

Anacortes City Council Minutes - April 8, 2024

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of April 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Carolyn Moulton (joined at 6:05 pm) participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom. Councilmember Christine Cleland-McGrath was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller announced that the Department of Ecology will host the A Avenue Landfill public meeting on April 15th at 4pm in the City Council Chambers, and on Saturday, April 20th, there is Residential Spring Cleanup Day from 9am-12pm at the City of Anacortes Operations Center, and on April 20th the Earth Day celebration will include the Procession of the Species Parade at 5pm followed by the Luminary Light Parade at 8pm.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting held April 4th. The topics discussed included agenda preparation for the May 9th visit of the Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use and Tribal Affairs to discuss housing issues in Anacortes.

Planning Committee

Mayor Miller announced that the Planning Committee did not meet as scheduled.

Public Safety Committee

Ms. Hubik reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting held April 2nd. The Fire/EMS topics discussed included the completion of the training academy for new hires and the Fire Wise and Fire Protection programs. Police topics included the Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy, a staffing update, and the virtual reality training system roll-out.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Connie Russell of Anacortes commented on the Emergency Medical Service Levy proposal, asserting that the Skagit County information contained in the voter pamphlet is deceptive and excessive, citing the lack of detailed information on the levy rate increase, corresponding expected revenue increases, the impact on property taxes, and failing to account for the City of Anacortes ambulance budget increase after voters approved the Anacortes levy lid lift in 2023. She urged a 'no' vote on Proposition 1 to force the county to come back with a more realistic increase and a clearer rationale for voters to consider.

Bill Collins of Anacortes thanked Mr. Fantini for canceling the roundabout concept at 12th Street and Commercial Avenue and proposed a meeting with the architect, public, City Council, and Habitat for Humanity regarding the proposed housing project on West 5th Avenue.

Beth Bell of Anacortes commented on the Anacortes Cinema lease, expressing sadness about how the Council handled the issue and how they voted. She asked the Council for transparency regarding future plans for the building. She then spoke about affordable housing, asking that the City Council clearly define affordable

housing, citing the examples of the Fidalgo Flats development and multi-unit housing between 21st Street and 20th Street between Commercial Avenue and Q Avenue as developments that were billed as affordable housing that is now available at market rates that are unaffordable for the average Anacortes individual income. She mentioned affordable housing areas currently available in Anacortes. She concluded that the proposed Habitat for Humanity development has inadequate parking, storage and no maintenance plan.

Linnea McCord of Anacortes commented that the purpose of the discussion of climate change, affordable housing, and amending the Growth Management Act is banning single-family homes. She cited California development regulations that allow for multi-family unit development of lots zoned for single-family dwellings without local approval, adding that over 200 cities opposed the regulations. She mentioned that these initiatives come from the World Economic Forum and the United Nations International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (iclei.org), asserting that these organizations are not friendly or considerate of individual freedom. She concluded that the ultimate goal of such initiatives are to provide a city where vehicles are not necessary and empower government to limit freedom of individual mobility.

Becky Mifflin of Anacortes expressed strong opposition to the construction of the proposed Habitat for Humanity project on West 5th Street. She asked why the surrounding property owners had not been informed of the project and she read Mr. Walters' social media post from December 14, 2022, pointing out that Mr. Walters had since deleted the post and asked why it had been deleted. She pointed out that the post indicates that the City Council and Habitat for Humanity have been working on the initiative since 2021, and that the city had not sought neighborhood input during that two and one-half year period. She concluded by suggesting that the project be reduced to two units or leave the parcel as is.

Suzanne Rohner of Anacortes expressed concern about the community's potential loss of the Anacortes Cinema. She detailed that the lease provision requiring a potential buyer to have five years of experience as a theater operator was intended as a temporary measure to ensure the theater's initial viability, adding that the current lessee fulfillment of this requirement is questionable, reading excerpts from the March 27th *Anacortes American* article on the topic. She asked why the Council was insistent that the requirement be left in force when the current owner is not in compliance, why some Councilmembers are concerned about the value of the parcel, and if the Council intended to build multi-level multi-family housing upon the expiration of the lease in 2026.

Xuhua Mu of Anacortes commented on the Habitat for Humanity project on West 5th Street, asserting that there would be financial impact on the city's balance sheet from the gifting of public property to Habitat for Humanity, and that there could be legal liability and financial exposure to the city if the project is pursued. She then pointed out that affordability is driven by the local market, and that the choice to develop five units is due to being the maximum density per the existing development code. She suggested that greater density is not favorable to the neighbors nor to potential development residents, and that the idea the development code was written to ensure neighborhood compatibility for new developments was flawed logic.

Kellee List of Anacortes spoke about the Habitat for Humanity project on West 5th Street, reading excerpts from an email from the Skagit Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Tina Tate to volunteers addressing the neighborhood opposition to the project. In the email excerpt Ms. List asked if Habitat for Humanity would ask the City Council to modify the project plan to include two units in keeping with the character of the neighborhood, to which Habitat for Humanity responded affirmatively. She then asserted that the City and Habitat for Humanity are working behind the scenes to outnumber and marginalize opposing neighbors' concerns. She urged the Council to come up with a plan that works for both the existing neighbors and potential new residents.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. Minutes of April 1, 2024
- b. Special Event - Open Streets Festival

Other Business

Contract Award: Anacortes Climate Element #24-120-PLN-002

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman introduced contract #24-120-PLN-002 for \$338,351 with Makers for consulting services on the climate element of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update, mentioning that House Bill 1181 sets forth the new requirement for a climate element in the Comprehensive Plan, which necessitates contracting with Makers and subcontractor Parametrics to consult with the city in the Comprehensive Plan update. He outlined the project scope of work and added that the public participation plan will be heard at a public hearing during the Planning Commission meeting of April 24, 2024.

Discussion topics included:

- \$500,000 grant to be used for this process.
- Climate policy advisory team selection process.
- Public participation and outreach process.
- Areas to be updated in the 2025 Comprehensive plan in addition to climate - transportation, housing, and land use.
- Ensuring that Skagit Transit, Port of Anacortes, Island Hospital, Anacortes School District and other stakeholders are consulted in the update.
- Deep dive into the ability of community stakeholders to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Coordination of the transportation element with the Skagit Council of Governments.
- Fluid schedule of events due to extension of deadline to December 31, 2025.
- Check in with the City Council on the Housing Action Plan menu.
- Greenhouse gas inventory.
- Future Council action to adopt a scope for Comprehensive Plan update.

RYAN WALTERS moved, seconded by TJ FANTINI, to authorize the mayor to sign contract #24-120-PLN-002 as presented with Makers Architecture.

Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK, TJ FANTINI. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Contract Award: Thompson Trail Trestle and Causeway Replacement Project – Design #23-092-PRK-001

Parks and Recreation Director Jonn Lunsford introduced contract #23-092-PRK-001 with Hanson Professional Services, Inc. for design for the Thompson Trail Trestle and Causeway replacement project, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Partnership to address environmental challenges in the bay.
- Smooth surface for bikers and pedestrians similar to Taylor Dock in Bellingham.
- Funding for the project.

- Respecting the environment.

AMANDA HUBIK moved, seconded by RYAN WALTERS, to authorize the mayor to sign contract #23-092-PRK-001 with Hanson Professional Services Inc.

Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK, TJ FANTINI. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Contract Award - Microsoft Enterprise Agreement - Office 365 Renewal #24-113-ITS-001

Administrative Services Director Emily Schuh introduced contract #24-113-ITS-001 with SHI International Corporation for the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement - Office 365 Renewal, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Criminal Justice Information System = CJIS.
- A range of applications are included in this license.
- State contract.
- On-premises server elimination.

RYAN WALTERS moved, seconded by AMANDA HUBIK, to authorize the mayor to sign contract #24-113-ITS-001 with SHI International Corporation.

Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK, TJ FANTINI. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Contract Award: Wastewater Treatment Plant Outfall Relocation - Marine and Upland #20-032-SEW-009

Public Works Director Andrew Rheume introduced contract #20-032-SEW-009 with Strider Construction for the marine and upland portion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Outfall Relocation project. He provided project details including cost, location, outfall dimensions, reason for the relocation, amended packet materials, the project website, preliminary contract schedule, and blasting requirements.

Discussion topics included:

- Public comment that identified an inaccuracy in the contract.
- City Attorney review of the contract.
- Schedule of work and possible interruptions for local entities based on the fish window.
- Affirmative outreach to the neighborhood, the port and port tenants.
- Vetting process for the contractor.

ANTHONY YOUNG moved, seconded by BRUCE MCDOUGALL, to authorize the mayor to sign contract 20-032-SEW-009 with Strider Construction Company Inc.

Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK, TJ FANTINI. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:18 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of April 8, 2024 was adjourned.