



# CITY COUNCIL MINUTES ANNUAL PLANNING SESSION JANUARY 27-29, 2012

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## Friday, January 27, 2012

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the planning session to order at 5:00 pm in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island, Washington).

### ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Jane Brahm, Debbie Bertlin, Mike Cero, Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz, Mayor Bruce Bassett, and Councilmember-Elect Tana Senn were present. Councilmember Mike Grady was absent.

### MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS

Mayor Bassett welcomed the Council to the 2012 Planning Session. He asked the Council about whether future planning sessions could focus on visioning and long-term planning for Mercer Island, what are the issues going to be in 10 to 20 years. He noted that most planning sessions are tactical and focus on what the City is facing in the current year and that the Council has not done a visionary and strategic process in a while. The Council concurred about the new approach for future planning sessions.

City Manager Rich Conrad introduced facilitator Rhonda Hilyer from Agreement Dynamics. He spoke about her background in conflict resolution and mediation. Staff introduced themselves to new Councilmembers Debbie Bertlin and Tana Senn.

### AGENDA REVIEW

The Council discussed and agreed to the following changes in the agenda:

#### FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2012

- 5:30 pm: 2011 Objectives and Accomplishments
- 6:00 pm: Communications Styles (during private social and dinner)
- 7:30 pm: South End Fire Station -- public vote
  - Design process?
  - Financing options
  - Timing?
- 9:00 pm: Council Operations
  - Director's reports about City Council impact on staff
- 9:30 pm: Adjourn

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2012

- 8:00 am: Status Report -- Town Center project
  - Re-development projects status report - selection of developer
  - Sound Transit - Commuter Parking/Public-Private Partnerships
  - Shared space ideas with School District
- 9:30 am: Council Operations (continued)
  - Rules of Procedure – Questions?
- 10:15 am: Sustainability Program

The Council agreed that the agenda would be adjusted as needed; Citizen of the Year and "Parking Lot" issues would be moved up to fill empty time slots.

## **2011 OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

City Manager Conrad reviewed the progress and outcomes of the following issues from the 2011 Planning Session:

- Pool Planning
- Town Center Transit Oriented Development
- Development Impact Fees
- Sewer Lake Line Project
- Transportation Issues: R8A, Tolling, I-90 Ramps, Island Crest Way Corridor
- Underage Drinking
- Solid Waste Services on Snow Days
- Island Crest Park Ball Field Turf
- Development Code Improvements
- Definition of Senior Citizen for Community Center Uses
- Financial Issues: Sewer Lake Line Project Savings, Town Center TOD study, LEOFF 1 Long-Term Care and Volunteer Fireman's Pension Fund
- North Star Property
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

City Manager Conrad reviewed the Council's 2011 work plan which details the planned, unplanned and actual agenda items completed. He noted that it was a modest work load in 2011, and that all items placed on the work program had been addressed and completed.

The Council took a break for a private dinner.

The Council resumed the public meeting.

## **SOUTH END FIRE STATION**

City Manager Conrad introduced the discussion by announcing that the City received eleven responses to the south end fire station architectural and engineering services RFQ that was due today. He stated that the goal for Council's conversation was to decide if and when the City would go to the voters for a bond issue to fund the fire station rebuild.

Fire Chief Chris Tubbs provided a history of the south end fire station. In 1991, a study was done that determined that both Island fire stations need to be replaced. In 1999, the north end station was replaced, but no plan was set for the south end station. A programmatic study was done that reviewed the functions that occur in the station and it was determined that there were structural and seismic issues at the south end station.

Councilmember Cero and Deputy Mayor Grausz expressed their concern with the proposed size of the fire station. Chief Tubbs noted that the size of current facility does not accommodate today's standards for fire stations. City Manager Conrad stated that the design process will define the project by researching the service needs and a building size will emerge.

Deputy Mayor Grausz asked about whether the south end station needs to have both fire and medical aid services. City Manager Conrad responded that fire service is based on the whole island, not on a north-south basis. Chief Tubbs responded that having fire service at both the north and south stations gives the Fire Department the ability to provide better services to the entire Island.

Following discussion, Mayor Bassett asked if there is support to move forward with the design of the south end fire station this year. There was consensus from the Council.

Deputy Mayor Grausz stated that this project is exactly what the City should go to the voters for. He asked what the options would be with full funding, 60% funding or 50% funding. Finance Director Chip Corder provided information to the Council about possible voted debt scenarios or a Levy Lid Lift or Bond Levy. He noted that with a levy lid lift, the yes vote must be 50% to pass and that with a bond levy it passes with 60% yes vote. Also a levy lid lift must be paid off in 9 years and a bond levy pay can be set to 10, 20, or 30 years. He also noted that it is a great bidding environment right now and a good time to go out for debt.

The Council then discussed the timing for going to the voters for a levy. Council determined that staff should move at a pace to make a decision on design for the station in June, which would allow for the levy to possibly be on the November, 2012 ballot.

The Council again discussed the size of the building. City Manager Conrad advised against setting a limit and stated that staff will come back with the ramifications for a functional station based upon the Island's needs. Following further discussion the Council did not provide direction on building size, but did ask that staff be sensitive to the issue during the design process.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

*There was consensus to move forward with the design of the south end fire station this year at a pace to make a decision on design for the station (with sensitivity to building size) in June, which would allow for the levy to possibly be on the November, 2012 ballot.*

## **COUNCIL OPERATIONS**

The staff and Council engaged in a dialogue about interactions between council and staff, particularly during Council meetings. The following points were made:

### **Staff:**

- Encourage Council to think about delivery of question. Instead of accusing or stating staff is wrong. Put staff on defense rather than giving information
- Try to avoid "gotcha questions" of staff.
- It is uncomfortable getting legal questions asked during the meeting for political purposes. Try not to set staff up – make them look stupid.
- Staff is there to give facts. It is important to put less senior staff in front of the Council for professional growth. Try not to "beat them up" so much.
- If Councilmembers want to give "constructive" feedback to staff, please do so before or after Council meetings.
- Council should provide supportive feedback during the Council meeting when a staff person has done a good job.

### **Council:**

- The Mayor should be more forceful in moving the meeting along.
- Councilmembers should not make long speeches and repeat themselves during discussion and debate.
- Assume council members have read the agenda materials. Presentations should be short. Staff should not simply repeat written information during their presentations.
- Staff should give Council option to not have a presentation.

Facilitator Rhonda Hilyer summarized that the dialogue was helpful and illustrated a lot of different styles. No one style is going to win the day, but it is helpful to recognize that diversity is good. The Mayor is being given more of a platform to run the meeting, maintain diversity. The Council and Directors should try to mentor newer and younger staff.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor adjourned the planning session for the day at 9:41 p.m.

**Saturday, January 28, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the planning session to order at 8:30 am in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

**ROLL CALL**

Councilmembers Jane Brahm, Debbie Bertlin, Mike Cero, Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz, Mayor Bruce Bassett, and Councilmember-Elect Tana Senn were present. Councilmember Mike Grady and was absent.

**STATUS REPORT – TOWN CENTER PROJECT**

Development Services Director Tim Stewart spoke about the Council's request to add more commuter parking in the Town Center. He explained that as part of Phase 1, the City hired Ben Pariser from BP Squared to assist in determining initial feasibility by talking to land owners and to Sound Transit to see if there was potential for moving forward. Based upon his assessments, the City agreed there was potential for a project and moved into Phase 2 which included more detailed analysis of parking possibilities and potential public/private partnerships.

Consultant Ben Pariser explained that he met with various owners and Sound Transit in an effort to see if it was feasible to develop partnerships with landowners for a public/private partnership. He noted that only two of the five owners he met with wanted to put their intentions in writing (owners of sites containing Walgreens and Freshy's).

The Council discussed what the effects could be on parking on Mercer Island with the expansion of Sound Transit's South Bellevue Park and Ride, possible tolling on I-90, the start and completion of the East Link project.

Ben Pariser noted that the last step in Phase 2 is a Request For Qualifications from developers for a proposed Transit Oriented Development within the Mercer Island Town Center. He stated that three submittals were received from Lorig & Sanderson Capital, SECO Development, and Wright Runstad. He explained that the next step would be to choose a preferred developer and preferred land owner and see if a joint venture or lessee/lessor opportunity is available.

City Manager Conrad asked the Council if they would like to create an ad hoc committee to help pick the developer and help with the project. He suggested one councilmember and two citizens with background in development be part of the committee along with staff and consultant.

The Council discussed the property owner(s) role in the selection process, future growth in the Town Center, having affordable housing be an element of the project, and possible uses for the building (office space, retail, housing, etc.). The Council also discussed whether there should be a civic component of the office structure (i.e. moving City Hall and/or the MISD Administrative Offices to Town Center) and if zoning regulations will need to be re-evaluated and/or changed (i.e. building height)

***Agreements & Direction:***

*There was consensus to:*

- Create an ad hoc committee to pick the developer and help with the project. The Mayor will appoint one councilmember, two citizens with background in development, staff and consultant to the committee.*
- Discuss the possibility of moving City Hall and/or MISD Administration to the selected spot in the Town Center.*

The Council further discussed the need to find balance between current zoning principles and future innovations in the Town Center. They talked about approaching the project with a civic mindedness consideration of open space and flexibility with the possibilities for the private/public partnership.

Councilmember-Elect Tana Senn provided comments about future agenda items before she excused herself at 9:30 am. She stated that 1) spending time on a plastic bag ban, may not be good to use our time if it is going to be decided by the State, 2) she supports a City-wide communications person and strategy as many other staff are not able to do their core job duties as they are spending time on communications, and 3) she supports whatever ask there is from Youth and Family Services.

The Council revised the agenda to discuss Council Operations topics before the Sustainability Program – Task Force.

## **COUNCIL OPERATIONS (continued)**

- **Side Bar Conversations:**

Mayor Bassett spoke about side bar conversations during Council meetings. He stated that he doesn't want to discount or discredit sidebars, but they are disrespectful and disruptive. The Council discussed the need to get agreement on issues, that a sidebar is sometimes the most effective way to gain consensus, and that sidebars and body language can further the impression of a lack of respect toward the speaker.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*There was consensus that Council will give the speaker their full attention and that Mayor Bassett will call out the parties if a sidebar goes on too long.*

- **Video During Appearances:**

Mayor Bassett asked for the Council's input about a request he received to show a video during public appearances. Councilmember Cero stated that the City needs a policy about how the public and the Council can use media during public meetings.

City Manager Conrad expressed concern about what the content of the video could be and first amendment rights if certain videos are prohibited. City Attorney Katie Knight suggested that staff can treat the medium as a hard copy and provide copies to the Council and have copies available for the public.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff develop a policy for Council review regarding media presentations during public appearances and council meetings by members of the public and Councilmembers. In the meantime, staff will provide hard copies to Council of media provided during public appearances and have a copy available to the public.*

- **Appearances**

Mayor Bassett noted that many people who get up to speak to the Council are nervous and it takes a little while for them to start speaking about their issue. He also spoke about consistency in cutting of speakers at the three minute mark.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff start the timer clock after the speaker states their name and address for the record during Appearances. The Mayor will consistently let speakers know they need to wrap up their comments at the three minute mark.*

- **Junior Staff Presenting to Council**

Mayor Bassett introduced the idea of having junior staff come and talk about what they do at the City at each Council meeting as a way for Council to learn more about all of the work staff does and to introduce different services to the community.

City Manager Conrad noted that the topics would be timely and "feel good", but not controversial so that the presenting staff member would not be put on the spot.

Deputy Mayor Grausz asked that there be staff or community members present to speak to proclamations to help understand how they affect our community.

**Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to have junior level staff speak at the beginning of Council meetings about their job or a specific issue. They also agreed that a staff or community member should be present to speak to proclamations and explain how they affect our community.*

- **Mayor Style**

Mayor Bassett spoke about his style as mayor. He stated that he wants to be inclusive and gain consensus on issues, but is open to input from others as he tries to find his path.

**Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to let Mayor Bassett know if there are times that he needs to be more direct. They also agreed to maintain the structure for speaking at Council meetings (presentation, questions from council, council discussion starting at one end to the other, then vote).*

- **Council Rules of Procedure Section 8.6**

Councilmember Cero expressed his concern that the Council is not notified of vacancies on Boards and Commissions nor given the opportunity to weigh in on appointments. He stated he would like to see all of the information in order to influence the Mayor in his decision-making.

**Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to have staff give an update at each Council meeting regarding any vacancies and send the applications for appointments to vacancies to the entire Council not just the Mayor and the liaison.*

- **Council Rules of Procedure Section 8.15(5)**

Councilmember Cero stated that Council Liaison reports about Boards and Commissions are not taking place as outlined in the City Council Rules of Procedure Section 8.15(5) and he feels the Council is not being briefed on what is happening on the Boards and Commissions.

**Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed that liaisons will report to the whole Council when issues for their specific Board or Commission are relevant and need to be reported.*

## **SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM**

Development Services Director Tim Stewart spoke about his experience with the sustainable practices program in the City of Bellingham. He noted that Bellingham had paid staff responsible for constant outreach to their citizens and funding to celebrate their sustainable successes.

City Manager Conrad explained that the Council has asked to look into a more focused and dedicated effort for sustainable practices on Mercer Island. He noted that for the past 3-5 years the Council has tiptoed around sustainability and the Council needs to decide if the City should take the next step to have sustainability be an organizing principle. He suggested that 2012 be the year to meet and talk about how the City could put sustainability into planning documents, the budget, and determine how to make it part of the community.

Mayor Bassett noted that with Council support, a Sustainability Taskforce will be created to look into the next step for sustainable practices in the City and community. Councilmembers Cero and Brahm asked about the impacts on staff and funding the creation of the taskforce. City Manager Conrad explained that there will need to be some staff support, but mostly as a resource. He noted that when the taskforce comes back with ideas, there will be a need to commit resources to the proposals.

**Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to create a Sustainability Taskforce to provide the City Council with policy recommendations for becoming a more sustainable community. The City Council Sustainability Sub-Committee will decide the make-up of the Taskforce.*

Following discussion Mayor Bassett provided information about the City's past, current and potential future sustainable practices.

## **OTHER COUNCIL TOPICS – “PARKING LOT”**

- **Island Crest Park Turf Projects**

City Manager Conrad provided background information about the turf projects at Island Crest Park. He stated that a group of citizens approached the former Mayor with the idea to help raise the funds to pay for turf for the fields, but the effort didn't produce any funds.

Parks and Recreation Director Bruce Fletcher stated that the fields are not usable in the spring because of the weather. Last year the high school baseball team was not able to use the fields because of the mud. He presented an idea to the Council to use the current funding for the Island Crest Park Ball field Lights Replacement (\$300,000) as the one-to-one match for a King County Ball Field Grant that would upgrade the north field infield to turf, install new grass in the outfield and replace the field lights at Island Crest Park. This proposal would not include the JV field or synthetic turf for the outfields. Director Fletcher also proposed a fundraising idea of having businesses and organizations advertising on the fence line at the Island Crest Park Ball fields to generate income for the Park.

The Council discussed the timeline for the grant, the need for public input on the project, whether a sinking fund needs to be created, and notifying the ball field user groups about possible fee increases.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff move forward with the grant application, work with user groups regarding the fee increases, come back to Council with the grant resolution and provide an opportunity for public input.*

The Council agreed to address advertising in Island Crest Park later in the Planning Session.

The Council took a break for lunch.

- **Communication Strategy**

City Manager Conrad spoke about the Communications Coordinator position that has remained vacant since early 2011 and that the funds were reallocated last year to the City Clerk's Office for additional staff. He noted that he has asked the Council for additional funds twice and the Council has chosen not to fund the service. He explained that he has met with communications expert who could write up a communications strategy for the City, detailing how to focus efforts, what media to use and how to inform the public. He characterized what we do now as not well organized and not collaborative.

City Manager Conrad proposed hiring a consultant to develop a strategy and then fund staff resources for communications.

The Council discussed the merits of a having a dedicated communications staff member, the need to send a unified message to public, the risks of one person framing the issues, and the need for a strategic thinker in the position.

City Manager Conrad stated that a commitment from the Council for staffing the position is more important than developing a communications strategy.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff come back with a proposal for funding a City communications strategy (without a consultant) to include a Communications Coordinator position.*

- **Biennial Citizen Survey**

City Manager Conrad spoke about the customer satisfaction data the City gets from the biennial citizen survey that is conducted in advance of budget planning. He noted that the Council cut the funding for the survey and if the City was going to do it for the 2013-2014 Budget, it would need to be conducted in March 2012.

The Council discussed the following topics regarding the survey: having the Communications Coordinator facilitate the survey, adding questions about the south end fire station levy, controlling accuracy of the survey, calling respondents on land lines versus cell phones, and the framing of questions to get specific answers.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*There was no consensus from the Council regarding the biennial citizen survey, but staff agreed to research a cheaper alternative.*

- **Plastic Bags**

Mayor Bassett spoke about the topic of banning plastic grocery bags on Mercer Island. City Manager Conrad noted that there is a bill in the current legislative session to ban them statewide.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to revisit the idea of banning plastic grocery bags on Mercer Island at the June mini-planning session and put it on work plan based upon what happens at the state level.*

- **Angle Parking on 77<sup>th</sup>**

Councilmember Brahm spoke about parking issues in the Town Center as the current situation does not encourage people to stay downtown and shop. She spoke about the success of the angle parking on SE 28<sup>th</sup> Street and asked if the City could consider doing the same thing on 77<sup>th</sup> Ave SE from SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Street to SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

Councilmember Bertlin and Deputy Mayor Grausz expressed concern about the proposed parking interfering with the bike lane. Councilmember Cero suggested looking at the overall picture of parking in the Town Center and how we can improve short and long term parking.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff come back with the information on parking in the Town Center that was presented a few years ago and then provide further direction at that time.*

## **TOWN CENTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

City Manager Conrad explained that Councilmember Brahm wanted to have conversation about Town Center businesses and economic development. He introduced Ellen Miller-Wolfe, City of Kirkland Economic Development Manager and Terry Moreman, Executive Director for the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Miller-Wolfe spoke about the City of Kirkland's current Economic Development program. She noted that she focuses on the following areas: business retention, land use and finance studies, orientation for new businesses on monthly basis, marketing assistance, small business sustainability, business ombudsman, expansion and relocation assistance (eCityGov Alliance), recruitment, responding to site selectors, summer time work with travel writers, etc, Kirkland video programming around promoting business, cooperation with brokerage community, working with Planning Director on focused areas to reinvent (e.g. Totem Lake), planning for annexations, regulatory relief, how to promote downtown, providing funding with Kirkland Downtown Association and subsidizing the Kirkland performance center.

Ms. Miller-Wolfe emphasized the following points:

- retail success has to do with the density of the customer base
- need to have both the day and the night retail
- experience of having both office and retail is important
- access, parking, and walkability are important factors
- helps to be at a distance from other retail centers. She gave the example of Ballard: it's so hard to get to that it functions as a destination and neighborhood shopping center.

- events are important, make downtown a work-play retail plus.
- having a vital street life is the most important, try to get people on the street.
- provide more flexibility in ground floor uses to sustain and add foot traffic.

The Council discussed whether it might be right time to shrink retail and look at other uses. City Manager Conrad noted that Mercer Island staff is scheduled to go to Council in March with ground floor uses in the Town Center. Ms. Miller-Wolfe noted that if uses beyond retail are opened up, then you may “flip” downtown into an office market. What kind of retail you support in your Code is a key issue.

Ms. Miller-Wolfe listed a number of strategies and promotional tools that she has used to stimulate retail success in Kirkland including:

- Buy local program (1000 businesses in Kirkland)
- Promoted businesses
- Relationship among merchants, connectivity
- Brand loyalty
- Walking maps, walking routes through Town Center
- Bike maps, biking routes through Town Center
- Farmers Market
- Events: bringing people to the retail center.

Councilmembers then engaged in a dialogue about the Town Center questioning why some storefronts have remained empty for such a long time, how commercial rents were affecting tenants, how a few property owners were affecting the health of the Town Center as a whole and what the City’s role should be trying to stimulate retail health. Chamber Director Terry Moreman mentioned that many current retailers had avoided the new Town Center buildings because of high rents. She urged the Council to consider how the City and Chamber could work together to promote the downtown.

Councilmembers said that staff and the Chamber should look at modest efforts to promote Town Center activities in 2012 and that the Beautification Fund was an appropriate source of funds to finance the effort.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff prepare a modest proposal, funded from the Beautification Fund, to support the Chamber for promotional materials and a Buy Local program in 2012.*

**YFS REPORT – NEEDS ON MERCER ISLAND**

Youth and Family Services Director Cindy Goodwin and YFS Administrative Manager Derek Franklin presented information to the Council about the numbers of households and individuals the Family Assistance program served in 2010. They spoke about food pantry uses, qualifications for emergency assistance with utilities, rent, groceries and other bills.

The Council and staff had a lengthy discussion about the utility reduction assistance program and the referrals that YFS makes when a resident does not qualify for the program. Director Goodwin noted that there was an increase in clients after the holidays and the counseling waiting list is growing long again. They are seeing an increased need for human services on the Island.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff come back with further suggestions and a proposal of how YFS could further assist Mercer Island residents in need including additional utility assistance and access to other regional public and private support.*

**OTHER COUNCIL TOPICS – “PARKING LOT” (continued)**

- **Advertising in the Island Crest Ball Park**  
Parks and Recreation Director Bruce Fletcher spoke about the potential for raising new revenues by allowing advertising on the Island Crest Park ball field fence line. He noted that if the Council approved moving forward,

a policy would be developed to address appropriate ad content, sign uniformity, and responsibility for damage and wear-and-tear to the signs.

Deputy Mayor Bassett stated that he has seen this in small communities and it seems a little tacky, especially when the signs start to wear out. Councilmember Bertlin stated that she appreciates the general lack of advertising on Mercer Island. Councilmember Cero thinks that every little league field should have advertising on the fence. Deputy Mayor Grausz is not objected to it, but it needs to be for a greater amount than just \$15,000.

Councilmember Brahm asked about the size of signs on the fence line. Director Fletcher responded that they would need to be large enough for the audience to see the signs and that there could also be scoreboard advertising or even naming the field. He also mentioned that there would need to be a sign code amendment or an administrative policy to allow the signs on the fence line.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff investigate if the revenue could be more in the \$50,000 range for advertising at Island Crest Park Ball Fields and to develop a policy about how the revenue will be used.*

- **Parking Spot for Mayor**

Councilmember Brahm proposed having a dedicated parking spot for the Mayor to raise awareness that we have a Mayor and who he is. She noted it could be it at community events or in one of the parks.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council decided not to move forward with the parking spot.*

- **Council Visibility at City Hall**

Mayor Bassett asked about Council's visibility at City Hall. City Manager Conrad explained that when City Hall was commissioned the Council at that time did not want to have anything else at City Hall, but the names of the members on the plaque on the building.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have a group photo taken to hang at City Hall.*

- **Banquet Recognition for Citizen Honorees**

Councilmember Brahm suggested having a luncheon to honor the people who have been recognized throughout the year by various organizations. Deputy Mayor Grausz suggested making it an event during Summer Celebration.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council decided not to move forward with a recognition event at this time.*

City Manager Conrad reminded the Council to think about ways to recognize and say thank you to boards and commissions members. Councilmember Cero suggested that Council have stationary to write handwritten notes, with intent of thanking staff or boards and commissions members. City Manager Conrad agreed and will have staff provide stationary to Council.

- **Study Session: MISD Demographic Brief**

Councilmember Cero would like a study session regarding Mercer Island demographics. City Manager Conrad stated he would get a copy of the work the Mercer Island School District has done with demographics and have City staff capture key points from the 2010 census to present to Council.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to schedule a study session about Mercer Island demographics.*

- **Televise Study Sessions**

Councilmember Cero proposed recording Study Sessions and broadcasting them on MI-TV. Council discussed concerns about eating dinner and being on camera, whether to be at the dais or around tables in the middle.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff research the costs associated with recording and broadcasting Study Sessions.*

- **Flashing Crosswalks at West Mercer Elementary and Islander Middle School**

Councilmember Cero proposed installing embedded flashing crosswalks for West Mercer Elementary and Islander Middle School.

City Manager Conrad stated that the projects can be added to the list of potential TIP projects. He also reminded the Council that review of the streets and parking around the high school is also on the list.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to add embedded flashing crosswalks for West Mercer Elementary and Islander Middle School to the list of potential projects for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2013-2019.*

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

The Council made its selection for 2011 Citizen of the Year and Distinguished Services Awards.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor adjourned the planning session for the day at 5:15 p.m.

**Sunday, January 23, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the meeting to order at 8:30 am in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

**ROLL CALL**

Councilmembers Jane Brahm, Debbie Bertlin, Mike Cero, Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz and Mayor Bruce Bassett were present. Councilmember Mike Grady and Councilmember-Elect Tana Senn were absent.

**DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

Mike Kaser, Information Services Manager and City Clerk Ali Spietz presented information to the Council regarding document management and public records. Mr. Kaser gave a presentation covering the City's public records and document management systems as well as what has been done with document management to date (email archive system, electronic document management system, targeting high-value documents, scanning and indexing projects).

The Council asked questions about the risks of not having digitized records and computer search and retrieval of the documents. They also emphasized the importance of prioritizing our document management efforts - digitizing and storing recent documents and de-emphasizing old historical documents which have low chance of public records requests. Deputy Mayor Grausz emphasized that the City try to standardized public records production straight into the records management system, making records scanning unnecessary. Other Councilmembers urged staff to implement document destruction per state law. Staff assured the Council that the City was devising and implementing its records retention policy.

Staff emphasized that the document management project was making good progress but was being "shoe-horned" in with other high priority work. Councilmembers urged staff to return to the Council in 2012 with a plan for complete implementation of the document management system including timeframes and costs.

***Agreements & Direction:***

*The Council agreed to have staff come back with a roadmap for city-wide document management implementation plan including a timeline and required expenses.*

**YOUTH THEATRE NORTHWEST (YTN)**

Manny Cawaling, YTN Executive Director and Doreen Kindred, YTN Boardmember joined the Council in a discussion regarding Youth Theatre Northwest's needs for a future facility space. Mr. Cawaling pointed out that the School District had notified YTN that they would need to leave the North Mercer campus within four years due to planned redevelopment of the site. City Manager Conrad reported to the Council his conversations with Mr. Cawaling and Ms. Kindred about exploring possibilities at the Boys and Girls Club East Seattle site.

The Council engaged in discussion about potential sites for YTN, the need for YTN to do its own fundraising for a facility if someone else can find them a site. Others asked about possible collaborations with the School District's facilities, JCC, Town Center sites and Boys & Girls Club PEAK facility.

Mr. Cawaling said their next step was to develop a program for YTN for their 30<sup>th</sup> year. During the February to June timeframe they would host listening sessions with children and families and the broader arts community on YTN issues. Having a councilmember to join the listening sessions would be helpful to the process and plan.

Deputy Mayor Grausz and the City Manager volunteered serve as liaisons to YTN in their attempts to find a future site. Councilmember Brahm volunteered her time as well.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to have Deputy Mayor Grausz and City Manager Conrad work with Youth Theatre Northwest to research opportunities for relocation.*

## **PIONEER PARK OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITY**

Parks and Recreation Director Bruce Fletcher provided information about the possibilities for acquisition and/or use of the North Star property and its costs. The Council discussed the King County Conservation Futures matching grant of \$500K. The North Star property is a 3.4 acre tract which produces a rough estimated land value of \$2.2 million. Mr. Fletcher also explained that Parks Natural Resource Coordinator Paul West had attempted to negotiate a 25 foot conservation easement but was unsuccessful.

The Council and Mr. Fletcher discussed possible uses for the property including trail access and tie-ins to Pioneer Park as well as how this acquisition fits into the City's financial priorities. The Council agreed that continuing to talk to the property owners about long term preservation and potential trail use was a good idea.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to have staff continue to communicate with the North Star property owners.*

## **OTHER COUNCIL TOPICS – “PARKING LOT”**

### **• PEAK Agreements – Status Report**

City Manager Conrad noted that the development agreements associated with the PEAK project need closer monitoring to hold up the commitments that have been made to the neighborhood.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed to have Kirsten Taylor monitor the various agreements and permits connected to the PEAK project and bring a status report on compliance.*

### **• MI-TV Video Policy**

Mayor Bassett asked the Council if MI-TV (Channel 21) should broadcast other materials and meetings. City Manager Conrad noted that in the past the Council has not gone further with MI-TV policies due to budgetary issues.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

*The Council agreed, that as a first step, to have staff look into offering MISD the option of airing recordings of their meetings on MI-TV or using Council Chambers to broadcast meetings (and pay costs associated with staff time and cable operators).*

## **2012 WORK PLAN**

As a result of discussions during the planning session, City Manager Conrad added new tasks to the work plan for 2012. The year's work areas include:

- 2013-2014 Biennial Budget
- I-90 (WSDOT/Sound Transit briefings and mitigation for mobility loss)
- Town Center (TOD Project partnership opportunities and City offices as project component)
- Sustainability Update (2012 work program and sustainability task force updates)
- Shoreline Master Program adoption
- Mary Wayte Pool – Interlocal Agreement with MISD
- South Fire Station – Design & Planning
- Town Center Economic Development – City/Chamber Partnership
- Youth and Family Services Emergency Assistance Program
- Plastic Bag Ban Ordinance Review (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarter)

- Board & Commissions Work Plan Reviews
- Advertising in Island Crest Park – Proposal
- Island Crest Ball Field Turf Project
- Youth Theatre Northwest Siting
- North Star – Open Space Acquisition
- Document Management Program Proposal
- Communications Officer Proposal
- PEAK Agreement Status Report
- Town Center Parking Analysis
- Parking on the Mercers Ordinance
- Demographic profile of Mercer Island

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor adjourned the planning session at 11:46 a.m.

Attest:

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Bruce Bassett, Mayor

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Allison Spietz, City Clerk