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CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES OF DINNER MEETING

Monday, January 24, 2005
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; Bob Olander, Deputy City Manager; Julie Modrzejewski, Assistant City Manager; Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs Director; Tim Stewart, Planning and Development Services Director; and Kirk McKinley, Aurora Corridor Project Manager

GUEST: Jack Crawford, Kenmore City Councilmember and member of Sound Transit Board of Directors

Mayor Hansen called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. All Councilmembers were present. Mayor Hansen introduced Jack Crawford, a Kenmore City Councilmember and member of the Sound Transit Board.

Mr. Crawford discussed the planning process for Phase 2 of the Sound Transit program. He urged the City to submit comments on the Sound Transit Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) in order to make sure they are part of the record making Shoreline's wishes known for Phase 2. Continuing, Mr. Crawford said that Sound Transit would be closing the downtown bus tunnel to buses in order to get it ready for Light Rail. He then reviewed the plans to add to the Sounder (heavy rail) train service from Everett to Seattle. He said ridership improves as more trains are added.

Deputy Mayor Jepsen asked about the timing of implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Aurora Avenue, to which Mr. Crawford responded that Sound Transit has plans to work with the Regional Transportation Investment District during Phase 2 to try to obtain BRT funding. This might be as late as 2006.

Robert Olander, Deputy City Manager, asked if Phase 2 includes buses as well as trains. Mr. Crawford responded that it does, noting that ridership on Sound Transit Express buses keeps going up, despite higher gasoline prices.

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Councilmember Grace asked how “fixed” the route is from the University of Washington north to Northgate. Mr. Crawford responded that the Board is voting this week on the route.

Responding again to Councilmember Grace’s question about the route north, Mr. Crawford said that this is what is being studied now. He said Sound Transit may be implementing its own monorail.

Deputy Mayor Jepsen reported that at the Seashore Forum a letter was sent to Sound Transit asking it to consider routes other than I-5 for the route north from Northgate. He wished to make sure that all the options are looked into so that the best choice can be made.

Steve Burkett, City Manager, said the Seashore Forum asked who would operate and fund the BRT. Mr. Crawford responded that the solution would have to involve both subareas to be able to fund it in King and Snohomish Counties.

Councilmember Fimia wondered where the money would come from to fund BRT if most of the Sound Transit money is committed to Light Rail. Mr. Crawford responded that it will be essential to find money to fund BRT through Sound Transit.

Councilmember Fimia said BRT should be funded along Aurora Avenue and Lake City Way in order to make transit work as it should. There have to be good east/west connections to link to BRT and Light Rail.

Mr. Crawford said that Sound Transit funds both Light Rail and buses in its south subarea. He said he keeps bringing up the question of why this isn’t the case in the north part of the county as well.

Councilmember Fimia said that all forms of rail (monorail, Light Rail, etc.) are more expensive than BRT because buses can move around to where the people are and want to go, while rail is fixed.

Mr. Crawford responded that Sound Transit will be increasing its bus fares soon so it can improve its fare box recovery.

Councilmember Fimia felt that Sound Transit will receive four-fifths of the money Metro gets, but will provide only one-fifth of the trips.

Councilmember Gustafson noted that he had just returned from Denver, where both Light Rail and buses are being used. It seemed to him that most large cities are committing to both rail and buses.

Councilmember Fimia said the BRT is an excellent example. She said if you get the traffic out of the bus lanes, you can have a good system.

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Mr. Crawford added that so many cities are committed to this mix, they can't all be wrong. At this point, Mr. Crawford left the meeting to attend a Kenmore City Council meeting.

Councilmember Fimia distributed a document from the Coalition for Effective Transportation that will be submitted to Sound Transit in response to the DSEIS.

Moving on, Councilmember Ransom mentioned that he spoke with a representative from the Buxton Company about following up on the study it did for Shoreline a couple of years ago. Councilmembers Grace, Chang and Fimia all said they would like to attend a meeting with this representative. Councilmember Ransom agreed to set up a meeting.

On another topic, Tim Stewart, Planning and Development Services Director, reported that the Cottage Housing Tour could occur on either February 5 or February 12. He said the tour would include the Fremont Cottages, the Reserve Cottages and the Greenwood Cottages, all of which are in Shoreline. It was agreed to schedule both dates and to do the tour jointly with the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Fimia suggested looking at cottage housing in some other cities, to which Mr. Stewart responded that this tour is only of Shoreline examples, but Councilmembers can suggest other developments they might want to see.

Councilmember Ransom reported that the Suburban Cities Association (SCA) is asking Shoreline to name its top three issues for 2005, which were identified as: 1) transportation funding; 2) municipal finance issues, including streamlined sales tax and sales tax equalization; and 3) Community Development Block Grant funding, affordable housing and related services. He also reported on Suburban Cities Association committee appointments, noting that Mayor Hansen was nominated to the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board, Councilmember Gustafson to the Regional Water Quality Committee and he (Ransom) was nominated as an alternate on the Regional Transit Committee. The nominations will be voted on at the January 26 meeting of the SCA Board.

Concluding, Councilmember Ransom also mentioned SB 5287, which deals with the gambling tax by freezing cities' tax rates on mini-casinos to the rate in effect on January 1, 2005, taking the difference between that amount and 20% for the State. He said that since Shoreline taxes at 11%, the State would take an additional 9% from our casinos.

Mayor Hansen adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs Director

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