

**Snohomish City Council Meeting Minutes  
June 16, 2020**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Kartak called the Snohomish City Council regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 16, 2020.

**COUNCILMEMBERS/MAYOR PRESENT**

Larry Countryman  
Steve Dana  
Judith Kuleta  
Tom Merrill  
Donna Ray  
Linda Redmon  
Jason Sanders  
John T. Kartak, Mayor

**STAFF PRESENT**

Pat Adams, City Clerk and HR Manager  
Debbie Burton, Finance Director  
Emily Guildner, City Attorney's Office  
Glen Pickus, Planning Director  
Wendy Poischbeg, Economic Development and  
Communications Manager  
Capt. Robert Palmer, Interim Police Chief  
Steve Schuller, City Administrator and  
Utility General Manager  
Grant Weed, City Attorney  
Brandi Whitson, Administrative Assistant

***NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 declared federal, state and local emergency, and pursuant to Governor Inslee's Proclamations 20-05 and 20-28, the Snohomish City Council held its meeting via remote participation.***

2. **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY MAYOR JOHN T. KARTAK.** Mayor Kartak provided a statement regarding the necessity to conduct the remote meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and reviewed additional emergency restrictions currently in place.
3. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order

The Mayor called for a motion to amend the agenda by moving Agenda Item 6 Citizen Comments to immediately follow Agenda Item 4 Approve Minutes.

**MOTION** by Countryman, second by Merrill to move Agenda Item 6 Citizen Comments to immediately follow Agenda Item 4 Approve Minutes. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

4. **APPROVE MINUTES** of the following meetings:

- a. June 2, 2020 Workshop
- b. June 2, 2020 Regular Meeting
- c. June 3, 2020 Emergency Meeting
- d. June 4, 2020 Special Meeting

**MOTION** by Ray, second by Kuleta to approve the minutes of the listed meetings. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Ray to move Agenda Item 12 Council President Comments, before Agenda Item 6 Citizen Comments. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

12. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS** (*Moved to this point in the agenda*): Council President Sanders provided a statement regarding updates from the June 4th "Statement Against Racism" and related follow-up actions. Actions include scheduling a Town Hall

meeting, as well as a moderated meeting with leaders from various community groups to share experiences, concerns and ideas on ways the community can move forward. The diverse group included differing political views, various religious leaders, youth involvement, business owners, and representatives from the Snohomish School District, Snohomish for Equity, Snohomish Sheriff's Office, and City Council. Some results of the open dialogue included suggestions for:

- ◆ Race and equity training for schools, local government, and the community.
- ◆ Collection of shared statements denouncing racism and hatred.
- ◆ Considerations of hate-free areas around the community to demonstrate support for safety and inclusivity.
- ◆ Mentorship opportunities for at-risk youths.

Council President Sanders explained these ideas are not directives from the City Council, but rather a community-wide commitment to change. Additional details and information will be shared with these groups at the June 23rd Town Hall meeting.

6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS** (*Moved to follow Approval of Minutes, at beginning of meeting*):

Mayor Kartak welcomed the citizens to the meeting and discussed the procedures for providing citizen comment.

Citizen Comments: Ms. Adams read aloud six (6) written comments, and fifty-four (54) citizens provided oral comments, all regarding events of the past week.

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Redmon to extend the meeting beyond 9:00 p.m. for an additional thirty (30) minutes. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Citizen Comments: Closed

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Ray to take a five-minute recess at 9:16 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Ray to extend the meeting to 10:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Mayor Kartak opened the floor for Councilmember Comments.

Councilmember Ray thanked the community for their comments. She believes racism exists in the community, and would like to see the Council help everyone work together to collectively find ways to educate people and provide a positive platform for inclusivity.

Councilmember Kuleta also thanked those that commented. She spoke to her family's personal experience with racism, the conversations these events have evoked, and the lessons she is learning. She discussed her personal journey to examine her own unconscious biases, as well as reflections concerning what she can do as a Councilmember to help the community move forward.

Councilmember Merrill thanked everyone for speaking and sharing their experiences, especially the youth, who have made it clear that racism exists in the community. He commented the Council cannot do it all, and is encouraged by the willingness of several community groups to engage in finding common ground to educate people and resolve issues. He felt Snohomish was targeted by white supremacists and would like to see efforts to identify what happened, and how to prevent it from happening again.

Councilmember Redmon shared her personal experiences regarding the events which occurred in Snohomish the weekend of May 30-31, and touched on her and her family's experiences with racism. She has heard the community state they are scared, and heard students say prejudice is present in their schools. Fixing these issues will be uncomfortable, but should be used as motivation to do the hard work. She thanked the speakers for their comments.

Councilmember Countryman commented he felt a credible threat existed to Snohomish, but does not condone the presence the Proud Boys had in town. He strongly disbelieves Snohomish is a racist community, but conceded he does not have the same experiences as others. He mentioned the School District appeared as a common thread through citizen comments, and felt the protests have political undertones.

Councilmember Dana stated Snohomish is a historic town and part of that identity are the historic structures on First Street, so protecting them is important. He spoke to the inception of Resolution 1389 stemming from a specific event, but otherwise personally had not been made aware of racism in Snohomish. He suggested partnering with the Snohomish School District and other community groups to identify ways to alleviate the perception of racism that has evolved. He commented on the trust he had in Chief Rogers and felt if additional actions were necessary, the Police Department would have handled things appropriately.

Council President Sanders thanked Interim Police Chief Palmer for his attendance, and the job done by law enforcement during these difficult times. He denounced racism and hatred, stated Black lives do matter, and believes Snohomish can do better at being inclusive to people of color, the LGBTQ community and others. He reiterated the Council cannot do this all on its own, but there are things they can do to help address these issues, such as providing bias awareness training. He is encouraged and excited by the discussions the Council has had with other community groups, and asked everyone to look inside themselves for what they can do individually to help work towards a solution.

5. **PRESENTATION:** Introduce Interim Police Chief Robert Palmer

Mayor Kartak stated Police Chief Keith Rogers requested, and was granted, reassignment. He welcomed new Interim Police Chief Robert Palmer to the City.

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Ray to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Interim Police Chief Palmer thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Snohomish, the citizens for their comments, and provided a brief summary regarding his background and experience. He stated as a member of the Snohomish community, he is committed to working with City government, staff and citizens to develop solutions to keep Snohomish a safe place to live, work and play. He is abhorred by the police actions that led to the death of George Floyd, is emphatically against racism and division, and supports inclusion and dialogue. As Interim Police Chief, his responsibility will be to remain impartial, protect rights, and help bring stability to the community.

6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS** (*Moved to follow Approval of Minutes, at beginning of meeting*)

7. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. SEPA Categorical Exemptions Flexible Thresholds - **ADOPT** Ordinance 2399

Mr. Pickus presented the staff report, explaining the ordinance would provide the maximum allowed flexible thresholds for the SEPA categorical exemptions for minor new construction. Several recent updates to the Snohomish Municipal Code (SMC) make SEPA review for some projects redundant, but would still require public notice and hearings. The changes proposed by Ordinance 2399 would also make the entire development review process more efficient (both in time and resources) without sacrificing environmental protection.

Citizen Comments: None  
Citizen comments: Closed

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Kuleta to ADOPT Ordinance 2399 implementing the maximum allowed flexible thresholds for the SEPA categorical exemptions for minor new construction.

Councilmember Dana thanked Mr. Pickus and his staff for the work they have done and continue to put into the review and updating of the SMC.

**VOTE ON THE MOTION**: Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Mayor Kartak added his thanks to Mr. Pickus and the Planning Department staff for their diligence in reviewing the SMC.

b. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Recommendation

Ms. Poischbeg presented the staff report, explaining four events that previously received LTAC grant funds had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She requested the funds be reallocated to *Shop Safe Snohomish*, a marketing campaign intended to promote the City of Snohomish as a safe place to shop, work and live for all people, not just during the coronavirus pandemic (as originally intended), but now also to address recent events. Funds would be used for education outreach, events, advertisements, and other yet-to-be-determined methods.

Councilmember Merrill questioned if it was appropriate for the City to use the funds for these purposes. Ms. Poischbeg commented reallocating the funds does not require LTAC approval. Mr. Weed clarified reallocation and use were allowed as long as they met state regulations.

Councilmember Ray asked if other or excess funds could be used. Ms. Poischbeg explained she is only requesting funds that had been budgeted for the cancelled events; however, additional funds remained that could be allocated through the line-item budget adjustment process.

Citizen Comments: Five (5) citizens commented, generally in favor of reallocating the funds. Concerns were raised that the campaign not be empty gestures, and suggestions were made to use the funds for outreach and education opportunities for business owners on bias and awareness training.

Citizen Comments: Closed

Mayor Kartak thanked Ms. Poischbeg for her efforts in light of constant changes due to

the COVID-19 crisis.

Councilmember Ray questioned if limits existed on how the funds could be spent. Ms. Poischbeg exclaimed providing equity training to business owners would be considered visitor services, and would therefore be covered by the LTAC funds. Council President Sanders commented Snohomish for Equity sponsored trainings, and several other resources existed that could be utilized toward these efforts.

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Kuleta to AUTHORIZE the reallocation of up to \$8,000 to market and promote the City of Snohomish. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

8. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** Current Economic Approach and June 23 Workshop Agenda

Due to time constraints, and the change in the workshop's focus, Mr. Schuller suggested, and the Council concurred, to use this time to discuss the upcoming Community Town Hall meeting scheduled for June 23, 2020. Discussion of the Current Economic Approach could be held during the July 7th regular meeting.

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Ray, to extend the meeting for an additional thirty (30) minutes at 10:30 p.m. Motion passed by visual majority of Councilmembers' nods.

Councilmember Redmon provided details on the moderated format of the Town Hall, and the Council discussed topics, presenters, and format.

**MOTION** by Redmon, second by Merrill to schedule a special meeting held as a remote Community Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2020, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**MOTION** by Sanders, second by Dana to extend the meeting to 11:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9. **CONSENT ITEM: AUTHORIZE** payment of claim warrants #72968 through #73013 in the amount of \$135,460.12, issued since the last regular meeting.

**MOTION** by Countryman, second by Merrill to PASS the Consent Items. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

10. **OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS:** None

11. **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:** *Comments made after Agenda Item 6 Citizen Comments.*

12. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS:** *Comments made earlier in the meeting.*

13. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:** None.

14. **MAYOR'S COMMENTS:** Mayor Kartak acknowledged the emotional toll recent events have taken on the community, and believes together, the community can move forward.

Council President Sanders inquired if home addresses can be stricken from the record, given the concerns raised by citizens. Mr. Weed advised changes cannot be made to the official record, but addresses can be withheld from the written minutes, which are typically completed in summary format.

15. **RECESS to EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 11:15 p.m. to discuss performance of a public employee, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), for fifteen (15) minutes, with no action to follow.

16. **RECONVENE and ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 11:38 p.m.

APPROVED this 7th day of July, 2020.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

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John T. Kartak, Mayor

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Pat Adams, City Clerk