



***REVISED* CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

ANNUAL PLANNING SESSION

JANUARY 11-13, 2013

Friday, January 11, 2013

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 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor Bassett welcomed the Council and City staff that were present and urged the group to proceed ahead with the agenda.

AGENDA REVIEW

City Manager Rich Conrad reviewed the Agenda and explained that the agenda had been set by Mayor Bassett and Deputy Mayor Grausz after reviewing all topics suggested by Councilmembers. He explained that most of the suggested topics were included somewhere on the agenda with the exception of a couple items that were omitted from the agenda by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, because the items had previously been addressed by the City Council.

2012 OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

City Manager Conrad summarized the accomplishments during 2012 with a review of the Council's 2012 work plan and outcomes.

The Council broke for social time and dinner. They reconvened at approximately 7:30 pm.

MARY WAYTE POOL & YOUTH THEATRE NORTHWEST

City Manager Conrad reviewed that status of Mary Wayte Pool and Youth Theatre Northwest's search for a new facility site.

Regarding Mary Wayte Pool, he explained that the School District had recently conducted a survey of Mercer Island residents concerning future school facility investments. Included in the survey were questions about future investments in Mary Wayte Pool. The Council was eager to learn the results of the survey and chose to wait until the School Board had made its decisions regarding facility investments before making decisions regarding pool facility capital improvements. In the short run, the Council acknowledged its intent to continue annual pool operations subsidies.

Regarding Youth Theatre Northwest (YTN), City Manager Conrad reviewed site acquisition efforts in 2012 on the part of the City and YTN. He reviewed unsuccessful and unaffordable efforts to acquire the East Seattle School site as well as, heretofore, unsuccessful efforts by YTN to partner with a private developer for a future site and facility in the Town Center.

As YTN City Co-liaison, Deputy Mayor Grausz urged the Council to consider the possibility of creating a performing arts space in the area of the former recycling center adjacent to Mercerdale Park. With YTN as a primary tenant, a performing arts space could generate needed activity in the Town Center at times when businesses do not need their parking spaces. YTN representatives indicated a willingness to collaborate with Youth & Family Services (e.g. Thrift Shop expansion) or other City services to mutual benefit. He urged the Council to explore a shared parking arrangement with Farmers Insurance to maximize the development potential of the performing arts space and minimize the need to finance and construct parking facilities.

Agreements & Direction:

Regarding Mary Wayte Pool, the Council chose to wait until the School Board decides its next steps in school facility investments as well as its timing for the next ballot measure.

Regarding Youth Theatre Northwest, the Council agreed that Deputy Mayor Grausz and City Manager Conrad would approach Farmers Insurance with a shared parking proposal. Depending on the outcome, the Council would consider other publicly owned sites for a performing arts facility.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Council made their selection of Citizen of the Year for 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the planning session for the day at 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 12, 2013

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 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

ROLL CALL

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

TOWN CENTER

Mercer Island Shopping Center

Deputy City Manager Noel Treat introduced Tom Fitzsimmons of Lorig & Associates. He explained that Lorig was selected to work with the City to create a development package at Mercer Island Shopping Center and the parcel next to it.

Tom Fitzsimmons described the proposed project as approximately 300 apartments over retail space, with shared parking, and an enhanced civic space (yet to be defined) for the residents. He indicated that the resultant development would be of the quality, size and scale that adds to the City's aspirations for Town Center.

One key element of this project Fitzsimmons explained is to include Sound Transit loss of mobility mitigation dollars (\$7.7 million) to build combined or shared parking for commuters, residents, and shoppers who tend to use parking at different hours and different days of the week. He cited a similar, successful partnering project with METRO King County and the Thornton Place development in Seattle. He noted that METRO does not own anything there, paid upfront fees in the development phase, and had only a commitment for use of 350 parking stalls. He cited the success of the project saying, "The fluidity of use resulted in 425 stalls being available for commuters."

Tom Fitzsimmons read from the amendment to the 1976 Memorandum of Agreement. , "...To the extent there is a loss of mobility to and from Mercer Island, additional transit facilities and services (bus and parking availability for Mercer Island residents) shall be identified and satisfactorily addressed." The Council discussed possible constraints on the mitigation funds, including design standards, hours in which the parking stalls would be dedicated to commuter traffic, and the length of the parking agreement.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council directed staff to continue negotiations with Lorig and report back on their progress.

Legacy Partners

Development Services Group Director Scott Greenberg gave a status report on the proposed Legacy Partners project. He described the development as comprised of 209 housing units and 258 parking spaces. He explained that Legacy Partners want a density bonus in exchange for a public plaza and affordable housing and that the developer wants to break ground in summer 2013. He said the affordability level will be slightly higher than Mercer Island's code, but that it matches federal standards (for affordable housing). He referenced a schematic drawing (attached) and indicated that the public plaza will be situated on 76th Ave SE, not in the center of the building, which is a larger, private plaza for building residents.

Scott Greenberg explained that the Council will receive a proposed development agreement to review in February, and if there is Council approval, the project will go to the Design Commission in March for their consideration.

Councilmembers expressed concerns about traffic congestion, a hairpin turn nearby at the intersection of SE 27th Street and 74th Ave SE, a lack of pedestrian accessibility, the potentially low number of parking spaces allotted compared to housing units, and that the residential private space in the center of the project could be confused for a public plaza. The Council and City Manager discussed concerns about past Town Center developments that received density bonuses and the Council's desire to improve upon its public space and parking.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council directed staff to provide new members with an introduction to Mercer Island's building code and process for development at Town Center. In addition, to ensure the Council and City's interests are being met by the Legacy Project, the Council asked that the key elements of the proposal be brought to the Council for input.

City's Role in Shaping Development

Deputy City Manager Treat asked for Council feedback on the Town Center tour. Councilmembers commented on changes that occurred since 1990. They noted the success of the Aljoya development and that its public open space could be a model for future developments. They also commented on a consensus developing on the Island that there needs to be 2-hour parking in the Town Center. Councilmembers described the density tradeoffs that netted less-than-expected public amenities, particularly plazas. They described the economic difficulties facing small businesses who wish to locate on the Island. Some also expressed a desire to maintain a partnership with those earlier Councils who had shaped the ordinances that resulted in Town Center.

Next, the Council and staff discussed the City's role in economic development and other cities that are more or less active in promoting their city and recruiting commercial development. The group also discussed the Chamber's role and activities to date.

Terry Moreman from the Chamber of Commerce suggested collectively working on the sense of community. She said that the local newspaper had lost some of its Mercer Island focus and since many seniors do not read the online blogs, the community has lost touch with a portion of its residents. She cited ideas they had to build community, including an "Island Reads." She noted that the Chamber builds community through its community profiles, business directory, website, and visitor center activities.

City Manager Conrad reminded the group that there had been an extensive conversation last year on shaping economic development, but while the Council agreed it was a good idea, they were reticent to allocate funding to it.

Councilmembers weighed in on the role of the City in business development and promotion. Councilmembers recommended more staff time to work with organizations on a community-based, "Promote Mercer Island" and "shop local" effort. Others suggested an organization to facilitate more awareness and self-promotion among Island associations and clubs. Another suggested a ready-made tool kit of information, collaboration, and support to new businesses locating in Mercer Island. They also discussed the regulatory environment. More collaboration with the Chamber, utilizing directional signage on I-90, and having a kiosk with information in public spaces was also discussed. Council members also recommended taking active roles in encouraging the community to support businesses on the island.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council directed staff to produce some ideas for the City and Council to undertake and bring back to the Council for consideration.

60/40 Ordinance

Development Services Director Greenberg provided a preview of a memo and draft agenda bill that will be brought to the next Council meeting concerning modifications to the 60/40 rule for ground floor uses in the Town Center, walk-off parking, and common signage design.

He explained the community's desire to potentially park in one building's parking lot and shop at retail sites in another. This "walk-off" parking has been suggested at a meeting of Town Center property owners. While not all were receptive to the idea, some agreed to meet and discuss friendlier parking signage.

To provide incentives for this parking flexibility, Councilmembers agreed in December to lower the minimum square footage requirements for retail establishments and raise the maximum allowable square footage for non-retail establishments.

The Council and staff discussed scenarios associated with this code amendment. First, if a current building owner is content with the 60/40 retail to non-retail mix, they will not be expected to provide walk-off parking. If, however, a building owner wants a variance for less retail space, the building must allow for walk-off parking. Finally, the

Council discussed the application of this rule to new construction, and whether financing rules could prohibit this type of shared parking arrangement.

Councilmembers expressed support for the proposed signs developed for Town Center. They also discussed way-finding signs directing customers toward parking as an incentive to businesses and as a way for Town Center to develop a walkable reputation.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed the code amendment should apply to existing projects, should allow for a relaxing of the 60/40 retail mix, and “walk-off parking” should apply to the non-residential spaces in the buildings, for a minimum of 2 hours. The Council requested staff provide more information on building owners’ resistance to walk-off parking, research financing restrictions vis-à-vis parking, and bring their findings back to the Council for consideration.

Design Development Code

Councilmember Brahm shared her concern that the Town Center has developed in ways that were not envisioned by the community and Council. She expressed a desire for more public amenities and pedestrian corridors (including mid-block crossings). City Manager Conrad asked if the Council wanted staff to develop a short list of ways to improve the code and provide incentives to develop more sophisticated, modern, and flexible amenities.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed that the City Manager should return in 2013 with a list of ways to improve the public amenities section of the Town Center Code.

The Council took a break for lunch.

COUNCIL TOPICS

After lunch, the Council took up items previously raised for discussion (but postponed for later).

Southend Emergency Shelter

Councilmember Cero raised this topic for discussion. Police Chief Ed Holmes explained that when the City was developing its emergency preparedness plan, its natural southend partner Island Middle School was about to undergo a remodel. Therefore, there were few options for shelter, and that is why the public-private partnership with the Mercer Island Country Club was formed. He indicated that, in the future, once the school remodel is completed, the generator can be moved at a very low cost. City Attorney Katie Knight stated that this was necessary to demonstrate to FEMA, et al what the City’s emergency plan was and that this was the groundwork of having two fully functioning shelters.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

Social Media

Councilmember Brahm suggested the City develop a policy on social media, to begin using social media as a means of communication with Island residents, and as a promotion tool for the City. City Manager Conrad reminded the Council that a half-time communications staff member would soon be hired and this would be one of the duties of that employee.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

Sinking Funds

Councilmember Cero raised this topic inquiring as to the purpose and amount of the City’s sinking funds. Finance Director Chip Corder defined sinking funds as future budgeting for public safety personnel (long-term care and firemen’s pension) and replacement of vehicles, equipment, furnishings and synthetic turf fields. He provided a handout on the status of the different funds.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

THRIFT SHOP

The Council and staff discussed the future of the Mercer Island Thrift Shop (MITS). City Manager Conrad indicated that \$25,000 had been set aside in the capital improvement program (CIP) to conduct research on modifications and create an architectural redesign for the building. He also explained that past thrift shop expansions were paid for by thrift shop sales.

Mercer Island Youth and Family Services Director Cindy Goodwin provided background on the history of the Thrift Shop, the Professional Resource and Consult Group (PRCG) who advises the Department, the populations served by the MITS, and its purpose to fund Youth and Family Services for Mercer Island.

She showed the Council a few bird's eye re-designs along with income projections for various square footage options. She said based on input from the PRCG and shop staff, expanding the building from 7,600 up to 10,000 or 12,000 total sq. ft. would be optimal. Goodwin noted that this would allow for easier drop off and increased retail space, including the ability to accept larger value items like furniture. She asked for policy direction from the Council about what the Council wants MIYFS to do for the community. She asked if the shop's goal should be self-supporting, and if so, for how long. She cited these as key factors in the decision making to determine expansion size for the thrift shop.

The Council discussed the life of the building and the affect tolling on I-90 would have on 35% of the thrift shop customers who are off-islanders. They also mentioned the shop as a gathering place and that the current shop size results in the highest quality items being on display and lesser quality items are culled out for donation. The group discussed adding-on versus tear-down and rebuild. Since the MITS has its roots from a garage sale, retaining the funkiness of the building and the shop was expressed as an important interest to some Council members.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to use the \$25,000 for planning a remodel/expansion of Mercer Island Thrift Shop. The goal is to generate more square footage for the Thrift Shop and more revenue for Youth and Family Services. Expanding the footprint would be satisfactory, but the children's play area should be preserved (or moved). Staff will report back to Council with expansion/remodel options and preliminary cost estimates.

RECYCLING CENTER:

City Manager Conrad referenced the Bainbridge Graduate Institute's work on the recycling center.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council tabled discussion on the Recycling Center.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Mayor opened this discussion drawing attention to a *Seattle Times* article on the Third National Climate Assessment drafted by 300 experts. He quoted, "The effects of climate change driven by human activity are spreading through the United States faster than had been predicted, increasingly threatening infrastructure, water supplies, crops and shorelines, according to a review of climate science and its effects by a federal-advisory committee."¹

Green Building

The Council and staff compared the fire station plans with the City of Issaquah's new fire station that some Councilmembers had recently toured. Issaquah's station had a number of green building elements, the Deputy City Manager explained, and an expert provided design advice on the HVAC such that the City could quantify a payback. The group discussed the possibility of including similar green elements in their station.

¹ *SeattleTimes.com*; "Climate Change Moving Faster than Predicted"; January 11, 2013; http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2020115021_climatereportxml.html

City Manager Conrad stated that the official vote of council was to make this fire station most efficient and that building green can be viewed by the community as part of those efficiencies. He encouraged the Council to stay with the current design, and the staff could recommend some high-value, low-cost green options to consider including in the fire station. The group discussed a potential need for additional monies, reasonable payback periods, and the kinds of green elements to include. They also discussed the need for a green building policy for the City.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to include developing a green building policy as a work plan item for 2013.

Sustainability Task Force

The decision to activate the Sustainability Task Force again was deferred until the sustainability and communications manager is on board. The group also discussed the need for a study and goal setting session on sustainability and a six-year plan for the City.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to a sustainability goal-setting session to provide policy direction for a six-year sustainability plan to be developed by the new Communications/Sustainability Manager.

Fleet Turnover

Maintenance Director Glenn Boettcher gave a status report on the Green Fleets Plan and the 2013-2018 Planned Fleet Replacements for all departments in the City. He indicated that by 2018, most of the City's vehicles will be low emission vehicles and equipment, with a few exceptions: the meter reader's Jeep can't be replaced because the steering wheel is on the right side and no hybrid currently on the market is configured as such. He also said that future police cars will have eco-boosts.

The Council thanked the City Manager, Maintenance Director and others in the City for getting charging stations installed at the community center, PEAK, the City, and at Walgreen's.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

Plastic Bags

Councilmember Senn has been polling stores on the Island regarding legislating a plastic bag ban. She explained that many are regional stores who operate in other markets where bag bans exist and the ban could represent, for some, a cost savings for the stores. Councilmember Senn also suggested the ban could be an opportunity to develop a "shop local" bag for consumers to use.

The Council discussed the plastic bag ban as part of the City's sustainability efforts. They also discussed a 5-cent fee for non-compliance, educating the community, and a bag fee exemption, similar to Seattle's, for food stamp recipients and the elderly.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to add discussion of a plastic bag ban to the work plan, including discussion of not imposing a bag fee and/or the possibility of exempting seniors and low-income persons from such a fee.

COUNCIL TOPICS

The Council returned to topics remaining in the "Parking Lot".

Bicycle and Pedestrian Implementation Plan for 2013

Assistant City Engineer Anne Tonella-Howe, briefed the Council on various projects using CIP funds to improve bike and pedestrian mobility that will be conducted in 2013: North/South bike route striping, Mercer Ways Fog Line, and East Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (Phases 8-10). In addition, certain areas of the Island do not provide adequate shoulders for non-motorized users, and a plan needs to be designed to fill the gaps. In 2014, the Town Center cross walk needs analysis will be conducted.

Councilmembers asked about parking on the Mercer Ways. Ms. Howe said it is still in the plans to prohibit parking on the bike/pedestrian areas paved by the city.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to go forward with a multimodal summit using a committee nominated by the City Council in the first quarter of 2013.

Diversity of Housing Stock

Councilmember Bertlin raised the topic of diverse housing stock. She indicated it was not to change the core values of home ownership and preservation of property values. Rather, she noted changing demographics and sustainability issues have resulted in a demand for a smaller housing stock on the Island. She suggested looking at changing lot sizes and possibly encouraging cottage development in certain areas. City Manager Conrad suggested that the Council should have a broader policy discussion before looking at specific neighborhoods.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item. The Council did not add this topic to its workplan for 2013.

Parks Level of Service

Councilmember Grady raised this question before the Council: "Do we need more resources to meet the levels of service we have?"

Parks and Recreation Director Bruce Fletcher said the Department's budget can meet the level of service with funding that was reinstated.

Councilmembers discussed Rotarians volunteering to bring Rotary Park up to a level of service higher than "B". In addition, they discussed the Council's desire for Clark, Grover and Rotary Parks to be maintained at a higher level of service than they have been.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item. The Council did not add this topic to its workplan for 2013.

Volunteer Recognition

Councilmember Brahm raised the topic of volunteerism at the retreat. She suggested a more robust approach to recruiting, retaining, celebrating, and acknowledging the volunteers who contribute so much valuable time to the City. She emphasized the need for the City to show more recognition and appreciation for volunteer efforts.

The Council discussed the difficulty of filling some boards and commissions. They discussed a role the new communications staff member could have in developing and maintaining a "volunteers needed" website. Councilmember Brahm acknowledged that there used to be a volunteer recognition luncheon, but budget cuts eliminated it.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to add a volunteer promotion/recognition program and a "volunteers wanted" website to the 2013 workplan.

Seniors in the Community

Councilmember Brahm raised the topic of whether seniors' needs were being met in the community. She informed the Council that the Senior Advisory Board has become very active on the Island.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

City as Fundraiser?

Councilmember Brahm raised this topic indicating that in tight budget times, the City asks its staff to become fundraisers for certain projects. She differentiated between one-time fundraisers for certain discrete projects versus projects that the City fund raises for year after year, like the fireworks display. She asked if it was appropriate for the departments to be doing so year after year.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to add this topic to its workplan for 2013.

City and School Board Communications and Working Relations

Councilmember Bertlin raised this topic acknowledging that the working relationship is already good, but that more interaction and communication would be an improvement. She cited a survey being conducted by the schools that the Council was not aware of.

The Council suggested a number of ways to increase interaction/communication: receiving minutes of School Board meetings, viewing their meetings on television, meeting to discuss communication and working together, reviving previous fun activities like basketball or softball games with accompanying picnics or potlucks.

Agreements & Direction:

Mayor Bassett and Councilmember Grady agreed to work on this topic together.

Marijuana Dispensary Regulations

The Council discussed their need to understand the land use and legal implications of medical and soon-to-be retail marijuana dispensaries and what authority the City has to restrict or regulate these sales.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to add a briefing on this topic to its workplan for 2013.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Cero raised this topic, suggesting a pledge of allegiance at the start of the Council meeting would unify the Council and community. Councilmembers discussed their demonstration of patriotism through their actions on the Council.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed not to conduct the pledge at meetings or add this topic to its workplan for 2013.

Rotary Signage Request

Councilmember Brahm raised this topic. Similar to other communities across America, Rotary wants to place signs on the island demonstrating its existence, saying where it meets, etc. They were told by the City that volunteer organizations could not have signs on the Island. Councilmember Brahm asked if the group wants to revisit this matter.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to add this topic to its workplan for 2013 and requested that staff provide options and background on what other communities offer service clubs.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the planning session for the day at 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 13, 2013

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 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

ROLL CALL

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

STRATEGIC PLAN

City Manager Conrad introduced Karen Reed, who he explained had 30 years experience in local government and a strong background developing strategic plans with four jurisdictions within the region.

Karen kicked off her session by asking Councilmembers where they had received experience in strategic planning. Collectively, the Council had experience in a broad range of organizations including Carnival Cruises, the City of St. Louis, King County, the Federal Government, non-profit organizations, Paccar, and Microsoft.

Next, Karen defined strategic planning, explained its importance, and the differences between a comprehensive and a strategic plan. She encouraged the Council to seek big picture, long-term ends as their future vision of the City.

Next, the Council brainstormed their vision ideas for a future Mercer Island:

- Maintain status quo (suburban, single family household great for community, sustainability)
- Maintain I-90 access as is
- Vibrant and inviting Town Center with clear path to and from it (park and ride, light rail, to it from the island); walkable, lively, beautiful, a lot of offerings; you can get most of what you need on the island
- Preserve parks
- Preserve good education
- Accessible and welcoming community for a broad range of demographics
 - Aging population
 - Getting around and on/off island
 - Regional access
 - Making it easy to live on this island
- High community awareness around sustainability
 - carbon footprint reduction
- Expand diversity of housing
- Be a national leader in sustainability
 - Power generation
 - Self-driving cars
 - Fleet conversion
- Safe and prepared island for emergencies
- Refine Town Center vision to address coming increases in growth, changes in transportation
 - Development in current footprint (address capacity issues)
 - Expand the CBD boundary to the north
 - Or strategy is to change regional policy to relieve city of policy mandates
- Educational infrastructure must keep pace with increases in population
- Improved engagement and knowledgeable people
 - Lack of newspapers
 - Do we know how to engage our community
- Maintaining multi-modal level of infrastructure
 - Transportation
 - Utilities
- What is the carrying capacity of the Island?

- At what cost?
- Be prepared for a more transit-oriented future
 - Intra-island transit system
 - Getting people from the southend to the northend once light rail comes
 - Approach churches to use their lots during the day
 - Possible bus system to get from south to north (METRO might be able to help)
- Understanding the implications of people staying on the Island more
- Expand/develop a gathering location at the south end of the Island
- Performing arts
- Maintaining commitment to prevention and caring for those in need – YFS (food bank, counseling services, mental health)
- Re-evaluate Youth and Family Services name/role/branding to address the changing demographics; daycare needs may be displaced soon
- Moving City Hall to Town Center? Explore as part of Town Center vision.
- Town Center – how do we want to connect Park and Ride, how do we want to welcome people, pathway, how to walk, how to frame that, build community, do stuff there
- Timeline for I-90 and strategy

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to have a study session(s) on the topics they brainstormed and discuss prioritizing one of these items to work on in 2013. In addition, the Council agreed to plan and discuss next steps for a possible strategic plan and engagement of the community in 2014. The Council also agreed this was not a final or closed list for the strategic plan.

COUNCIL TOPICS:

Fee for Park & Ride

Deputy Mayor Grausz raised this topic indicating there is discussion within Sound Transit to charge a fee to commuters for the use of their park and ride lots based on the distance a commuter travels to reach the park and ride. He asked the Council if the City should advocate making Mercer Island a test case for what he viewed could result in a fee for off-islanders. He also commented that it could result in a nominal fee for Mercer Islanders and asked if that would be acceptable.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council requested that staff research this topic and report back to the Council.

I-90 Mayors' Letter

Mayor Bassett raised this topic, explaining that WSDOT has asked mayors along the I-90 corridor for input on what to study vis-à-vis tolling on I-90. He suggested engaging past mayors to provide as broad a perspective as possible. Staff had checked calendars and the only date that worked for the most accessible past mayors (Fred Jarrett, Judy Clibborn and Alan Merkle) was February 2.

The Council discussed the advantages of holding this meeting during a regular Council meeting to involve the public, versus on a Saturday. They discussed whether past mayors would sign the letter, which Councilmembers were not available on February 2 (Councilmembers Cero and Grady), and suggested including Jim Horn in the meeting.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council requested that staff check to see if other dates could work so as to include more Councilmembers.

Legislative Agenda

Councilmember Senn asked why the City did not have a legislative agenda. She recommended the Council adopt one on I-90 matters and other City issues and that the agenda should be forwarded to Olympia. City Manager Conrad explained that past Councils did not want the City lobbying in Olympia.

The Council discussed forming a legislative agenda, what would be included in that agenda, and the mechanism for raising policy issues from regional bodies to the Council for a vote. City Manager Conrad encouraged Councilmembers to go to Olympia and give direction to staff if they want staff to lobby on behalf of the City.

The Mayor provided a draft letter being circulated by mayors in the region regarding transportation funding and asked whether he should sign it. This letter recommends expanded funding options to preserve the existing road and transportation systems.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed the Mayor should sign the regional funding letter. In addition, the Council asked the City Manager to draft a legislative agenda that would address the City's position on tolling on I-90 and other issues for the Council to consider.

Golf Carts in the Neighborhood

Councilmember Cero stated that a citizen asked him if golf carts be driven on the streets of Mercer Island.

City Manager Conrad indicated that it is against state law to drive golf carts on public streets. He further explained that in gated communities (where the roads are private) one could drive a golf cart on the streets.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

Council Email

City Manager Conrad explained that previously, when someone sent an email to the council from the website, it went to the City Clerk who would forward it to the appropriate staff and Councilmember to address. However, two months ago she changed it so email goes directly to the Council only, and not to her. The group discussed the best approach to constituent email generated from the website.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to direct email.

Snow Removal

In response to a question from Council, City Manager Conrad indicated it is the business owners' responsibility to remove snow from in front of their businesses.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item.

Off-Island Signage

Councilmember Senn inquired about a sign ordinance stating there are A-frame signs advertising the Bravern in Town Center. City Manager Conrad stated it was okay to have A-frame signs and it is not illegal to place them in Town Center, regardless of their origin.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item, and the City Manager planned to call the Bravern to discuss not placing their sign at Town Center.

Band Width Expansion

Mercer Island applied for a pilot program to take part in an expanded bandwidth program with Comcast. The Council asked how long Verizon will have an open pit at Island Crest Park. They also expressed frustration at how long the pit had been there and at the damage done to the surrounding trees.

Agreements & Direction:

There was no Council action on this item, and Deputy City Manager Treat will pose these questions to Verizon and report back to the Council.

WiFi at Mercedale

Councilmember Brahm noted that Mercedale Park is a gathering place for Island residents and asked the Council to support research into the cost of installing wifi and placing tables and chairs there in the summer.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council agreed to place discussion of this topic on their workplan for 2013.

Executive Session Taping

Councilmember Cero encouraged members to allow taping and broadcasting of Council Executive Sessions, exclaiming this would be on the cutting edge of transparency.

Agreements & Direction:

The Council did not agree to place discussion of this topic on their workplan for 2013.

WORK PLAN AGENDA ITEMS

Next, the Council reviewed its 2013 Work Plan (attached) based on earlier discussions:

1. Legislative agenda
2. Strategic planning work study sessions
3. I-90 issues (WSDOT/Sound Transit briefings – center lane loss)
 - Fees for the P&R
 - Motivation for mobility loss
4. Town Center:
 - Development partnerships, Sound Transit
 - Development agendas, public amenities
 - 40/60 ordinance
 - Design code/amenities/modifications
5. Sustainability work plan
 - 2013 work plan
 - Task force implementation and recommendations
 - Green building policies
6. Shoreline master program adoption
7. Mary Wayte pool – city/school investments
8. Town Center economic development (Chamber and City)
9. Communities that care
10. Performing Arts/YTN public site review
11. Board/commissions work plan review
12. Plastic bag ban
13. Thrift shop expansion plan
14. Volunteerism: website, recruitment, recognition
15. Fundraising objectives – events versus programs versus capital improvement
16. Fire station – sustainable features/fire apparatus
17. Marijuana initiative implications
18. Service club signage options
19. Wifi at Mercedale
20. Bike/auto discussion (Mercer Ways)
21. Emergency management plan update

In addition to the workplan, staff will conduct a “Development 101” briefing related to Town Center for Councilmembers who wish to attend. Councilmembers Senn and Bertlin, and City Manager Conrad will attend the school meetings regarding guns in schools and monitor the survey being conducted by the School District.

Councilmembers closed out the meeting expressing appreciation for everyone’s participation and commitment to improving life for Mercer Islanders.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the planning session at 12:00 pm.

Attest:

Bruce Bassett, Mayor

Allison Spietz, City Clerk

Notes compiled by Ginny Ratliff, Agreement Dynamics, Inc.