

December 13, 2004

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL

SUMMARY MINUTES OF DINNER MEETING

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

Shoreline Conference Center
Highlander Room

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

ABSENT: none

STAFF: Steve Burkett, City Manager; Julie Modrzejewski, Assistant City Manager; Joyce Nichols, Community and Intergovernmental Relations Director; and Sharon Mattioli, City Clerk

GUEST: Senator Darlene Fairley

Steve Burkett, City Manager, convened the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Director, distributed a copy of the City's 2004 Legislative Priorities.

Senator Darlene Fairley provided background on what is expected in the 2005 legislative session, given that the election of the governor is still undecided. She said that the main focus again this year will be the \$1.6 billion deficit in the budget. She said both candidates for governor have indicated that they do not support raising taxes.

Sen. Fairley reported that she is Chair of the Finance Committee. She briefly mentioned issues that will come before her committee, including insurance, banking, privacy issues and consumer protection issues. She is also a member of the Ways and Means and Government Operations Committees.

Continuing, she noted that legislators are not inclined to provide more funding for cities when cities are not using all of their current taxing authority (e.g., gambling taxes). She said not using current funding options makes it appear that the money is not needed.

Councilmember Fimia explained that in the case of gambling, the profit margin is lessening for cardrooms and casinos. The fear is that if gambling taxes are not lowered, these businesses will fail. Senator Fairley responded that there is a move to freeze the number of cardroom licenses at the current rate, which should assist the current businesses.

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Deputy Mayor Jepsen asked about funding for low income housing and asked Sen. Fairley to try to influence the federal policy to eliminate cuts, especially in the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Mayor Hansen arrived at 6:33 p.m.

There was further discussion of what might be done to address the budget deficit and changes that might occur in the Department of Social and Health Services. Sen. Fairley said it is difficult to predict the future when the Governor's race is still in limbo and the head of the various agencies are still unknown..

A discussion of possible legislation regarding motorized scooters ensued. Deputy Mayor Jepsen noted that Shoreline hopes that the state will step up and put forward some standard regulations for the entire state, rather than leaving each municipality have develop its own regulations. Sen. Fairley said that last year the Senate passed a bill to do the opposite of this. Ms. Nichols added that the Association of Washington Cities has not identified this topic as a high priority for its lobbying activities. There was further discussion of the importance of having standardized regulations. Sen. Fairley noted that the police have not identified this as a major concern.

Councilmember Fimia said that if the state does not act, it will be important for Shoreline to have regulations in place to make scooter use safer.

Councilmember Fimia asked the legislature to take a look at how much funding is going to Sound Transit. There was discussion of where the support for Sound Transit comes from.

Sen. Fairley concluded that she tries to "watch out for the cities' interests" but she urged the Council to "speak with one voice" on issues. She also noted her reliance on Ms. Nichols for quick information about where Shoreline stands on issues.

Councilmember Ransom arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Sen. Fairley reiterated her position on gambling taxes. Deputy Mayor Jepsen concluded that the Council has given staff direction to look into the economic situation of local cardrooms before the City makes any decision on the gambling tax rate. Mr. Burkett said that the staff is getting information from the Gambling Commission.

Councilmember Gustafson thanked Sen. Fairley for coming to update the Council on legislative issues.

Moving on to another topic, Councilmember Ransom distributed an informational three-page memo on his request that the "8-hour rule" implemented at the City's inception be continued. He said that the City Council originally allowed for one staff member to provide staff support out of the City Clerk's Office. When Bob Deis became City Manager, the function of staff support and research was performed by an administrative

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assistant and then Management Analyst Eric Swansen in the City Manager's Office. When Mr. Burkett became City Manager, Mr. Swansen and the Manager's Executive Assistant did the research work needed.

Councilmember Ransom said that when Councilmembers needed research or support, the Manager's Office would perform the necessary work. He gave the following examples:

- Study of the remnant King County properties in Shoreline, which ultimately led to the formation of two pocket parks;
- Details on the Echo Lake site, which is now proposed for the City Hall site;
- Beach property at south end of Apple Tree Lane, which has been proposed by the Bond Advisory Committee as a possible purchase for beach access;
- Consideration of possible uses for the convent building off of 145th Street;
- Special police study on the number of drug houses closed and arrests made, a key early achievement for the City, with 185 drug houses closed and burglaries lowered by 50%;
- Study of no-shows at Municipal Court and jail sentencing;
- Search for an early King County design of the Interurban Trail and the projected costs of a 16-foot wide trail;
- Several different tabulations for counts of statement for and against an issue before the Council.

He said that the use of the 8-hour rule has saved the City money by discovering areas to bring to the full Council for action, such as the use of volunteers to call municipal court arrestees to make sure they show up for court, thereby cutting the costs for days in jail. He concluded that he has used the rule once or twice a year without incident since 1996. He felt that the City Manager's suggestion that a Councilmember must have four votes to request research or ask for letters to be written is a unnecessary impediment to the Council's ability to do its work.

Councilmember Grace said that in his experience Councilmembers have been able to ask for information without a formal process. He had not heard of any requests for information from Councilmembers that have been denied.

Councilmember Ransom said he had asked for some research that the City Manager had denied. He said that sometimes it is essential to have some data in order to propose something to the full Council.

Councilmember Grace clarified that Councilmember Ransom appeared to be the only Councilmember who had invoked the 8-hour rule. Mayor Hansen and Councilmember Gustafson stated they had never used it. Councilmember Gustafson added that if he has had an issue, he has taken it to the City Manager. He felt the Council should know about requests for extensive research.

Councilmember Fimia suggested that the important issue of Council support be continued in the regular meeting.

Councilmember Ransom reiterated that the Council had the 8-hour rule at the beginning, but Mayor Hansen only recalled that it had only been discussed. He thought that later the Council decided against this process.

Councilmember Fimia said the legislative branch needs the ability to do research. She noted the difficulty of finding a spot on the agenda to discuss an issue in order to get four votes to research it. She felt Councilmembers lack access to basic information and do not have the time to do their own research.

There was consensus to continue the discussion at the regular meeting.

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

Sharon Mattioli, City Clerk