

Anacortes City Council Minutes - September 26, 2022

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of September 26, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jeremy Carter, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present.

Councilmembers Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, and Carolyn Moulton participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Councilmember Anthony Young was absent.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller shared an update regarding the ongoing investigation and progress toward rebuilding the Tommy Thompson Trail Trestle. He reported that the investigation report from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives is out for technical review with final results back hopefully by the end of the week. He then mentioned signing a contract for engineering drawings enabling permit application submission to state and local agencies, which he hoped would be issued by early October. He related that the delivery timeline for project supplies could be 3 months and that staff are looking for creative means to expedite the repair effort. Mayor Miller then reminded the public to be vigilant on State Route 20 for bicycle traffic and concluded by commending the Police and Fire Departments for making last weekend's Oyster Run a safe and successful event.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting held the previous Thursday. The topics discussed included the Helping Hands county-wide food program with Engagement Manager, Käaren Flint. She announced that September is Hunger Action Month, and that 11.5 percent of people in Washington identify as 'food insecure', which equates to nearly 14,000 people in Skagit County. Ms. Moulton then detailed the organization's mission and the opening of the new Solution Center at 3018 Commercial Avenue. She concluded by summarizing discussions surrounding community outreach and coordination to avoid duplication of effort and efficient use of available resources, as well as specific details of contacts with individuals on T Avenue, who were provided food, hygiene products, cell phones, and weekly garbage service.

Planning Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the Housing Action Plan and efforts to meet the goals set forth in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, including the prospect of new measures to achieve housing targets prior to an upcoming Comprehensive Plan update. Committee members provided their feedback to the Planning Department, which would come back before the Council and ultimately the Planning Commission in the near future. Mr. Walters then announced his appointment to the Association of Washington Cities working group on housing solutions, which is discussing statewide legislative solutions for next year's legislative session emphasizing flexible approaches and condominium liability reform.

Fiber Committee

Mr. McDougall reported from the Fiber Committee meeting held the previous Thursday. The topics discussed included a customer status report including 1580 total customers on the network with 3-4 installs per day and a stronger than expected 65 percent 100 megabit - 35 percent gigabit service mix yielding higher than projected average revenue numbers, a status update of the grant application to the Washington State Broadband Office to provide 25 percent of the required matching funds for the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration grant, the Guemes expansion project with work beginning in early October, an employment opportunity for Fiber Network Administrator, and a dark fiber lease with Astound Broadband.

Library Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Library Committee meeting held the previous Thursday. The topics discussed included the 2023 budget, the children's library update with donated funds from Sylvia and Robert Maxson to be completed in early 2023, a summer reading program recap including 33 programs with 1500 participants, school outreach, and the upcoming Family Place Library Play and Learn series program in October, teen events, student library card interlocal agreement renewal, and an upcoming closure on Friday October 7th for staff training.

Public Comment

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

Mayor Miller had Assistant to the City Clerk, Greg Francioch, read a public comment submitted via email by Roger Jewett regarding his concerns about public safety surrounding the presence of individuals living in vehicles, panhandling and conducting illicit drug transactions on public property.

Cheryl Decker of Anacortes in lower Cap Sante, is a professional botanist for the National Parks Service who chose to live in Anacortes because of the abundance of public lands. She expressed concern about property encroachments and the planting of Class C noxious weeds, particularly pampas grass, and decried the lack of action regarding the issue and suggested that timelines be placed on issue resolution.

John Wilkinson of Cap Sante in Anacortes expressed support of the neighborhood petition to have free public access to the parklands. He detailed that the neighbors on 5th Street maintain a median that effectively restricts access to the public parklands' many visitors. He encouraged the Council to enforce the existing ordinances that deal with public lands by setting specific deadlines for compliance.

Lorie Morgan of Cap Sante in Anacortes expressed concern about the encroachment by the owners of the property at 115 5th Street adjacent to the Cap Sante park trailhead. She felt duped by the owners who led her to believe that she should not use the public access trail, citing the owners' pervasive use of City property as their private driveway. She decried the longstanding dispute, pointing out that the initial letter from the City informing the neighbors to remove the encroachment was sent in January 2012. She asserted that this could be either one of many encroachments on public lands or a case of special dispensation for the property owners. She asked that the Council take affirmative steps to end the encroachment.

John Paul Cox of Anacortes, representing the Campbells, mentioned that the Packards who previously owned the property, used the public property in question for an extended period to access their property. He claimed that the area is in better condition than it has ever been, citing existing signage designating the public access trailhead. He then mentioned that the Campbells plan on moving the trees 5-6 feet to facilitate access to the Campbell property by November 30th and invited the Council to visit the site or contact him with any questions or concerns.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Carter moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

a. Minutes of September 19, 2022

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$283,300.04

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 104335 through 104373, total \$185,251.52

Check numbers: 104374 through 104390, total \$83,016.32

Wire transfer numbers: 310538 through 310857, total \$15,032.20

Other Business

OpenGov overview of the 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan

Finance Director, Steve Hoglund, introduced the overview of the OpenGov 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan for the Council, citing a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Mayor Miller pointed out positive feedback he has received from staff users as they put together the budget for 2023.

Finance Manager, Philip Steffen, provided a demonstration of the OpenGov software for the Council with the caveat that the public portal will be available after implementation is complete, increasing the transparency and ease of public access to budget data.

Mr. Walters expressed appreciation to the staff for their data entry efforts, optimism that OpenGov will enhance the ability to better analyze forecasted budget expenses and nervousness at some of the limitations discussed during the Finance Committee meeting. He declared that the larger goal is communicating to the public how money is being spent and ensuring that all future capital expenses are being considered and entered into OpenGov. He concluded that further discussions are necessary, including those areas where funds are not being appropriated.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 6:55 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of September 26, 2022 was adjourned.