

PORT OF ANACORTES

Minutes-Special Meeting

February 22, 2010

The Port Commission of the Port of Anacortes held a Special Commission Meeting on the evening of February 22, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was for the Commission to meet jointly with the Anacortes City Council and the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce to discuss the Anacortes Futures Project. This meeting was held at the Council Chambers of Anacortes City Hall, 904 6th Street, Anacortes Washington. No official action was taken.

In Attendance for the Port: Commission Vice President Mooney, Commission Secretary Niver, Commissioner Hopley and Commissioner Short. Commission President Rubin arrived shortly after the meeting began, having been in Olympia testifying against a Model Toxics Control Act tax increase at a meeting of the state legislature along with Mayor Dean Maxwell.

Also in attendance for the Port: Executive Director Hyde, Director of Operations & Facilities Hachey, Director of Finance & Administration Johnson, and Executive Assistant Lindsey.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:30 P.M. Mayor Pro-Tem Brad Adams called the Study Session of the City Council to order. Council members present were: Petrish, Richardson, Turner, Pickett, and Adams. Prior to beginning the joint meeting, The City Council briefly discussed and then unanimously voted to pass a resolution opposing a tax increase for the Model Toxics Control Act.

At 7:35 P.M. Port Commission Vice President Mooney called the Special Meeting to order on behalf of the Port of Anacortes and announced the purpose of the Special Meeting.

Facilitating on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce were President-elect Mike Trafton and Executive Director Mitch Everton.

Others attending on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce were Jim Clark, Peter Whiting, Matt McKay, Suzanne Knutson, and See Hogan.

Mr. Everton noted that several representatives from the City, Port and Chamber had testified in Olympia earlier in the day in regards to opposition to the proposed tax increase for the Model Toxics Control Act and the detriment it would have on Anacortes refineries. He noted that this evening's meeting marked the first such joint meeting of the City, Port and Chamber that anyone could recall, and he thanked all in attendance for participating. Mr. Everton explained the purpose of this meeting was to provide the opportunity for members of all three entities to comment or ask questions about the Anacortes Futures Project. He introduced the Steering Committee for the Project: Dick Nelson of Dakota Creek Industries, Bob Hyde of the Port of Anacortes, Laurie Gere of

Gere-a-deli, Stuart Janke of Puget Sound Rope, Mayor Dean Maxwell, Courtney Orrock, Mike Trafton of Bank of the Pacific, Mark Bunzel who had been with the Project from the beginning, Wallie Funk as Emeritus member, and a Student member to be named.

The Steering Committee's focus will be to move work along - helping the project to remain on tract, to oversee the Request for Proposals for a firm or individual to act as facilitator and engage the public, to ensure the process remains transparent, to report to the City, Port and Chamber leadership, and to establish and monitor committees.

Mr. Everton provided a short synopsis of the Futures Project and a two year Chamber economic analysis. A draft RFP was sent out for comment and the hope is to begin the final RFP process in late April or early May. He asked for input from the officials assembled including how to effectively get citizen input, how to keep the Project on-track, and the proper role of a facilitator or consulting firm.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Rubin observed that the City and the Port have enjoyed a better working relationship in recent years and he was excited to work with the Chamber and the City on this process for planning for Anacortes' future.

Councilwoman Richardson stated this was a historic meeting with the three represented groups working together. She found it promising that this effort was not just about the end product but also about the process leading up to it and a dialog with all in the community, with everyone talking and sharing their ideas about what Anacortes means to them and what they see for our future. She noted that this "road map" would not need to be followed exactly, but the direction for and buy in from the community was imperative.

Councilman Adams noted that the Anacortes Futures Project was now a household name in Anacortes. In response to the challenge of how best to get the public involved, he suggested that town meetings be held where people could brainstorm about all sectors, including their ideas about industrial, retail, environment, housing and so on.

Mike Trafton, speaking on behalf of the Chamber, noted he was very excited about this meeting which had been two years in the making, as all involved took up the task to develop a plan for Anacortes. He stated that all had seen and reviewed the first product, the Futures Project report, and noted the steering committee wanted to hear all comments, ideas, and see participation in a public visioning process.

Councilman Petrish stated what he liked about the initial report was that it was compiled by local people and not outside sources. Citing the long list of topics for study, among them retail, tourism, manufacturing, and so on, he believed it wise for the steering committee to key in on what is doable. He noted a key issue would be to rank these various opportunities in the order to be attacked and the amount of effort and funds to invest in each opportunity as doable and feasible.

Commissioner Hopley also expressed his support for the Futures Project, noting that when there were this many people in the community who were interested, it deserved

the support of all officials. He believed the initial report was good and identified things to be addressed, with the draft RFP laying out the process. He stated he was very glad to hear that the MJB group was on board. Commissioner Hopley noted that public input need to come from a broad perspective and not only from an economic standpoint. He believed the ultimate ends needed to be described and that economic means should always have to serve broader ends.

Commissioner Mooney noted the purpose of the public meeting, which was being filmed this evening, was to find direction from the people of Anacortes, and found the blending of the three representative groups this evening as a good start. Commissioner Mooney believed the top priority for the future was developing family wage job producers here so that our children can live here and raise their families here as he had,

Councilman Turner voiced his support for the process underway this evening. He noted one thing he struggled with as a City Councilman was the competing interests in Anacortes. He observed that input was needed from all residents and especially the business community as to where efforts should be placed. He noted that all public entities represented need this as would the steering committee.

Mr. Matt McKay explained that as a small business owner and Anacortes resident for five years, he was excited by this process and wished to see a broad impact from the community. As a father of two small children, he noted he would like to see the school district involved as well.

Commissioner Short stated he was very pleased with the makeup of the steering committee. He expressed that one concern he had was for livability of the community. Commissioner Short noted that he had observed problems with density when living in California and believed the trend in Anacortes had been away from development. He noted that once current lots and housing options were full, density in Anacortes would increase, causing parking to become more and more of a problem and these things should be considered.

Jim Clark noting that using the experience of those present, it was important to not shut the door on possibilities, but to draw on the examples of other communities and examine how those we hold in esteem have handled similar problems. He believed it was important to consider all viewpoints.

Commissioner Rubin observed that a visioning process is something people like to talk about but haven't put into practice much. He believed that it was necessary to be almost childlike in imaging all possibilities and then to narrow down the choices. Commission Rubin wished to see the process incorporate as many viewpoints as possible. He noted once a plan was in place, Anacortes could begin to recruit business to complete any missing elements.

Mike Trafton observed those assembled were using the word "economic" a great deal but believed what was to be stressed even more was lifestyle and that without a stable and growing economy, Anacortes residents would not be able to maintain a lifestyle that was important to them.

Zee Hogan spoke as a business owner in the downtown area for 13 years and the need for businesses to continue to grow. She believed Anacortes is poised on the brink of opportunity and praised the City for the work done on infrastructure. Ms. Hogan stated she was in total agreement with Commissioner Short in regards to housing and saw a lack of affordable housing as a serious reality, noting that if Anacortes wishes to attract good teachers, doctors and other professionals, we need to have affordable housing and amenities.

Suzanne Knutson noted she was born and raised in Anacortes and had seen it change quite a bit over the years. Traveling a lot for her company had given her a deeper appreciation of Anacortes. She observed that we live on an island, yet have trouble making people believe we have a waterfront. She noted there was so much possibility that hasn't even been tapped yet, and saw Anacortes as a beautiful waterfront community.

Peter Whiting noted that the Futures Project had started out as a project of the Chamber, but once the seed was planted all involved realized this was not just a Chamber initiative but would also involve the City and the Port to be successful rather than have people question whose responsibility it is for future planning. He was excited to see all three groups together this evening.

Commissioner Niver noted he was very impressed by the draft plan since it looked at all options, however he saw the Futures Project largely as a City Process in which the Port was an economic contributor. Commissioner Niver thought the plan as begun thus far did not address the economics of the Port, believing that the Port's role was to contribute by bringing in businesses and jobs. He saw the Port as a minor player with respect to decision making in this process and having different economic drivers. Commissioner Niver felt the Port should participate but that Port plans may not be the same as City plans and this should be addressed.

Commissioner Mooney noted that he too was excited about the three entities represented at the meeting and believed an all inclusive, give us all your thoughts, approach was needed and hoped all members of the community would participate. He stressed again that employment for future generations and the ability of our children and grandchildren to live here was of primary importance.

Councilwoman Richardson observed that Commissioner Niver had made a good point, that the Port's objectives had not always been the same as the City's, but noted what was good about this process was that everyone will get to hear everyone else's thoughts. She agreed that in doing so we would find some conflicts, but also some collaboration, and that an open forum was a marvelous way to do so.

Councilman Turner believed the timing of the Futures Project was perfect and that it was a time when new businesses, such as Anthony's restaurant – for which he thanked the Port for preparing the ground for that to be possible, were choosing to come to Anacortes because Anacortes is ready and they can see opportunity here. He believed Anacortes to be the most beautiful place on earth and believed we all need to decide how our town will look in 10-20 years. He noted people will want to come here and we need to be prepared for them.

Councilman Adams thanked the steering committee in advance for all the hard work ahead of them. He observed that Fidalgo Bay was the center of the plan and was currently under-sued. He was glad to see MJB involved as they have tried to do things with their industrial park properties in the past that had not garnered support from the City and the community. He noted that the committee and public should keep in mind that you usually can't make everyone truly happy, but you can try to make everyone somewhat happy.

Matt McKay stated the challenge to all was to go out and get feedback and input and bring that to the steering committee.

Zee Hogan observed that the Futures Project was now placed in the hands of the steering committee, which was very well-rounded. She asked them to consider what kind of retail and living wage jobs Anacortes would have in 2025.

Jim Clark noted that the process will not be easy. The facilitator's job is similar to an orchestra leader – bringing all the notes together to give us music that is representative of our community, yet keeping in mind at the same time that you have to have music that will sell.

Commissioner Niver pointed out differences between the Port and the City using Anthony's as an example. Anthony's is a retail sales establishment and its taxes benefit the City, yet contributes little to the viability of the Port. Environmental cleanups performed currently and in recent years by the Port, including the one that attracted Anthony's to Anacortes, are dependent on the MTCA tax funding. He further explained that as the economics of the Port and City are different, so are their roles in the community.

Commissioner Short stated that he was not in favor of limiting the number of people coming to live in Anacortes, believing density will increase and stressing once again the need for low cost housing. He anticipated a 3% increase in population by 2040. Commissioner Short noted that the Port is involved in most aspects addressed in the Futures Project and that the Port could not set itself aside from the rest of the community, believing the Port's role was to bring in as much business as possible to help the community to thrive.

Mr. Everton asked for any concluding comments.

Mike Trafton voiced appreciation for everyone's comments. He requested of the steering committee that when we reach the end of the process there be an implementation strategy and that this strategy is actually put into motion and not sit on a shelf like past studies. He thanked the temporary task force and the new steering committee for the next steps they would undertake.

Councilman Turner asked the steering committee to prioritize items to be accomplished so that the Project would continue to move forward.

Zee Hogan thanked those who had agreed to serve on the steering committee, believing it was a good mix of individuals, and thanked Mike Trafton for his leadership to this point.

Suzanne Knutson thanked the steering committee as well and looked forward to the next steps in what she termed a great thing for Anacortes.

Councilwoman Richardson noted that Mr. Everton had stated he would like feedback on the Request for Proposals. She observed it was well written and inclusive of tasks in a reasonable order, and asked those submitting proposals to suggest additions. She asked the committee to select a facilitator or facilitators that would get results, gather feedback, and move thoughtfully through the process methodically.

Mitch Everton asked that anyone with comments regarding the process communicate them to him: meverton@anacortes.org and he would take them to the steering committee. He noted there would be later opportunities for community committees and looked forward to citizen participation. Mitch thanked all involved for taking part.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss at this time, Commissioner Mooney adjourned the special meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Attest:

Keith Rubin, President

Pat D. Mooney, Vice President

Ray Niver, Secretary

William L. Short, Commissioner

Steve Hopley, Commissioner

Julie Johnson Lindsey, Executive Assistant
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