

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, January 3, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber - Shoreline City Hall
17500 Midvale Avenue N, Shoreline, WA

PRESENT: Mayor McGlashan, Deputy Mayor Hall, Councilmember Eggen, Councilmember McConnell, Councilmember Roberts, Councilmember Scott, and Councilmember Winstead

ABSENT: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 7:00 p.m., the meeting was called to order by Mayor McGlashan, who presided.

2. FLAG SALUTE/ROLL CALL

Mayor McGlashan led the flag salute. Upon roll call by the City Clerk, all Councilmembers were present.

3. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT & FUTURE AGENDAS

Bob Olander, City Manager, provided reports and updates on various City meetings, projects, and events.

4. COUNCIL REPORTS: none

5. PUBLIC COMMENT: none

6. STUDY ITEMS

- (a) Ordinance No. 594 Repealing the Requirements to Underground Overhead Utilities by May 21, 2011 and to Underground All New Facilities and Additions and Rebuilds of Existing Facilities and Adding a Requirement that Capital Projects Pay for Costs of Undergrounding Service Connections

Flannary Collins, Assistant City Attorney, and Mark Relph, Public Works Director, provided the staff report and recommendation to adopt Ordinance No. 594 amending SMC 13.20 to require undergrounding of utilities during road projects and joint trenches. Ms. Collins explained that the current mandate that utilities be placed underground by a specific date is an unreasonable expectation on utilities, the ratepayers, and the City. Furthermore, Mr. Relph recommended that the City drop the credit system for connecting service lines to the undergrounding facilities.

The Council discussed various issues related to underground utilities, including costs, cost-benefit, customer base, distinction between main lines and connecting lines, equity issues, and utility rates. Mr. Relph commented that the City is not mandating properties to underground if they are more than 100 feet from Aurora Avenue. Mr. Olander added that mandating undergrounding within this 15-year period is not economically feasible for everyone involved.

It was noted that now is not a good time to ask the community to invest in major utility undergrounding projects. Responding to Council questions, Ms. Collins noted that the recommendation treats all areas the same, whether they are commercial or residential. Councilmember Roberts confirmed with Mr. Relph that it would take multiple decades to underground all of Shoreline if the 1% underground fund was adopted. Councilmember Roberts felt that at a minimum the deadline for the utilities to convert to undergrounding should be revised; however, he is hesitant to remove some requirements when there is no Council agreement to adopt a 1% underground fund, nor are there any specific requirements in place.

Mr. Olander commented that if the Council wants this as long-range goal the City staff can research, explore concepts, and bring back options, but it would be years before implementation. Mr. Relph noted that the entire City is paying for undergrounding at this time. He continued and explained in more detail, the related costs and amortization.

Councilmember Scott and Deputy Mayor Hall expressed support for the staff recommendation.

There was brief discussion about undergrounding in relation to the last half mile of the Aurora Project. There was also discussion about the need to concentrate on underground utilities before considering new sidewalks.

Councilmember Roberts expressed concern that there is a current requirement for utility companies to underground utilities when capital improvements are done. Mr. Olander and Mr. Relph explained the City's role as it relates to right-of-way work. Mr. Olander pointed out that the City has ensured that Shoreline ratepayers are not paying for Seattle City Light projects.

It was stated that funding for undergrounding opportunities should be built into this program. Mr. Relph stated that placing utilities in conduit is a positive move for the City. He agreed that the language needs to be revisited.

The Council discussed the location and relocation of power poles. Councilmember Roberts expressed concern because the ordinance reads that whenever a power pole is moved, the utilities will be undergrounded. Mr. Olander added that this would occur only in instances where a quantity of power poles would be moved one or two blocks.

It was noted that the City has done some priority sidewalk work in the past and the utilities were not underground. Mr. Relph responded that there should be more Council discussion on the subject, but if there is an obvious place to improve the infrastructure through undergrounding, staff will consider it.

Staff commented that undergrounding will be considered on a case-by-case basis and greatly rely on the amount of right-of-way that is available.

(b) King County Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement

Mark Relph, Public Works Director, summarized the staff report and recommendation that the City present five issues to the Shoreline Water District (SWD) and the Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement (SWIA) process in January. He noted that the SWIA expires in 2028 and King County has asked for an extension on that agreement and wants input from cities. He noted that Councilmember Eggen is the City's representative on the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee (MSWMAC). Councilmember Eggen discussed the specifics of the SWIA and current MSWMAC agenda items that will be considered in the near future. He noted that they want to determine funding options to update older infrastructure and build new transfer stations. Additionally, MSWMAC bonds are expected to go beyond the term of the interlocal agreement, so they are considering a longer-term agreement.

Deputy Mayor Hall wanted more information on MSWMAC because they are a relatively new committee and expressed concern about long-term contracts. He added that he is not comfortable executing an agreement that is longer than the bond. Councilmember Winstead concurred. Councilmember Roberts said he is worried about the length of bonds and Councilmember Eggen responded that King County is unwilling to bond a 20-year bond because the ILA expires in 18 years. He questioned if the Council would support a shorter-term ILA.

There was discussion about potential options for solid waste processing, including contracting with Snohomish County. There was agreement that the length of any agreement should match the length of the bond. Mr. Relph noted that the ILA would be discussed with the cities; specifically the solid waste division has some decisions to make by 2013. Mr. Olander commented that the City could do its own stand-alone plan; however, it is difficult.

Deputy Mayor Scott asked if there was a way to join with other cities to craft language that anticipates future changes in/technology/service modalities and said he is hesitant to sign on without any acceptable language for the City to get out of the agreement. Councilmember Eggen noted that the new transfer stations would be better equipped to support recycling and felt it warrants further discussion. Councilmember McConnell noted that other entities including the Council, do not want to be in a long-term agreement and that there is a lack of support for the term for debt service. She felt government should work on downsizing committees instead of focusing on politics. Deputy Mayor Hall emphasized the need for strong City involvement for accountability reasons and to protect Shoreline ratepayers and expressed opposition to a long-term agreement that allows King County to control the costs. He asked for: 1) comparisons with other counties; 2) information about how the Shoreline Transfer Station was financed without having to extend the ILA; 3) how much Shoreline taxpayers are paying for it; and 5) information about the geographic area that utilizes the Shoreline Transfer Station.

Mr. Olander discussed short-term versus long-term bonds. Mr. Relph added that the longer the term, the higher the cost. Councilmember Eggen discussed what has transpired at the MSWMAC meetings and the ILA process that King County hopes to adopt by the first quarter of 2013. He

concluded the discussion by stating that revised tipping fees and dispute resolution will be a major part of the ILA.

RECESS

At 8:35 p.m., Mayor McGlashan called for a five-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 8:40 p.m.

(c) Continued Discussion of the City's Compensation Program

Marci Wright, Human Resources Director, reported the findings of the research the City staff conducted on two issues: 1) Expanded sample alternative salary survey using data from the Association of Washington Cities annual salary survey; and 2) Cost per FTE of health benefit coverage of each of Shoreline's comparable jurisdictions. She explained that the City has an established policy for compensation, which is crosschecked with the labor market in 18 jurisdictions. Mr. Olander said he feels comfortable and that the past practices are reasonable and the comparables used now reflect the market. He stated that it is also important to look at this information at the macro level in that the City staff is hard-working, productive, and there is a relatively low amount of turnover. Additionally, he said the City has lower per capita costs when it comes to the costs per police officer and employee per capita.

Councilmember Eggen asked questions about the survey methodology and said more detail about job duties and responsibilities would probably tighten up the groupings even more. He said it seems the current policy to constrain costs appears to be doing what it is supposed to do. Councilmember Roberts confirmed with Ms. Wright that there were between 25 – 30 positions reviewed in the study done in 2010. Deputy Mayor Hall noted that the higher salaries that were pulled from these new eight cities matched the results from previous studies and that from a statistics perspective he felt comfortable with what is being done.

Ms. Wright confirmed for Councilmember Roberts that certain positions in some cities were consistently high and there was a wide range in what employees are being paid. Councilmember Roberts also suggested doing these studies on a biennial basis. Mr. Olander noted that about 98% of the cities on the list are unionized and labor negotiations are done each year. He said even though the City employees have not received a cost of living allowance (COLA) the past two years, the City strives to keep up with the CPI and offers very competitive insurance.

There was additional discussion concerning the salary and benefit differences between the public and private sectors, City employee morale, and the services the City provides.

(d) Agenda and Scope for January 18 Council Meeting for Council direction on Goals, Scope and Format of Comprehensive Plan Update

Joe Tovar, Planning & Development Services Director, and Steve Cohn, Senior Planner, requested that Council discuss and provide feedback on the proposed scope for the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Update as provided in the staff report.

After discussing possible approaches, Mayor McGlashan summarized Council consensus to hold a Council retreat to refine the scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update. There was also discussion about the role of the Council and the role of the Planning Commission in this process. Mr. Tovar stated that the Comprehensive Plan is general policy direction, like the vision and framework goals. Mr. Olander agreed that an investment by the Council would help the Planning Commission and allow the Council to give better input in the process up front. Mr. Tovar suggested that the Council look at the background information for the Special Meeting on January 18, then decide what should occur at the retreat.

At 9:53 p.m., Mayor McGlashan announced that the Council would recess into an Executive Session for a period of 30 minutes to discuss a personnel issue per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g).

MEETING EXTENSION

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Hall, seconded by Councilmember Winstead and unanimously carried, the Study Session was extended until 10:25 p.m.

At 10:25 p.m. the Executive Session concluded and the Study Session reconvened.

7. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:25 p.m., Mayor McGlashan declared the meeting adjourned.

Scott Passey, City Clerk