

Anacortes City Council Joint Special Meeting Minutes with the Port of Anacortes Commission - August 18, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the August 18, 2025, Anacortes City Council joint special meeting with the Port of Anacortes Commission at 4:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Bruce McDougall were present. Councilmember Amanda Hubik was absent.

Port Commission President Shawn Ottenbreit called the meeting to order for the Port of Anacortes Commission. Commissioners Kathy Pittis, Bonnie Bowers, and Jon Ronngren were present. Commissioner Jon Petrich was absent.

Mayor Miller and Port of Anacortes Executive Director John Dumas introduced proposed interlocal agreements #24-121-PLN-002 for Design and Construction of an Event Center and #24-121-PLN-003 for Operation of an Event Center, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Public Comment

Mayor Miller invited the public to comment on the proposed interlocal agreements.

Public comment was given as follows:

Mary Staley of Anacortes of the Anacortes Arts Festival and Creative District read a letter written by Meredith McIlmoyle, Executive Director of the Anacortes Arts Festival, who expressed support for the event center with a suggestion that a stakeholder group be formed to consult on the design process.

Kristen Keltz of Mount Vernon and Chief Executive Officer of the Skagit Tourism Bureau expressed support for the event center.

John Sternlicht of Anacortes and Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County expressed support for the event center as an economic multiplier for the community and appreciation for being consulted throughout the process.

Mary Trester chose not to comment.

Trina Wherry of Anacortes expressed support for the event center and spoke about the intangible benefits associated with the facility.

John Wilkinson expressed support for the event center, and recommended that the council and port commission consider how to handle a situation when there is negative cash flow due to lower than expected occupancy rates.

Marta McClintock of Anacortes and Executive Director of the Island Health Foundation expressed support for the event center, especially in enabling a space for local non-profits to hold critical fundraising events.

Michele Pope of Anacortes expressed support for the event center, citing that an affordable space is needed for local non-profits.

Jesica Kiser, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, expressed support for the event center and echoed Ms. McIlmoyle's suggestion for a stakeholders' group on design.

Other Business

Interlocal Agreement #24-121-PLN-002 with the Port of Anacortes for Design and Construction of an Event Center and Interlocal Agreement #24-121-PLN-003 with the Port of Anacortes for Operation of an Event Center

The Council and Port Commission discussed proposed interlocal agreements #24-121-PLN-002 for Design and Construction and #24-121-PLN-003 for Operation of an Event Center.

Discussion topics included:

- Saved lodging tax advisory committee (LTAC) funds
- Continued LTAC outlays.
- Financing the facility is a primary concern.
- Minimize the impact on port tenants.
- Evolution of design without sacrificing capacity requirements.
- Honoring the sense of place on the marina.
- Economic engine for the community.
- Parking plan is formalized, and project is moving forward.
- Partnership between the city and port.
- Concerns over the cost of the project.
- Considering potential revenue loss.
- Gathering space for the community.
- Concerns during public comment are still being discussed by the elected officials making the decisions.
- Marketing and recruitment are needed.
- Cooperation is necessary to make the project happen.
- Concern for funding
- Grants are important, and the port has a good track record.
- Staff will be scaled to balance funding.
- Making it affordable for core non-profit events while also making the venue profitable.
- Community benefits through cohesiveness and volunteerism.
- Codifying agreements for posterity and reference for future leaders.
- The rough design fits the community's needs.
- Flexible design for a diverse set of users.
- This project is included in the port's Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents.
- Waterfront design is an investment in the community.
- Brainstorm what we do have, we do not have, and what we would like to see.
- Differentiate the city from other places in the area.
- Enhance life for the citizens of the city.
- Build towards the future and add on as time goes on.
- Ability to accommodate a mobile kitchen.
- There are multiple off-ramps in the document to not move forward for both parties.
- Traffic flow considerations.
- The idea of the facility has existed for at least 40 years.
- The best opportunity to date for project realization.

Shawn Ottenbreit moved, seconded by Bonnie Bowers, to authorize the executive director to enter into interlocal cooperative agreement for design and construction and the interlocal cooperative agreement for

operation of an event facility with the City of Anacortes.

Vote: Ayes - Shawn Ottenbreit, Kathy Pittis, Bonnie Bowers, Jon Ronngren. Nays - None. Abstentions - None.
Result: Passed

Ryan Walters moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to authorize the mayor to execute interlocal agreements #24-121-PLN-002 for design and construction and #24-121-PLN-003 for operation of an event center with the Port of Anacortes.

Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 5:24 p.m. the Anacortes City Council joint special meeting with the Port of Anacortes Commission of August 18, 2025, was adjourned.