



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the Special Meeting to order at 6:05 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

Mayor Bruce Bassett, Deputy Mayor Debbie Bertlin, and Councilmembers Dan Grausz (left at 6:43 pm), Tom Acker, David Wisenteiner, Wendy Weiker, and Benson Wong were present.

Mayor Bassett welcomed new Councilmember Tom Acker, who was sworn in before the meeting. He thanked Salim Nice for his service and noted that in January he will be sworn in to a new position on the Council. He also welcomed WA State Representatives Judy Clibborn and Tana Senn. He noted that Senator Lisa Wellman was unable to attend due to a previous commitment.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Legislative Priorities Discussion with 41st Legislative District Delegation

Representatives Clibborn and Senn provided a recap of the 2017 Legislative Session and spoke about transportation issues as well as budget and implementation of the McCleary decision to fund basic education in regards to property taxes and other budget decisions. They also spoke about passing paid family leave, car tabs, sick leave, equal pay, and Public Records Act reform.

Assistant City Manager Kirsten Taylor reviewed the City of Mercer Island's 2017 Legislative Priorities and the outcomes of actions accomplished regarding these priorities in 2017.

The Council then discussed which 2017 Priorities to retain, amend, or remove and which new priorities to add for 2018 as follows:

1. **Maintain full access to I-90 R8A lanes**

City Manager Julie Underwood spoke about managing I-90 off- and on-ramps, as well as improving Island Crest Way access. Rep. Clibborn requested an update on traffic impacts Mercer Island has experienced to be able to advise WSDOT what areas require monitoring, additional study, and mitigation solutions. Lobbyist Tony Williams noted that actions requested from WSDOT should be passed along to the federal level as well. Councilmember Acker spoke about eastbound I-90 during the morning commute. City Manager Underwood responded that the problem is known and solutions are being looked at.

There was consensus from the Council to amend this priority to require that WSDOT:

- 1) implement improvements to I-90 access ramps in 2018,
- 2) create a path to access Island Crest Way for single occupant vehicles, and
- 3) find solutions to the I-90/I-405 interchange.

2. **Fully fund education**

Rep. Senn noted that the actual plan for the McCleary decision may be tweaked slightly and the big discussion item will be about whether to use property tax for funding or rely on other funding streams.

There was consensus from the Council to amend this priority to support the City's partnership with the Mercer Island School Board by promoting their legislative priorities.

3. **Allocate recreation/transportation funding for Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan**

The Council discussed requesting that WSDOT provide project support and funding for the Master Plan. Rep. Senn noted that funding for this Master Plan in the 2018 Supplemental Capital Budget is still possible. It is also possible to work on securing technical services from WSDOT at no cost.

There was consensus from the Council to retain this priority and encourage WSDOT's increased involvement in the project planning and implementation.

4. **Adjust the property tax cap**

There was consensus from the Council to amend this priority to include addressing other local government

funding options for revenues to fund City services, including the property tax cap, state shared revenues, and REET restrictions.

5. Enhance health and human services

Rep. Senn spoke about addressing the opioid epidemic in 2018 as well as moving tobacco to 21. She noted it would be a big hit on tax revenue if the minimum age to purchase tobacco is raised. She advised that affordable housing and housing/income issues will be a big priority.

There was consensus from the Council to retain this priority.

6. Preserve the environment

Rep. Senn stated that Mercer Island has been amazing leader with green power. She spoke about using carbon tax to offset property tax, and that it will trickle down and impact consumers. She stated that there is not an existing proposal and it will be a harder sell in a 60-day session. However, there is interest in the energy code, state goal to reduce carbon, and fully fund state building code council (by increasing state fees). Rep. Clibborn noted that the VW settlement has come down across the states and the Governor put Washington's portion of the settlement into the capital budget. She also spoke about looking into an electric ferry, a tax break for electric vehicles that is expiring, and road usage charge pilot project to possibly replace the gas tax.

There was consensus from the Council to retain this priority.

7. Address the housing and homelessness crisis

There was consensus from the Council to retain this priority.

8. Provide cost recovery for long range planning and code enforcement

There was consensus from the Council to remove this priority.

9. Support AWC/SCA legislative priorities

There was consensus from the Council to retain this priority.

Representatives Clibborn and Senn answered questions from the Council regarding the public works trust fund and bonding capacity. They spoke about the following issues legislators are facing in 2018: capital budget, Hirst decisions, bills that did not pass in 2017, voter registration, gender pay equity, legal financial obligation reform, car tab issue, hosing issues and opioid issues. They noted that policy issues that do not cost much will be passed such as preventing income discrimination in housing.

Mayor Bassett asked how the Mercer Island City Council can support the 41st District Legislators. Rep. Clibborn responded that it is helpful to have face to face meetings and discuss the topics. Rep. Senn stated that we are in a unique situation with a close-knit committee. She noted that having Rep. Clibborn as the chair of the Transportation Committee and Senator Wellman as chair of the Education Committee in the Senate is very helpful in expressing AWC, SCA, and Mercer Island priorities.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Attest:

Bruce Bassett, Mayor

Allison Spietz, City Clerk