

# DRAFT

## CITY OF SHORELINE

### SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES OF DINNER MEETING

Monday, September 13, 2004  
6:00 p.m.

Shoreline Conference Center  
Highlander Room

PRESENT: Mayor Hansen, Deputy Mayor Jepsen, Councilmembers Chang, Fimia, Grace, and Ransom

ABSENT: Councilmember Gustafson

STAFF: Steve Burkett, City Manager; Bob Olander, Deputy City Manager; Julie Modrzejewski, Assistant City Manager; Joyce Nichols, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Relations; and Sharon Mattioli, City Clerk

Mayor Hansen called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

City Manager Steve Burkett explained that tonight's review of proposed changes to the public participation process is a continuation of the discussion that occurred at the dinner meeting on June 14, 2004.

Councilmember Grace began by referring to his list of proposed changes, which he said are supported by Councilmembers Fimia and Ransom:

1. **Speakers will be asked to sign-up and be called in that order.** If there is time, the Chair will ask if there are any others who wish to speak. This change has already been implemented.
2. **Reduce the public comment period at the beginning of each meeting to 20 minutes.** Depending on the number of people who wish to speak, they will be allotted up to three minutes each. Councilmember Grace said this suggestion is made to accommodate #3.
3. **Provide for public comment after each agenda item, with a limit of 20 minutes.** Each speaker will be given up to three minutes but if no new information is presented, speakers will be asked to acknowledge agreement with previous speakers.
4. **Eliminate public comment at the end of workshops.** Mayor Hansen said he would not oppose this.

Councilmember Grace noted that the School Board takes comment after agenda items, and it works very well by focusing comments at the time items are being considered. He emphasized the importance of contacting stakeholders for their input.

Mayor Hansen commented that this approach allows the same speaker to comment several times during the meeting.

Councilmember Fimia felt that it is worth the potential risk to allow open communication on every topic. Councilmember Grace added that the School Board did not have a problem with speakers commenting multiple times.

Mayor Hansen noted that he would not be against this proposal if speakers were limited to only one or two times per meeting. He emphasized that he wants input from the public, but does not want the Council's time to be monopolized by a few people.

Responding to Councilmember Grace, Mayor Hansen noted the Council previously allowed comments after each agenda item. The meetings were longer and the same individuals spoke multiple times at each meeting.

Councilmember Fimia felt this "comes with the territory" and speakers should not be restricted. Comments should be allowed after every staff report, before the Council begins its discussion. She said she did not oppose Council taking actions at all meetings, as long as an item is discussed at one meeting and then acted upon at the second.

Mayor Hansen said that if this approach is taken, Council should be willing to enforce its own time limits. Councilmembers Fimia and Grace felt there could be times when the rules would be suspended to accommodate more speakers.

Robert Olander, Deputy City Manager, felt that sometimes several people make the same points and this is time-consuming and repetitive.

Councilmember Ransom thought that fewer people would speak at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Burkett said in his experience this is the only city that has allowed comment at several points in the agenda. He concurred with Mayor Hansen that there were certain individuals who regularly spoke several times during the meeting, often with the same negative message at each point.

Councilmember Fimia felt the Council should not be coming to conclusions at a dinner meeting. Mayor Hansen concurred that any changes to the rules will occur in a regular meeting.

Councilmember Ransom spoke in support of Item 3. However, he felt Council should be more firm about not allowing speakers to exhibit inappropriate behavior or make derogatory comments.

Deputy Mayor Jepsen advised that there should be sign up sheets, which would bring some order to the process. He also recommended setting ground rules for staff presentations in terms of length. He said Council should also be more focused in its own discussion of items. He felt that if Council would police its own use of time, there would be more time for the public to speak.

Councilmember Fimia noted that if a large number of people wished to speak, the time could be limited to two minutes, but Councilmember Ransom felt this is not enough time to make a good presentation. Mayor Hansen and Councilmember Ransom supported the idea of multiple sign up sheets.

Deputy Mayor Jepsen said those supporting these changes should act as “sergeants-at-arms” or have a mechanism for evaluating how effective the changes are.

Councilmember Grace recalled his suggestion that the changes be evaluated after six months. He acknowledged that with current agendas, the meetings may become very long.

Councilmember Fimia argued that less time will be spent at the beginning of the meeting. Councilmember Ransom concurred.

Councilmember Fimia summarized that people would sign up, not be redundant, and not make personal comments.

Mr. Olander noted that it was helpful to have the Mayor lay the groundrules with the audience ahead of time, as he did at the August 23 meeting.

5. **Allow group presentations by members of the Shoreline community.** These would be 30 minutes at one workshop a month (15 minutes for presentations and 15 minutes for Q&A). They would be allotted on a first-come first-served basis and need to be sponsored by at least two Councilmembers.

Councilmembers Chang and Ransom supported this idea, but Mr. Burkett spoke against it, noting that the Council’s time is very valuable. It should spend it weighing policy matters, discussing issues and making decisions. He suggested looking at some other method of delivering information or fostering discussion.

Councilmember Ransom felt this is a good option, if the presentation is supported by at least one Councilmember.

Mr. Olander noted that any given issue can have many sides, and once an issue is presented, other groups may wish to come and present differing views. In such cases, it would only be fair to hear all sides.

Councilmember Fimia said the presentations would have to be relevant to the people of Shoreline. She said if a group wishes to inform Councilmembers on a topic, the only option now is to schedule individual appointments. Allowing them to speak at a Council meeting would be a better way to deal with this information-sharing. She suggested that Councilmembers could look for common ground among opposing groups. She said that many people in Shoreline are doing very beneficial programs that it would be good for the Council and the public to know about. She said this is not intended to address political issues, but human services, the environment, transportation, etc.

At this point, Deputy Mayor Jepsen said he would like to see the full list of recommendations, so that he could prioritize his support. He said the Council cannot act on all the ideas.

**6. Staff and Councilmembers should identify and contact the obvious stakeholders about issues the Council will be discussing.**

In the interests of time, Councilmember Grace moved on to the town hall recommendation.

**7. Hold four town halls per year based on particular topics that are timely to the Council's decisions.**

Deputy Mayor Jepsen recalled that it was suggested these be held on 5<sup>th</sup> Mondays.

Councilmember Grace said town halls can work very well when they are facilitated and focused. It was noted that the budget, the Comprehensive Plan, and the Capital Improvement Plan would be good topics for discussion. It would be important to focus on issues, not personalities. There could be brief staff presentations to provide context and then an informal question and answer session.

Councilmember Fimia noted all of these suggestions came out of the Council forums held last spring.

Councilmember Ransom noted that there is usually good attendance at such town halls at the beginning, but then it tapers off. He suggested starting out with four per year and possibly going to two in later years.

Councilmember Fimia also suggested a yearly meeting with the City's partners, i.e., other governments, jurisdictions such as the school board, the sewer and water districts, etc. and non-profits.

Mayor Hansen agreed that the town halls would need a focus to be successful. He also noted that perhaps these should be on a day other than Monday, to accommodate those who cannot attend Council meetings.

September 13, 2004

8. **Form an ad hoc committee to review expanded use of the website and access channel.** The discussion focused on the government access channel.

Councilmember Fimia noted that many community members have great ideas about how to better utilize these resources. She suggested soliciting 10 – 20 people to do the footwork in making recommendations about short term projects and costs. Council could provide a scope of work.

Councilmember Ransom was concerned about opening up access too widely.

Councilmember Grace felt this group should be made up of other organizations with an interest in reaching the public via television, such as the community college, the school district, etc.. These would provide the technical backbone of the committee. He noted that the survey showed a small number of people actually watch the channel now. However, Councilmember Ransom noted that Council meetings do seem to be watched by a fair number.

Councilmember Fimia suggested coming up with a matrix of groups to invite to participate.

Mr. Burkett pointed out that the community college and school district have their own channel, as well as access to more staff and better facilities.

Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Director, concurred, noting the City could pursue interlocal agreement to work with these entities. She noted that there is a cost associated with this item. She also pointed out that we do not have data from other jurisdictions regarding the usage of their channels to know if the number of people watching our channel, based on survey results, is a high or low number compared to other cities.

Councilmember Chang commented that the 17 percent who watch may be a much larger percentage of those who vote.

There was consensus that more information is needed on this item. Councilmember Grace agreed to work with Ms. Nichols to provide it.

Councilmember Fimia commented that staffing issues might be addressed through the use of interns and volunteers. Mr. Olander pointed out that the viewing public is now very sophisticated, and the City wants to maintain a certain level of production values. He also noted the possibility of a “modest” source of funding for this from an increase in franchise fees.

Mr. Burkett said the Council would need to define what it hopes to accomplish with the enhancements in order to evaluate the recommendations.

9. **Publish *Currents* more frequently.** Ms. Nichols recalled that most Councilmembers supported publishing nine issues and a budget issue, skipping August and January.

Mayor Hansen was concerned about overexposure, wondering noting the newsletter may not be as well read at the higher number. Ms. Nichols responded that this can be tested in the community surveys.

Councilmember Fimia suggested doing the surveys with a back page mailer in the *Currents* itself. Various pieces of the broader surveys could be addressed in this way. She also felt that issues should be presented to the public earlier in the process

There was general consensus on expanding the number of issues to ten.

Mayor Hansen adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

---

Sharon Mattioli, City Clerk