

**Snohomish City Council Minutes**  
**July 18, 2023**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Redmon called the Snohomish City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 18, 2023. The meeting was held in hybrid format with in-person attendance at the Snohomish Carnegie, 105 Cedar Avenue, Snohomish, and remote online access via Zoom.

- a. Roll Call

**Present:** Councilmembers Lea Anne Burke, David Flynn, Karen Guzak, Judith Kuleta, Tom Merrill, and Donna Ray; Mayor Linda Redmon

**Absent:** Councilmember Felix Neals

**MOTION** by Burke, second by Merrill to excuse Councilmember Neals. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

- b. Pledge of Allegiance

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Morgan Davis** stated Lake Stevens was not a good comparable for salaries, and supported eliminating the multifamily tax exemption.

**Bonny Headley** commented on the tree survey and suggested the City needed an arborist on staff.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Flynn to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

4. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- a. APPROVE the Minutes of the July 5, 2023 regular meeting.

- b. AUTHORIZE payment of claim warrants #79088 through #79157 in the amount of \$271,398.22, issued since the last regular meeting; and payroll warrants #1006-1011 in the amount of \$666,978.01, issued June 5 through July 5, 2023.

**MOTION** by Guzak, second by Merrill to PASS the Consent Items. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

5. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program, 2024 - 2029 - PASS Resolution 1451

- a) Announce purpose and open public hearing. Mayor Redmon opened the public hearing.

- b) Staff presentation. Senior Utilities Engineer Andy Sics provided details on the annual program update, as required by state law. He stated there were no priority changes from last year's list.

c) Council's questions of staff

Councilmember Guzak questioned the placement of the 22nd Street Connector project. Senior Engineer Sics replied it was a newer project, and could be adjusted as Council requested. Administrator Thomas added staff was working on and would soon share the preliminary details for that project.

Council President Merrill inquired about grants. Senior Engineer Sics responded many of the projects listed were specifically targeted for grants, of which one might be received each year. Administrator Thomas shared the Project Coordinator position was recently filled, and they will assist in targeting, applying for, and tracking grants. Receipt of grant funding could affect priority list or timeline of projects.

Councilmember Flynn questioned if project designs were changeable depending on budget and funding. Administrator Thomas explained the action taken tonight was simply the annual update for adding or removing projects from the list for grant funding eligibility.

Councilmember Kuleta asked if funding for projects was provided to accommodate growth and significant development in surrounding areas. Administrator Thomas replied conversations have been had with local representatives. Identifying projects and funding eligibility helped if or when funding opportunities became available. Staff could also assess fees if development happened in an area in which a project was identified, to help fund the improvements. Reviewing and updating the City's Comprehensive Plan--such as traffic studies for the Transportation Element and establishing appropriate levels of service--can help identify project priority. Council and staff discussed transportation impacts from growth, multimodal considerations, and the importance of reviewing levels of service to ensure appropriate levels were in place when identifying projects. Staff advised opportunities to review all these would be provided during the Comprehensive Plan review and update.

In response to Councilmember Flynn's question, Senior Engineer Sics explained transportation studies take future projections and expected traffic volumes into account, typically twenty years.

d) Public testimony. Mayor Redmon opened public testimony.

**Morgan Davis** agreed with the top four projects, appreciated roundabouts, and commented on speed limits.

**Jim Lewis** supported more consideration and emphasis for bicycles.

e) Close public testimony. Mayor Redmon closed public testimony.

f) Council deliberation

Councilmember Guzak appreciated the work that contributed to the list, and suggested projects could be reprioritized later.

**MOTION** by Guzak, second by Merrill to PASS Resolution 1451, approving the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program for the years 2024 to 2029 as established, and

direct the Mayor to take the necessary actions to file the approved program with the State Secretary of Transportation and required agencies.

Council President Merrill noted public testimony related to bicycles, and reiterated multimodal considerations could part of Comprehensive Plan update discussions.

- g) Close public hearing. Mayor Redmon closed the public hearing.
- h) Council deliberation and action - PASS Resolution 1451

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously (6-0)

## 6. ACTION ITEMS

- a. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Execute New Interlocal Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding with Fire District No. 4

City Administrator Heather Thomas provided history of the interlocal agreements (ILAs) with the Fire District, outlined background of the property ownership of the various fire station locations, and recapped previous discussions with Council on these topics.

The Fire Services ILA covered Fire Marshall services, emergency management, permitting and plan review, hydrant inspection, and fire inspection program; however, additional details were still needed. The accompanying memorandum of understanding (MOU) stated the ILA would not take effect until complete, and signaled a commitment of the agencies to move forward while updating the agreement from 2004.

The Property Transfer ILA addressed three properties:

- Station 41 (Maple Avenue) would belong to the Fire District outright. The City would no longer be obligated to contribute to the ladder truck, but the ladder truck would remain within City limits.
- Station 43 (north Avenue D) parcel would be split approximately 50/50, with the City taking ownership of the east portion that included the training annex and Food Bank.
- The proposed Public Safety Campus, a new consolidated location for the Fire District, Snohomish Police Department, and City departments.

Administrator Thomas covered the City's and Fire District's expectations of funding and use of the civic campus. For the City, all City departments including Public Works would likely fit on site, allowing for review of use of other City properties. She noted Fire District Chief Don Waller was in attendance to help answer questions.

Council asked questions, to which staff and Chief Waller responded:

- Known purchase price of the property helped determine City's cost share.
- Existence of potential contaminants on site warranted a geotechnical evaluation and environmental assessment. Cost of clean-up might be deductible from the purchase price, or other mitigation efforts might be identified.
- Staff and most equipment would relocate to the new campus; larger equipment may be housed at an alternate site.
- Assessment and appraisal of City properties conducted if sale of those properties were chosen to help fund the new campus.

- The ILAs would remain in effect if the Fire District were consolidated into another agency.
- Sharing facility features, such as meeting spaces, would help spread costs. Joint use agreements could be negotiated in the future.
- Alternate options were being considered for the City shop building that needed to be move away from the shoreline, in case the City's portion of the civic campus was not completed before the 2027 deadline.
- Fire District would study best uses for the existing stations.
- Penalties, if any, should the City not pursue its share of the campus or any breach of contract depended on the actual action taken.
- Phasing of construction and moving of City staff and equipment could depend on architectural design and funding. Staff would keep Council informed as the process moved forward.
- A termination clause was included in the agreement, describing proper notification.
- Improved operating costs included a more energy-efficient building, less staff time and cost for upkeep and general maintenance, improved security, and installment of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Consolidating agencies and location proximity improved communication and collaboration, as exemplified by many neighboring cities that have done so.
- Any infrastructure upgrades to existing City or Fire District facilities would follow standard permitting procedures.
- Construction of the civic campus could help spark other development in the Pilchuck District.

Public Comment:

**Morgan Davis** suggested purchasing the former County shop site instead, and questioned fire inspections of apartments.

**Jim Lewis** felt the proposed site was too close to the Pilchuck River and that more community input was needed.

Public Comment Closed.

In response to Councilmember Ray's inquiry, Administrator Thomas stated initial disclosure of information was limited due to sensitive real estate negotiations. Both the City and Fire District have since issued press releases and joint statements. The City had long identified the need for a new campus following a 2008 facilities condition assessment. This was also identified as one action item within the Council's adopted 2023-2024 goals. As the project progresses, the City will do more outreach.

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Guzak to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to sign two Interlocal Agreements and the Memorandum of Understanding with Snohomish County Fire Protection District #4 related to fire services and property transfers. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

- b. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Execute Agreement with Robinson Noble, Inc. for Geotechnical Services and Environmental Assessment

Administrator Thomas provided information on the agreement to allow the City to move forward with geotechnical and environmental assessment of the proposed civic campus site. Services would be funded through grants that were still being executed, but would

be reimbursable retroactively to July 1, 2023. Much of the details were covered in the previous item's discussion.

Public Comment:

**Morgan Davis** commented on site contamination and proximity to the Pilchuck River.

Public Comment Closed.

**MOTION** by Ray, second by Flynn to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to sign the Professional Services Agreement with Robinson Noble, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$145,733, for the geotechnical services and environmental assessment of the proposed property for the Campus project. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

At 7:36 p.m., Mayor Redmon called for a five minute **RECESS**, reconvening at 7:41 p.m.

## 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### a. Amending SMC Title 2 Regarding Boards and Commissions

Administrator Thomas provided background of the proposed changes as previously discussed with the City Council, including renaming the Public Safety Commission to Public Safety Board for consistency; renaming Park and Recreation Board to Park and Forestry Board; clarifying roles of Council liaisons, staff, and members; and setting meeting length and frequency. In addition, items were consolidated under uniform policies, and chapters revised to be more consistent across each board.

Council discussed and asked questions, to which staff responded:

- Focusing the Park Board on forestry and not general environment due to known upcoming work related to trees. Doing so would meet the requirements for Tree City USA designation.
- Additional direction and definition would be needed from Council if they wished to expand the Park Board's role, such as could be done during the Comprehensive Plan review process.
- Include environmental stewardship and restoration, arborist or forester expertise, and landscape architecture/design to the preferred qualifications of Park Board applicants.
- Include wording to allow a one-time exception to term limits if no qualified applicants responded to vacancy recruitments.
- Length of time needed for Board/Commission members to feel comfortable and knowledgeable in their respective role; being respectful and mindful of institutional knowledge.
- Providing members with additional resources and training; Council could provide budgets to cover expenses.
- Term limits allow more people an opportunity to become involved.
- Staff could create a template for bylaws used by each board, but not include in the code for ease of amending. Council retained oversight and approval of the bylaws.
- References to Council liaisons could be removed from the code but added to the bylaws should needs change.
- Ensure sharing changes with current boards and members for clear understanding.
- Councilmembers could attend board meetings, provided a quorum was not formed.

Administrator Thomas would incorporate suggested changes and bring an Ordinance back for Council action.

b. Classification and Compensation Review

Human Resources Manager Rebekah Park presented a slide show to review the classification and compensation study overview. Over the past two years, management worked with staff to review job descriptions and salaries, and held conversations on what the impacts would be and how to implement proposed changes. Staff anticipated presenting a salary ordinance for Council action, with budget amendments made later in the fall.

HR Manager Park explained the components of the study, which was last completed in 2014. The study covered developing compensation philosophy, job description review and revision, market analysis, and implementation methodology.

Three options were presented as potential solutions, with staff requesting Council direction: targeting 90%, 95% or 100% of the market high. High level 2024 fiscal impacts ranged from \$46,360 (90%) to \$194,885 (100%) for non-represented staff. Impacts of all adjustments could be mitigated with phasing.

Some points discussed by Council and staff:

- Snohomish competed with other cities, regardless of size, in the region for the same labor pool.
- Recent recruitments had to be creative to attract new hires.
- Snohomish did well with initial pay steps for all positions, but did not maintain.
- Employees and the Union would be kept updated throughout the process.
- Salary adjustments and reclassifications for represented staff were pending negotiations with the Union.
- Non-represented staff were identified as some of the most vulnerable positions, and needed additional salary steps to remain competitive. Staff often left after reaching the final step.
- Most positions were closer to 90% of the market high.
- As a smaller city, staff often performed multiple tasks, but earned the same (or less) as peers from larger agencies who had more focused, specialized responsibilities.
- Employees often left for other locations that offered promotions or better pay, often in specialized areas.
- New hires were offered beginning salaries higher than the base step to attract them.
- Outreach to peers revealed many did not consider applying due to low salaries offered.
- The study covered salary only, not benefits. A benefit review would be conducted next year.
- Benefits were an important consideration in attracting and retaining staff as well as salary; in general, staff were happy with the benefits offered.

Council discussed the various options presented, and generally concurred 95% was the preferred direction.

c. Housing Strategies Analysis

Planning Director Brooke Eidem provided an update on the housing analysis completed last month, and shared optional and mandatory actions, as directed by recent legislation.

Staff identified eleven tasks for the Planning Commission to consider, and requested Council input and direction. Some tasks were already in process or identified on the Planning Commission work plan, while others would be addressed during the Comprehensive Plan update.

Tasks identified and Council deliberation included:

- Mandatory legislation already being addressed, such as changes related to accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Increase medium density zones by rezoning single family areas; focusing on the City's subareas with input from those neighborhoods.
- Adjusting residential densities in general and increasing density caps was an option, but was not recommended by staff.
- The City would receive additional direction from the County on income focus. The City needed to determine if enough area was properly zoned with appropriate densities to support the types of housing that would serve those income levels.
- Form-based single-family zone was a good idea but complicated to implement. Staff proposed either this or increasing medium density, not both.
- Character of development could be defined by design standards, which the City had for all zones except single family.
- Incentives for offering affordable units--density bonus, building height, parking requirements, fee reduction/waiver, streamlined permit process.
- Housing incentives for planned residential development (PRDs), i.e., shared wall units on smaller lots.

At 8:48 p.m., **MOTION** by Merrill, second by Flynn, to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

- Extend PRD eligibility to developments that provided recreational amenities--public trail, preserving wooded areas, playground, large open space tract--beyond what was maintained by a homeowners or neighborhood association. On a case-by-case basis.
- Permit review process, which was already fairly quick compared to other agencies.
- Fee waivers/reductions for permits, utility connections and City-imposed impact fees. Concerns over payment plans and tracking billing when a development is sold before fees completely paid.
- Tenant protections had not been considered before, so impact of work or benefits was not clearly known; the City's Community Navigator could assist in developing policy options.
- Business displacement as a result of zoning or new development should be addressed. The City's Economic Development Coordinator could assist in this area.

Council generally agreed with staff's proposals, but expressed interest in extending tenant protections to commercial businesses, especially small local businesses. They also requested staff investigate if protections were extended just to new development, preferring it be offered to all.

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS

Mayor Redmon reminded Council that National Night Out coincided with the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on August 1, 2023, and asked Council if they might consider cancelling the meeting in order for Councilmembers to attend National Night Out activities.

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Burke to cancel the August 1, 2023 City Council regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Councilmember Ray inquired if page numbers could be included on the agenda cover page. City Clerk Brandi Whitson explained the new agenda processing software did not accommodate page numbers on the cover sheet; however, items were bookmarked in the Adobe pdf format to help navigate the document.

Councilmember Burke inquired about maintenance of the City property at 1103 Maple, citing the presence of numerous vehicles at the location. Administrator Thomas responded that she would check with staff on a workplan.

Councilmember Burke addressed public comment on the tree survey identifying several trees in need of pruning, and proposed training and certification for staff to perform assessments in house.

## 8. **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS/LIAISON REPORTS**

Councilmember Guzak planned to attend the Our Future Snohomish Carnival, and appreciated the City's extensive public outreach efforts.

Councilmember Burke shared Sno-Isle's Snohomish Library 20th anniversary event on July 29.

Councilmember Flynn expressed appreciation for Bill and Erin Webster's efforts coordinating the Kla Ha Ya Days event, and to staff for their outreach and community engagement efforts.

Councilmember Kuleta attend the latest Snohomish for Equity meeting at which they discussed the contentious presidential election of 1867 and noted similarities to the present.

9. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS** - Council President Merrill attended a transit seminar in Birmingham, Alabama recently, and remarked on the gravitas of civil rights history in the area.

10. **STAFF BRIEFINGS** - Director Eidem provided a tree survey update and information flyer for the Our Future Snohomish Carnival in the agenda packet.

11. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS** - Administrator Thomas shared the following:

- The new contractor for the Avenue D project would begin next week, expecting completion by the end of August. The overlay project would follow, and staff planned to notify the community of potential traffic impacts in the area.
- Delivery of the First Street planters was delayed, but City crews continued to prep the locations. Staff met with the Snohomish Arts Committee about a call for artists to decorate the planters.
- The Ferguson Park restrooms were vandalized over the Fourth of July holiday and remained closed pending repair.

12. **MAYOR'S COMMENTS** - Mayor Redmon shared the following:

- Our Future Snohomish Carnival on Saturday, July 22 from noon to 4 p.m., providing many activities for children and adults related to the Comprehensive Plan.



- Sno-Isle's 20th Anniversary at the Snohomish Library on Saturday, July 29
- The Snoqualmie Tribe would camp at Pilchuck Julia Landing July 25-27 as part of their canoe journey.
- Thank you to the organizers of this year's Kla Ha Ya Days event.
- Kudos to Youth Council members who were actively meeting over the summer, and will be touring the Cedar Grove composting facilities, and hosting voter preregistration drives for high school students.

13. **ADJOURN.** There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

APPROVED this 15th day of August, 2023.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

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Linda Redmon, Mayor

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Brandi Whitson, City Clerk