

**Snohomish City Council Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2020**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Kartak called the Snohomish City Council regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 7, 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
Emily Guildner, City Attorney's Office
Glen Pickus, Planning Director
Wendy Poischbeg, Economic Development and
Communications Manager
Captain Robert Palmer, Interim Police Chief
Steve Schuller, City Administrator and Utility
General Manager
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.
3. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order

MOTION by Sanders to amend the agenda by adding a brief Councilmember Comment period prior to Agenda Item 6 Citizen Comments, to provide a recap of the Town Hall from June 23. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

4. **APPROVE MINUTES** of the following meetings:
- a. June 16, 2020 Regular Meeting
 - b. June 23, 2020 Special Meeting - Community Town Hall

MOTION by Redmon, second by Merrill to approve the minutes of the listed meetings. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

5. **PRESENTATION:** Introduce New Employee

Utilities Manager Tim Jackson introduced new employee Kevon Peters, who began employment with the City in February 2020 within the Public Works Department's Wastewater/Stormwater Division.

11. **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:** Councilmember Redmon provided a recap of the topics and speakers from the Town Hall held June 23, 2020. Council President Sanders added discussions and meetings are continuing with community leaders.

Mayor Kartak opened the floor to all Councilmembers wishing to comment.

Councilmember Kuleta commented on continuing activities, including additional Town Hall meetings and potential surveys of citizens to solicit input for future Town Hall topics.

Councilmember Dana voiced his concern at some comments painting Snohomish as a racist town. He stated people would not live or visit Snohomish if they did not enjoy being here.

Councilmember Ray agreed with reaching out to the community by survey. She stated Snohomish is a great city, and is not a racist community; however, racism does exist whether someone personally experiences it or not. Open conversations and promoting inclusivity and equity are important.

Councilmember Countryman remarked he sent an opinion letter to be published in tomorrow's *Snohomish Tribune* which contains his feelings on the matter.

Mayor Kartak remarked on tensions and sensitivities in Snohomish recently, and how some may be uncomfortable seeing guns openly carried on First Street; however, drinking alcohol or carrying guns are not racist activities.. He commented that most people can agree that it only makes sense that because the Confederate Flag was flown by states who fought to protect slavery, it is a racist thing; however, the Confederate Flag has also been flown by some as a symbol of Southern pride or rebellion without racist intentions. He believes there is an opportunity as an open and engaging community to have conversations rather than attacking the nature of our town and judging the whole by its worst and few elements.

Councilmember Kuleta wished to confirm the possibility of moving forward with a citizen survey. Ms. Poischbeg replied she would contact Councilmember Kuleta with further details.

6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

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

Citizen Comments: Fifteen (15) citizens provided oral comments, primarily related to racism and equality in Snohomish. One citizen requested an independent review be conducted regarding the events of May 31. Ms. Adams reported no written comments were received by the Clerk's Office for inclusion in tonight's meeting.

Citizen Comments: Closed

7. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Flood Hazard Area Interim Zoning Regulations - Ordinance 2390

- a. Staff Presentation. Mr. Pickus provided a background of Ordinance 2390, adopted at the May 19, 2020 Council meeting. He explained the purpose of tonight's public hearing was to satisfy the requirements of RCW 35A.63.220 and RCW 36.78.220, which call for a public hearing to be held within sixty (60) days of adoption of the ordinance.

The Council had three potential courses of action to take:

- Retain the interim regulations as written in Ordinance 2390,
- Revise the interim regulations, or
- Repeal the interim regulations.

Staff and the Planning Commission recommended retaining the interim regulations, as

they are working on permanent regulations for adoption by ordinance at a future meeting.

- b. Council's Questions of Staff. Councilmember Ray clarified the purpose of tonight's public hearing was based on previously adopted Ordinance 2390. Mr. Pickus confirmed that was correct.
- c. Citizens' Comments. There were no citizen comments.
- d. Close Citizens' Comments.
- e. Council Deliberation and Action - Ordinance 2390

MOTION by Dana, second by Redmon to RETAIN the interim regulations and DIRECT staff to consider options for permanent regulations regarding development in flood hazard areas. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

8. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** City's Current Economic Approach

Mr. Schuller provided a slide presentation showing the City's current economic standing and approach as an introduction to the 2021-2022 budget planning process, cautioning that the COVID-19 pandemic may impact City revenues, and therefore, capital projects should be held to a minimum. Mr. Pickus added details regarding the Affordable Housing Alliance grant and presented options for consideration for the use of the funds.

Councilmember Ray questioned the timing of budget discussions until a Strategic Plan can be incorporated, as Council goals may impact the direction of the budget. Mr. Schuller commented adopting the budget has a firm deadline to consider. Councilmember Merrill responded discussions on goals were interrupted due to the COVID-19 issues and restrictions, but should continue and be considered during the budget process if time allows.

Councilmember Kuleta queried if a meeting should be held prior to the August 11 workshop, to ensure enough time is available to discuss goals and other topics which may impact budget discussions. Councilmembers discussed the current state of goal-setting, and will contact Councilmember Merrill directly, who can help determine if a meeting should be scheduled sooner.

Citizen Comments: Four citizens provided comments, including a suggestion to eliminate the School Resource Officer position, repurposing and funding of the Carnegie Building, and to consider creative approaches to the budget.

Citizen Comments Closed.

9. **CONSENT ITEMS:**

- a. **ACCEPT** Bid Award and **AUTHORIZE** Mayor to Sign a Contract with Kamins Construction for the Park Avenue Utility Improvement Project
- b. **AUTHORIZE** Mayor to Sign Wholesale Water Agreement with Snohomish PUD
- c. **AUTHORIZE** payment of claim warrants #73014 through #73114 in the amount of

\$1,075,978.71, and payroll warrants #70119 through #73123 in the amount of \$525,189.48, issued since the last regular meeting.

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

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

11. **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:**

Councilmember Dana stated citizen comments have been heard from both sides, and questioned Council on where they stand on the matter of racism in Snohomish. Council has been asked repeatedly on where Councilmembers stand on this issue. He wanted to know whether or not they think Snohomish is a city of racists.

Councilmember Countryman again referenced the letter he sent to the *Snohomish Tribune* that explains where he stands on racism.

Councilmember Redmon acknowledged questions brought forth during citizen comments. She stated all should work on increasing awareness through communication and conversations without becoming defensive. She called on people to evaluate their actions.

Councilmember Merrill also responded to questions from the citizens, and declared he does not believe Snohomish to be a racist town, but there is racism in it, as evidenced by the numerous hours of public comment. He reflected on his recent thoughts, praised front-line workers, and implored others to do their part to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. He stated leadership should set examples by stepping up, as many have already done.

MOTION by Sanders, second by Ray at 8:53 p.m. to extend the meeting until 9:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Councilmember Kuleta also acknowledged questions raised during the citizen comment period, and stated her belief that Snohomish is not racist, but racism exists within. She feels the voices of those marginalized have not always been heard, but we are hearing from them now, and we should all listen. She reported on a meeting with Snohomish for Equity, indicating discussions are moving forward. She is also continuing personal reflection and education, and stated this is a journey, not a one-stop destination.

Councilmember Ray addressed citizen questions as well, and commented as a whole, Snohomish is not a racist town, but some residents are, while others may not be aware of their unconscious biases. She believes leadership is providing safe opportunities for people to speak, which will strengthen connections within the community and minimize voices of those wishing to marginalize or suppress others. She is continuing to learn through interactions and communications with others, and believes it is up to the individual to determine their own path.

12. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS:** Council President Sanders echoed the comments of Councilmembers Ray, Kuleta, Redmon and Merrill. He believes Snohomish is not full of white supremacists, but has its issues, as many cities do. He feels there is room to move forward, and individuals need to determine what they can do. The work needs to continue.

13. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:** Mr. Schuller provided the agenda planner for upcoming Council meetings.

14. **MAYOR’S COMMENTS:** Mayor Kartak thanked Senator Hobbs and Representatives Mead and Lovick for their assistance on obtaining funds for the Carnegie Building. He explained the Council’s rules do not entertain personal attacks on staff or Councilmembers, but the Mayor is fair game; if the focus is on him, then it is deflected from others. He stated all can agree black lives matter, but the Black Lives Matter organization has its own controversies. There are other organizations that promote equality, such as Snohomish for Equity, the Communities of Color Coalition, and the NAACP. Not participating in protests or other events by a particular organization does not make anyone a racist. He addressed comments he has received, and noted community members are being listened to, but are not always agreed with. He rejected the idea that people cannot experience racism if they are white and provided an example. He recognized stories of racism in Snohomish, and declared everyone should denounce racism. He does not know anyone who does not denounce racism. He denounces racism. He remarked on his support and defense of the Police Department, former Police Chief Rogers, and local business owners’ actions, and criticized the media for their racist portrayal of Snohomish. He thanked the Council for their leadership, and other law enforcement jurisdictions for their assistance. He exclaimed the majority of citizen accounts of racism allude to racism in the schools, and believes parents and teachers should speak with students about racism, and everybody needs to contribute to help solve these problems as a community.

15. **ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

APPROVED this 21st day of July, 2020.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

John T. Kartak, Mayor

Pat Adams, City Clerk