

Anacortes City Council Minutes - June 21, 2022

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of June 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton and Amanda Hubik were present.

Councilmember Jeremy Carter participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Councilmember Bruce McDougall was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller shared current COVID-19 case statistics in Skagit County, noting a 4 percent decrease in new cases and no new hospitalizations. He continued by mentioning the inaugural Juneteenth holiday, as observed on June 20, 2022, which is celebrated annually on June 19th in commemoration of the emancipation of African Americans from bondage on that day in 1865. He characterized the holiday as a day on which we re-commit ourselves to the work of life, liberty, happiness and equality for all.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

The Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee did not meet the previous week.

Public Works Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. Her update included discussion of the curb gutter sidewalk standards and the desire to update them in the future. She then reported on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Outfall Project. She confirmed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had approved the alignment down U Avenue, but that there will be delays on the marine portion due to discovery of possible cultural artifacts. Ms. Moulton expressed hope that timely completion of the verification process would allow for construction to re-commence in August, thus meeting the "fish window". She further mentioned that the Committee is re-visiting the scope of work for the upland portion of the project, as only one bid was received for the project. Ms. Moulton continued the update, reporting that a contract modification would be coming before Council the following week for Pump Station 8 emergency relocation, which sustained damage during high tide events in July 2021, as costs increased due to permitting expenses. FEMA and the State government are covering 95 percent of the project cost. She continued by providing a water summer construction update, including water main replacement in Skyline on Sands Way and fencing improvements at a pond on West 7th Street. She concluded with street construction updates, including the cape seal project with Skagit County starting in July on 37th Street, Whistle Lake Road, and O Avenue south of 41st Street; the anticipated July 17th completion of 32nd and M roundabout; a sidewalk project on Hillcrest Drive alongside the cemetery; and sidewalk gap filling on O Avenue from 22nd Street proceeding north with ADA improvements on the corners.

Mayor Miller mentioned that interactions with FEMA and other agencies related to permitting make the Pump Station 8 contract modification a necessary cost for successful project completion.

Skagit County Law and Justice Council

Mr. Carter reported from the Skagit County Law and Justice Council meeting held the previous week. The topics discussed included the re-establishment of the drug court, which is a two-year program for those charged with non-violent offenses often involving illegal drugs. If successfully completed, jail time and charges can be

waived. He also reported on the family recovery court, which is a 9-month voluntary program offered by Skagit County for parents who have had a child removed from their custody for issues such as substance abuse. Skagit County advocated for increased participation in order to maintain state funding. He concluded by mentioning the Northstar Project, which Skagit County Public Health Director, Jennifer Johnson, would address later in the meeting.

Swearing-In of Police Officer Nadia Daniel

Chief Dave Floyd introduced Patrol Officer Nadia Daniel, who recently completed a 19-week course at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Mayor Miller administered the oath of office to Patrol Officer Nadia Daniel.

Announcements

Mr. Walters acknowledged the passing of former Councilmember Ken Brown and noted that on Wednesday June 22 at 1:30pm there will be a Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting will present their 2021 report on unmet human services at the Anacortes Senior Activity Center.

Mr. Young reported on his visit to the Senior Center and his participation in graduation ceremonies. He thanked the City and its departments for being involved in the successful Pride festivities held over the weekend.

Public Comment

Mayor Miller invited the public to comment on any item not on the agenda.

Natalie Clark addressed the Council as treasurer of Anacortes Pride and reported that the weekend event was a great success. She detailed some of the participating groups and mentioned the following celebration held at Causland Park. Ms. Clark characterized community response and participation as overwhelmingly positive from current and former residents alike. She expressed appreciation for the respectful and loving support of the LGBTQ+ community. Mayor Miller thanked the Police Department and their collaborative work with other local jurisdictions to ensure the events were safely conducted.

Kathleen Dickinson of Old Town mentioned derelict Recreational Vehicles (RVs) in her neighborhood are being moved, some being towed with ropes because they are not in running condition. She wondered if Council had any plans for finding an appropriate place for the RVs to park, as they are not hooked up to electricity or sewer.

Alan Weeks addressed RV's being parked on the waterfront in the Skyline neighborhood. He acknowledged the complexity of the problem, but asked that a more appropriate parking place be found for the RVs.

Gregory Smith of Anacortes on 5th and M noted a derelict RV being towed down the street causing a loud commotion. He reported observing various individuals conducting what he believed to be drug-related transactions and defecating on the sidewalk. He commended the police for prompt and professional response to his calls for support and advocated the City Council pass ordinances to address the problem. As a former King County resident, he noted that he had witnessed similar problems there and asserted that the City must address the problem before it worsens further.

Dan Polis of 7th Street and M Avenue agreed with Gregory Smith and wondered if the City can limit the area where the RV's are legally able to park, such as an industrial area.

John Morgan of Anacortes stated that he is not familiar with the RV issue, but is concerned that the problem stems from homelessness. He asserted that adequate shelter is needed for these individuals and that they are not a threat to law enforcement unless they are committing a criminal act. He hoped that City Council and City of Anacortes would be aware of the homeless issue.

Ward MacKenzie of Anacortes commented that from his experience as a 30-year career social worker, many of these individuals in RVs are criminals, addicts or mentally ill. He added that from past experience none of these individuals improved when their bad behavior was enabled or tolerated. He expressed appreciation for the work of the police, but was concerned that current laws prevent effective enforcement. He asked that municipal laws be passed to aid the police in more effectively addressing the situation.

Mayor Miller mentioned that he had contacted residents near 5th Street and N Avenue and that Mr. Walters had reached out to concerned residents in his ward. He cited recent success in moving vehicles from T Avenue and pointed to the sustained outreach efforts of City of Anacortes social workers and law enforcement in attempts to connect homeless individuals with available housing and social services. Mayor Miller further emphasized that the City will enforce public nuisance codes under Anacortes Municipal Code 9.06.040, while taking seriously the housing needs of the homeless and the public safety of our community.

Evan Saxton thanked the community for coming out to celebrate Anacortes Pride over the weekend. He mentioned an Oak Harbor man who was arrested for threats against LGBTQ+ community members and related this incident to the debate surrounding Resolution 2060, which addressed hate speech. He concluded that acknowledging the nuanced nature of hate speech was important, thanked Mayor Miller for his leadership over the last week in embracing diversity, and expressed hope that everyone could continue to learn these considerations in a safe environment.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Young moved, seconded by Ms. Moulton, to approve the following Consent Agenda items.

- a. Minutes of June 13, 2022
- b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$862,631.79

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 103483 through 103519, total \$846,370.40

Check numbers: 103520 through 103529, total \$3,521.26

Wire transfer numbers: 305288 through 305667, total \$12,740.13

- c. Street Fair Application - Anacortes Arts Festival

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Hearings

CDBG Draft 2022 Action Plan - Final Review and Approval

Planning, Community and Economic Development Director, Don Measamer, presented the Community Development Block Grant Draft 2022 Action Plan. Public comment opened March 16, 2022 and closed on April 15, 2022. However, the City accepted public comments until this evening's meeting. No public comments were received. Mr. Measamer reported that the grant totaled \$105,206 allocated for public service, the Anacortes Family Center, homelessness, assistance for special needs populations, and low-income senior housing rehabilitation. In particular, Mr. Measamer mentioned the Anacortes Housing Authority re-roof project of the Anacortes Family Center being moved from 2021 to 2022 in order to enable the project to move forward without loan funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mayor Miller invited the public to comment on the Community Development Block Grant Draft 2022 Action Plan. No one present wished to address the Council on the Community Development Block Grant Draft 2022 Action Plan. Mayor Miller closed the public hearing at 6:38 pm.

Ms. Moulton supported the use of the funds for the roof project having fewer reporting and administrative

requirements. As a member of the Housing Authority board, Ms. Hubik recused herself. As a member of the Anacortes Family Center board, Ms. Cleland-McGrath recused herself.

CAROLYN MOULTON moved, seconded by ANTHONY YOUNG, to Approve the CDBG Draft 2022 Action Plan as submitted..

Vote: Ayes - JEREMY CARTER, ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CAROLYN MOULTON. Nays - None. Result: Passed.

Other Business

Skagit Community Action Agency: Bill Henkel, Executive Director

Planning, Community and Economic Development Director, Don Measamer, introduced Bill Henkel, Executive Director of Skagit Community Action Agency. Mr. Henkel provided an overview of the Community Action of Skagit County program detailing services throughout Skagit County. He emphasized the importance of his organization's services in light of the homeless problem and the COVID-19 pandemic. Sandi York provided specific details on the City of Anacortes services, which include energy and utility assistance, Women Infants and Children, coordinated entry and housing assistance. She noted opportunities for connecting eligible groups, such as seniors and disabled citizens, with needed services, allowing them to stay independent longer. She cited statistics that nearly 60% of those receiving services are single without children and 42% are in an unhoused or unknown situation. 68% of those served are below the median income level and face rising rents and housing challenges. She mentioned conversations with the City to form a partnership including a full-time employee that would assist in providing coordinated access to services for those in need. She hoped that creating such a position could add value and not duplicate efforts in providing a modicum of stability to those in need, including affordable housing development. Mr. Henkel cited a University of Washington study that rates Skagit County as having the lowest vacancy rate in Washington state, which he posited presents challenges in dealing with homelessness and impoverished community members. Issues related to these challenges are the lack of developer capacity and the need for public funding. He advocated creative approaches and provided Cascade Landing in Burlington as an example of a private developer and non-profit partnership that flipped the relative abundance of open commercial office space to create residential space for those in need. He thanked Ms. Hubik for her recent visit and expressed a desire to partner with the City and other government entities in making progress on providing housing to those in need. Mr. Henkel and Ms. York's slides were added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Mr. Young thanked Mr. Henkel and Ms. York for their presentation and looked forward to continuing to work with Skagit Community Action Agency. As a former board member, he cited the importance of the organization's work and the opportunity for partnership with the community.

Ms. Moulton thanked the presenters and expressed gratitude for learning about Cascade Landing project and the potential partnership for the Anacortes Housing Authority on a motel purchase for conversion to affordable housing.

Mr. Walters also thanked the presenters and cited the importance of addressing the shortage of low income housing and appreciated the broad nature of the agency's services that help those who are in extremis avoid becoming homeless in the first place. He mentioned the importance of considering how the City can fiscally partner with organizations in addressing homelessness and related issues.

North Star Project - Jennifer Johnson, Director, Skagit County Public Health Department

Planning, Community and Economic Development Director, Don Measamer, introduced Jennifer Johnson, Skagit County Director of Public Health. Ms. Johnson provided an overview of the North Star Project for the design of a whole-of-government approach to dealing with homelessness through provision of housing and

behavioral health services for Skagit County. She mentioned that it was interesting to hear the public comments in tonight's meeting, which made it clear that the problem exists throughout Skagit County. She cited a misalignment of government services and funding needed to address the problems associated with homelessness. She mentioned that mental disorders and substance abuse are not the sole indicators of homelessness, and that many individuals are one crisis away from being without shelter. She said there was a lack of understanding related to the causal factors of homelessness and how to enhance individual wellness, and that many community leaders are trying hard to find solutions. Ms. Johnson proposed a community response embodied in the North Star Project, which would be a multi-jurisdictional effort that would occur in two phases over two years. In March of this year, phase 1 began by developing a shared vision for Skagit County. Phase 2 will be project implementation facilitated by Tenfold Health and their team of health integration experts. Mayors and Commissioners are guides for the process, which will create an advisory board to be established late summer 2022 that will bring together municipal leaders and allow for coordinated County efforts in addressing homelessness and related issues. She detailed a plan of action and milestones in project implementation to include interviews of government and civil society stakeholders, a non-binding call to action for local leaders, and mapping of existing resources. She thanked City Council for the opportunity to address tonight's meeting.

Mr. Walters asserted that misalignment is not necessarily the central problem unless it results in inefficiencies or inequitable distribution of services or failure to deliver results, citing the example of the Anacortes Family Center that does not do housing first, but should not miss out on available housing resources. He characterized the problem as diverse and not requiring a monolithic approach. Ms. Johnson responded that the project will take a holistic approach in determining how resources are allocated to vital services across the continuum of care. The intent should be that government leaders keep an open mind to shifting allocation priorities based on Department of Commerce models that the County used to prioritize funding, as well as positive outcomes that are being realized outside the scope of Commerce models. She intends to have the project address Mr. Walters' concerns and plans to revise the problem statement accordingly.

Ms. Moulton thanked Ms. Johnson for her presentation tonight and an earlier presentation to the Housing Affordability and Community Services (HACS) committee. She hoped that HACS committee members could be engaged in future discussions on this project with Tenfold Health. Ms. Johnson clarified that committee members would be included in follow-on project interviews.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath commended Ms. Johnson in Skagit County's transparency in providing project information to the public. Ms. Johnson emphasized the importance of transparency and inclusion.

Ms. Hubik noted that information sessions were in the near future and asked if there would be further information regarding these sessions. Ms. Johnson responded that she would send information through Mayors.

Mr. Young mentioned that there are huge challenges, but that there are many working on solutions throughout the community. He specifically mentioned a need for collaboration between local hospitals.

Resolution 3090 - Grand View Cemetery Policies and Fees

Parks and Recreation Director, Jonn Lunsford, introduced Resolution 3090, which would revise policies and fees for Grand View Cemetery. Parks Administrative Assistant, Darby Jordan, spoke about how the public can do research on cemetery services through an interactive map created cooperatively with GIS and Museum on the City website on the Parks and Recreation web page. Records go back over 120 years and Museum volunteers continue to work on adding data to the repository. She detailed how the public can search for grave site records and available plots via the City website. Parks Manager, Nicole Johnston, spoke about the Grand View Cemetery expansion that occurred over two phases, including road repair, re-grading and planting of trees and flowers, and installation of a sidewalk on the south end that will lead to the future columbarium site. She

added that Parks and Recreation Staff, in cooperation with the Legal department, are still researching data on columbarium prices and policies and monument options. Mr. Lunsford presented results of a comparative study of plot prices for other publicly and privately owned cemeteries in the region. Private cemeteries are generally more expensive. He then provided a budget history for the Grandview Cemetery that demonstrated the relative stability of prices for plots and administration, but that in light of the recent expansion, operating and administrative costs will increase and the budget will need to be adjusted accordingly and replenish the reserves that were utilized in the expansion project without using Real Estate Excise Tax funds. He proposed that Council approve Resolution 3090 to add Grand View Cemetery fees to the Unified Fee Schedule and change the cost for full-sized burial plots to \$1170, a 40% increase. This increase would allow the Parks and Recreation department to adequately provide cemetery services to the community.

Mr. Young mentioned that, as a former member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, he was cognizant of keeping prices reasonable for the public and that the resolution is a fair representation of the costs associated with administering the cemetery. He appreciated the work of staff to keep prices reasonable.

Mr. Walters stated that with the presentation not being in the packet he did not have time to digest the information. He expressed interest in reducing the overall tax burden on those who do not use cemetery services, and increasing the cost for those who do. He further expressed support for the implementation of a reduced income fee waiver, and skepticism that average cost is a reasonable measure for determining a fair price. Mayor Miller cited the challenge of finding a fair price for services.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath agreed with Mr. Walters statements and expressed a desire to keep cemetery services affordable to the public over the coming decades while maintaining the material condition of the facility. Mr. Lunsford detailed in the current budget that approximately \$200,000 comes from property tax and the rest comes from fees and services. He said that adding the services to the Unified Fee Schedule will ensure that cemetery fees keep pace with inflation.

Mr. Walters agreed that getting these fees on the unified fee schedule is important and that this resolution is ready to move forward.

ANTHONY YOUNG moved, seconded by Amanda Hubik, to Approve Resolution 3090 for Grand View Cemetery Policies and Fees.

Vote: Ayes - JEREMY CARTER, ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CHRISTINE CLELAND-MCGRATH, CAROLYN MOULTON, Amanda Hubik. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Mr. Walters moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to excuse the absence of Mr. McDougall. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 8:00 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of June 21, 2022 was adjourned.