that wouldn't need City Council approval.

Whatever the fate of the resolution, supporters are planning to take action.

"Regardless of what our city decides, we have many sanctuaries in our city," Rabbi Mark Strauss-Cohn said last week. "Regardless of what some politicians value, we value being welcoming in this city."

At last week's event, Rev. Craig Schaub of Parkway United Church of Christ said a meeting will be held at his church on Monday at 7 p.m. to discuss plans for an immigrant legal defense fund and an interfaith rapid response network of people to act as public witness to immigration enforcement actions. He said they'd even discuss offering sanctuary to those at risk of deportation in places of worship. Federal law says that anyone knowingly harboring an undocumented immigrant in any place, even a church, can face prison time.

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