



## **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES ANNUAL PLANNING SESSION JANUARY 24-25, 2014**

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**Friday, January 24, 2014**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the Planning Session to order at 5:03 pm in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

### **ROLL CALL**

Mayor Bruce Bassett, Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz and Councilmembers Debbie Bertlin, Jane Brahm, Mike Cero, Tana Senn (arrived 5:13 pm), and Benson Wong were present.

Mayor Bassett welcomed the Council and City staff that were present and thanked them for attending.

### **AGENDA REVIEW**

City Manager Noel Treat reviewed the updated agenda noting that the Mercer Island Center for the Arts and the Town Center Visioning items on Saturday were swapped. He noted that the Council would be able to add items to the "parking lot" for Council discussion at the end of the Planning Session. The Council discussed making a decision about continuing the Planning Session on Sunday, as there were no agenda items scheduled; they decided to make the determination at the end of the day on Saturday.

### **2013 OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

City Manager Treat summarized the accomplishments during 2013 with a review of the Council's 2013 work plan. He noted that during this Planning Session, items would be added to the 2014 work plan as they arose.

### **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

The Council discussed the nominations for the 2013 Citizen of the Year. They also discussed the need to review and possibly update the selection criteria for the future. Following lively discussion, the Council voted and made their selection for 2013. The nominee will be honored at an upcoming Council meeting.

The Council broke for social time and dinner. They reconvened at approximately 7:30 pm.

### **MI LIBRARY PRESENTATION BY KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM AND DISCUSSION**

King County Library System (KCLS) staff and the project architect presented information to the Council regarding the upcoming renovation and remodel project at the Mercer Island library. They spoke about the public input process leading up to the project, which included a meeting in June and a second meeting in January. They showed graphics depicting the proposed alterations to the interior. They noted that the project does not drastically change any of the program areas, but rearranges the layout and allows for study rooms to be added. KCLS staff also spoke about the interior material modifications and how that would change the feel and lighting inside the library.

The Council inquired about the timeline for construction and the project budget. They also discussed the limitations of the proposed temporary site for the library during construction due to traffic impacts and the loss of public computer access. Former Mayor Bryan Cairns and former library advisory board member Marcia Mellinger expressed their concerns to KCLS staff regarding the reduction in the collections due to the renovations, changing the ceiling to improve acoustics, and the proposed furniture. They also noted that there are so many smart, passionate citizens willing to engage in how they would like their library to be.

Council asked KCLS staff about the possibility of asking the KCLS board to put this project on hold until a Council and citizen advisory committee could further review the proposed project and provide input on the proposed renovations. KCLS staff responded that the request would need to be made to the KCLS board. They noted that the KCLS board's next meeting was on January 29, 2014, and that the board would be voting on the Mercer Island Library Renovation Project.

The Council discussed drafting a letter to the KCLS board asking for time for Mercer Island to re-evaluate the project design. They discussed forming a committee of Councilmembers and citizens to review the project and make recommendations.

Mayor Bassett thanked the KCLS staff and the project architect for their presentation and time. He also thanked the citizens for their involvement and passion.

***Agreements & Direction:***

It was the consensus of the Council to:

- Draft a letter to the King County Library System Board, requesting additional time to review the Mercer Island Library renovation project design and provide recommendations on the proposed alterations.
- Send the letter to the KCLS board and executive director on Monday, to give ample notice of the request in advance of the meeting on January 29, 2014
- Have Deputy Mayor Grausz, Councilmember Bertlin and Councilmember Wong attend the KCLS Board meeting.
- Have Mayor Bassett appoint Councilmembers and citizens to an ad hoc committee to review the proposed library renovation design.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor adjourned the Planning Session for the day at 8:56 pm.

**Saturday, January 25, 2014**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the planning session to order at 8:32 am in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington):

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Bruce Bassett, Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz and Councilmembers Debbie Bertlin, Jane Brahm, Mike Cero, Tana Senn, and Benson Wong were present.

**I-90/TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

City Manager Treat presented I-90/transportation issues for the Council to review.

**R8A / East Link Project**

City Manager Treat reminded the Council that the R8A project adds a transit/HOV lane between Seattle & Bellevue and, upon completion of the project, Sound Transit will take over the center roadway for the East Link project. He noted that the 77th Ave SE westbound ramp would be permanently closed, which means that Islanders will be limited in accessing westbound I-90 and that this may change traffic circulation. He spoke about correspondence with the Governor's office regarding Mercer Island's single occupancy vehicle access in the new HOV lanes and the need for further clarity on the issue.

Staff noted that they will keep the pressure on WSDOT and Sound Transit regarding the R8A and East Link projects timelines. The Council discussed what will happen when the 77<sup>th</sup> ramp is closed, as traffic wanting to use the HOV lane will have to access westbound I-90 from Island Crest Way. They also expressed concern about how an HOV lane and the center roadway would work at the I-90/I-5 merge.

**Agreements & Direction:**

Staff will press further with WSDOT on what the I-90/I-5 merge would look like if both R8A and the center roadway open at the same time. Staff will also start looking at traffic counts on 77<sup>th</sup> to determine the impact on Town Center traffic to access westbound I-90.

**Transit Service and Funding**

City Manager Treat reported that King County Metro has proposed transit service cuts unless additional funding is found. He also spoke about the proposed Transportation Benefit District (TBD) for transit and roads in King County and that Mercer Island is estimated to receive \$598,000 annually for road purposes.

Mayor Bassett presented a letter that he has been working on with Lake Washington mayors detailing support for the proposed TBD. Councilmember Cero asked about what passing this would mean for a statewide transportation package. Councilmember Senn noted that ideally this TBD would not pass, as the state needs King County votes for a statewide package (that supports projects on both the west and east sides of the state), but in reality King County is in a precarious situation and funding is needed now to maintain current transportation service levels. Mayor Bassett noted that the TBD is about Metro and local roads, not about mega-projects.

Councilmember Senn asked what the \$598,000 can be used for and what it means for Mercer Island. City Manager Treat reminded the Council that the Street Fund will go negative in 2016 and this money could be used to keep up with basic street maintenance. The Council decided to revisit the options after the April 22 vote. City Manager Treat noted that on February 24, staff will be presenting transportation budget issues and the Street Fund analysis to brief the Council on emerging issues.

**Agreements & Direction:**

The majority of the Council agreed to have the Mayor sign the letter from Lake Washington mayors to the King County Council supporting the proposed Transportation Benefit District for transit and roads in King County.

### **Bus Intercept & Commuter Parking**

City Manager Treat presented a proposal from Sound Transit to have a bus intercept on Mercer Island, which would save construction on the East Link project as the D2 roadway will need to be built to accommodate both buses and trains. He noted that Sound Transit is hiring a consultant to study the impacts of the bus turnaround on Mercer Island, looking at using existing road cutouts on the south side of North Mercer Way and 77<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. He showed the Council the potential route for buses coming onto the Island, where the buses might "lay over" when waiting, and what roadwork might need to be done to accommodate areas for the buses to turnaround (i.e. roundabout at North Mercer Way and 77<sup>th</sup> Ave SE).

The Council discussed the bus turnaround being located at the Bellevue Park-and-Ride, but it was noted that buses travelling west on I-90 would have to cross all lanes of traffic to get to the exit for the Bellevue Park-and-Ride.

Council discussed the timing and urgency of a Council decision on this proposal. Mayor Bassett noted that WSDOT needs to make a decision on the D2 roadway construction by July 2014.

City Manger Treat spoke about ongoing discussions with Sound Transit and about payment for loss of mobility for the loss of the center roadway (with the East Link project), which is required under the 1976 I-90 Memorandum of Agreement. The discussions have been in the \$6.3 million range and for 180 commuter-parking stalls. When the former City Manager pressed Sound Transit for a draft term sheet, the bus intercept proposal was included on that draft term sheet. He noted that Sound Transit has been adamant that if they give the City money for parking it has to be open to all drivers, not just Mercer Island drivers. He further noted that a consultant has done an analysis of potential sites in the Town Center for commuter parking, but there are challenges with each of the sites.

Mayor Bassett noted that the Council has been hearing from the public about a lack of parking to access transit. He also noted that the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride is the last stop before Seattle and it is used by many off-island drivers. He suggested a plan to get off-island drivers to go to the South Bellevue Park-and-Ride so that the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride can be used by Mercer Island drivers. City Manager Treat noted that this is a Sound Transit proposal and that King County Metro has still not said if they are on board with the proposal.

Deputy Mayor Grausz suggested that the Council should decide a few basic principles about the bus intercept proposal and loss of mobility before engaging with Sound Transit.

The Council expressed concern about what the response from citizens will be about the bus intercept proposal. They further discussed the details of the buses turning around and waiting on the Island.

The Council discussed specific parameters for an impact study responding to the proposal (see below).

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

The Council agreed that:

- Unless Mercer Island dedicated parking is on the table, the bus intercept proposal is not an option.
- \$6.3 million is tied to the loss of mobility from the closing of the center roadway (under the 1976 I-90 Memorandum of Agreement) and is a separate issue from the bus intercept proposal.
- A North Mercer Way roundabout at 77<sup>th</sup> Ave SE should be added to the impact study along with a roundabout on Sunset Hwy and 77<sup>th</sup> Ave SE.
- Sound Transit should study options to see if bus layovers can be released from other areas so as not to stack up on Mercer Island.
- No buses are allowed to wait or lay over on SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A cap should be set on the number of buses on the Island at one time as well as the number of buses laying over on the Island.

Deputy Mayor Grausz suggested that the City meet with King County Metro to discuss a bus route for just Mercer Island, since ridership from the eastside will increase once the center roadway closes.

Councilmember Senn noted that if Mercer Island has not been aware of all the regional traffic impacts with the implementation of R8A and East Link, then there are probably other regional players who are not aware either. She agreed with a high level meeting about how these projects are going to impact transportation in the entire region.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability & Communications Manager Ross Freeman presented information to the City Council about what sustainability looks like on Mercer Island. He spoke about internal operations and public projects the City has worked on. He noted campaigns, programs and events that have furthered the City's sustainability goals. He spoke about the City of Mercer Island's involvement in regional, state and national efforts and collaborations.

Manager Freeman provided data regarding the City's calculated fleet in miles per gallon as well as normalized energy consumption in City facilities. He noted the early results of the Town Center LED Lamp Retrofit project realizing a savings of \$4,500 in only 5 months. He provided information about the total Island greenhouse gas emissions, including a linear projection of progress toward the City (and County) goal of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.

Manager Freeman presented a draft six-year Sustainability Plan for the City. The plan encompasses long-term policy/advocacy positions and long-term sustainability education and community outreach projects and goals. He noted that the Climate Action Plan is a subset of the Sustainability Plan. It will set timelines for new goals and for the development of specific greenhouse gas reduction strategies, and establish mileposts by which to monitor and verify progress. Manager Freeman detailed some of the current action items on the plan, including green building standards, raingarden education, the plastic bag ban, stormwater education, and a residential Solarize campaign as well as a few new items, such as the green revolving fund for energy efficiency and an environmentally-aware procurement policy.

Manager Freeman asked the Council for feedback on the proposed six-year Sustainability Plan, agreement to set new interim milestone goals for the Climate Action Plan, authorization for future contract discussions with consultants to identify GHG reductions expected from specific projects, and about the possibility of hiring a paid graduate intern to catch up on data entry and tracking.

### ***Agreements & Direction:***

The Council provided positive feedback on the proposed six-year Sustainability Plan and asked for more specificity about how items would be prioritized. They approved moving forward with the Solarize campaign. They also agreed to discuss setting new milestone goals for the Climate Action Plan. Manager Freeman noted that assistance is needed to catch up on data entry and tracking of sustainability metrics. The Council agreed to staff moving forward with hiring a graduate intern to help with the catch up data entry, and agreed that staff should explore consultant support for GHG reduction strategies. They also asked to have a conversation at an upcoming Sustainability Sub-Committee meeting about what should be tracked by the City.

## **2015-2016 BUDGET PREVIEW**

### **2015-2016 Budget Process:**

Finance Director Chip Corder teed up a discussion for the Council about how they would like to review the operating budget during the 2015-2016 budget hearings this fall. He reviewed the budget calendar and asked if the Council would like to know the key operating budget issues in advance of the budget hearings. The Council agreed.

Deputy Mayor Grausz spoke about what decisions the Council actually makes during the budget process, and noted that the challenge staff faces is framing the questions for Council to make the decisions. He noted that it would be helpful for Council to have enough information to make decisions about the numbers.

He then spoke about the two approaches to reviewing the operating budget: by department (as has been done in the past) or by selected funds (a streamlined approach). He stated that the streamlined approach is an overview of the General Fund, Criminal Justice Fund, Beautification Fund, YFS Fund, Water Fund, Sewer Fund, and Storm Water Fund, encompassing major revenue estimates, summary level expenditures, budget analysis, significant budget policy changes/issues and proposed service reduction and service enhancement packages (changes to the "base" budget). He noted that this budget review approach keeps things at a higher level for the Council compared to the first approach above, drilling down only on the "driving details" of the proposed budget.

Councilmember Wong asked about best practices and how other cities review and approve the budget. Director Corder spoke about how Kirkland reviews the budget. Mayor Bassett noted that dollars flow in and out of funds, and departments are created to divide the people who work for the City. He asked if anything would be lost by switching to the fund review approach. Director Corder noted that 72% of the General Fund is salaries and benefits

and that the Mercer Island population is not growing. If the Council is comfortable with base budget and with a long-term growth trend of 5% per year, then the focus can be on what is actually changing (service packages).

Director Corder presented information about producing a streamlined Council budget binder with the following sections: Budget Message, Recap by Fund (for selected funds only), Budget Policies (only those with significant changes/issues), Service Reduction & Enhancement Packages and Capital Improvement Program. Deputy Mayor Grausz also requested the inclusion of a balance page for all funds.

Director Corder asked the Council if they would like to conduct the biennial citizen survey in February 2014 in advance of the 2015-2016 budget hearings. Deputy Mayor Grausz questioned how the survey influences Council's decisions; he asked to know how the results are used by staff. They also spoke about asking specific questions about the performing arts center. Councilmember Wong noted that it is an opportunity for citizens to be heard and provide feedback. Councilmember Cero brought up the issue with cell phones versus landlines and if the survey results are from a good cross-section of the population. Staff suggested reviewing methodology and validity of the survey and its results. Mayor Bassett noted that it is a tool that helps staff prioritize services and know whether the City is doing well.

### **Significant Budget Issues:**

Director Corder spoke about property tax, noting that it accounts for 43% of General Fund revenues, but is limited to 1% annual growth plus new construction, which puts the burden for General Fund revenue growth on utility tax, sales tax, license/permit/zoning fees, and recreation fees. He also noted that the General Fund budget is primarily tied to development activity, which is currently high and projected to remain so through 2014, but that it is an "elastic" (i.e. more volatile) revenue source.

Director Corder explained two issues with the Community Center budget: increasing the General Fund subsidy for MICEC operations and the need for supplemental funding for the MICEC equipment & furnishings sinking fund.

Director Corder further noted that:

- The annual General Fund Subsidy of YFS will need to be maintained in 2015-2016 even if Thrift Shop Renovation/Expansion project moves forward.
- The Street Fund balance is projected to go negative in 2016.
- Significant water and sewer rate increases are forecast for the coming 6 years.
- Council will need to make decisions about funding LEOFF I retiree long-term care benefits.

Director Corder and City Manager Treat presented position needs that the Council will need to take action on in early 2014:

- Development Services Group needs additional staff to support MISD, if the bond measure passes in February 2014 and to support higher than expected development activity levels unrelated to the MISD bond measure.
- Restore the Fire Marshal position as the current distributed work arrangement between Fire and DSG is not working well and is not cost effective, especially given the current high level of development activity.
- Unfreeze the Patrol "Hire Ahead" Police Officer, due to succession planning and the number of police officers eligible for retirement.

### **Agreements & Direction:**

The Council agreed to:

- a streamlined approach to the budget (detailed above)
- a presentation of key operating budget issues at the Mini-Planning Session on June 14
- dedicating the October 20 and November 3 Council meetings to budget only
- a streamlined budget binder for the Council
- conduct the biennial citizen survey in early 2014 for the 2015-2016 budget process

## **MERCER ISLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

City Manager Treat introduced John Gordon Hill who presented the concept for the Mercer Island Center for the Arts (MICA). Mr. Hill spoke about the need for Youth Theatre Northwest (YTN) to find a new home due to the school district reclaiming the building YTN is in currently. He noted that this need to find a new permanent location was the driver for the development of the concept for a multi-use venue on Mercer Island, a cultural gathering place



for youth, adults and seniors. He spoke about the functions of the proposed building including multiple theaters of different sizes, classrooms and rehearsal spaces, administrative offices for arts organizations for music and dance recitals, choir concerns, and YTN productions. Architect and Urban Planner Leslie Bain spoke to the Council about placing the building on the old recycle center at Mercedale Park in a public/private partnership. She noted that the building backs into the hillside, but does not encroach on the hillside. She showed concept drawings of the building and how it becomes a hub, a gathering place in the Town Center.

Mr. Hill spoke further about developing schematic plans that fit the footprint and the needs of the groups and fit within the "right" cost scenario. The MICA group is putting together a board of directors, and establishing 501(c)3 status. He noted that they have secured pledges for \$105K in seed money and that they will eventually bring in professional staff to fundraise. He spoke about the project being on a fast track in order to keep YTN on Mercer Island. They will aim for a high-speed capital campaign with the goal of raising a significant amount of money in year one, break ground in year two and open in year three. He noted there will be many hurdles, but they are ambitious and the endorsements they have received are encouraging. He believes this facility will be the missing piece for many of the things that have been put into place in the Town Center.

The Council asked questions about the fast project timeline and the goal for the capital campaign. Mr. Hill noted that there are many people willing to make contributions and that the campaign would be for \$10-12 million. He also spoke about this being a civic facility and how MICA can engage with the City in a public-private partnership for funding and use of the building.

Council asked about the size and scale of the building. Ms. Bain noted that a wish list would be developed and then it would be paired down to fit with the cost and needs identified for the building. Mayor Bassett asked if there would be parking for the facility. Mr. Hill responded that they are striving to create a "green" facility and they do not want to pave over more area for parking. Stowe Sprague also commented on parking for the facility, noting that there are opportunities for re-stripping, sharing spaces with the Thrift Shop, working with local property owners to create parking agreements, or a shuttle from the park-and-ride lot.

The Council discussed the location of MICA at the south end of the Town Center and if it really would be "the heart" of the Town Center. They expressed concern that if there is no parking, and patrons were encouraged to use mass transit to visit the facility, the walk to Mercedale Park may be a deterrent. Mr. Hill and Ms. Bain spoke about a shift in thinking regarding how people get around and that the perception of how far a walk is depends on the walk being aesthetically pleasing. They also mentioned that MICA would be located at the end of 77<sup>th</sup>, which is the main road through the Town Center from the freeway.

Deputy Mayor Grausz noted that he and Councilmember Wong met with Parks and Recreation staff and MICA to discuss programming and facility management. He stated that since the proposed land for the facility is owned by the City, then the City will need to be involved in the project development to determine the structure of the public/private partnership and work through the financial and legal issues associated with a partnership. He suggested that MICA provide an update at the June Mini-Planning Session to see where the fundraising is at and if the proposed schedule is realistic.

Mayor Bassett asked if there is a need for a formal agreement at this time. Deputy Mayor Grausz noted that discussions still need to take place regarding programming and financial/legal issues. He stated that future agreements would be driven by MICA's fundraising accomplishments and the City's determination as to whether it wants to operate the facility or if that will be MICA's responsibility.

Ms. Stowe provided an update about YTN's efforts to find a new location, as the school district has provided notice to YTN that they will need to be out of their current location by the end of August. She said there are some things in the works, but nothing is definite yet.

Mr. Hill thanked the Council for the opportunity to present the project concept and for their feedback. The Council thanked Mr. Hill and Ms. Bain for their presentation.

***Agreements & Direction:***

The Council agreed to appoint Deputy Mayor Grausz and Councilmember Wong to work with MICA. Issues to be worked through are developing a structure for a public/private partnership, programming clarifications, and the financial and legal issues of the City or MICA operating the facility. A project update will be provided at the June Mini-Planning Session.

## TOWN CENTER VISIONING AND BOOSTER COMMITTEE

Development Services Director Scott Greenberg reviewed the items provided to the Council in the packet: the history of the Mercer Island Town Center (including a chronology of Town Center redevelopment), a map of eligible lots for significant public plazas and significant pedestrian connections, and a map of Mercer Island Town Center development. City Manager Treat summarized the information in these handouts, noting that development of the existing Town Center code was a huge undertaking and that it has taken a lot of work to get what the City has now. He noted there are still a number of parcels that can be developed so there are still opportunities to effect what will happen in the Town Center.

Mayor Bassett noted that the Council has talked about Town Center visioning, but has not made any decisions about any changes in the future. He noted that there seems to be a notion in the minds of the public that there is no "center" in the Town Center. He believes it begs the question, is the plan put in place in the '90s still the right course, or is it the right moment for the Council to review what it could be and what changes could be made to make it better? He noted that the Booster Committee is a near-term idea that can be implemented quickly and changes can be seen relatively soon, but that a review of the Town Center vision is much more long-term. He asked the Council how they would like to move forward and how to provide staff guidance of framing the issue.

Councilmember Brahm discussed looking at the big picture, rather than trying to piecemeal specific elements. She also noted that the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to revitalize the Town Center have been difficult as the vision/goal is not clear. Councilmember Bertlin noted that the principles developed 20 years ago are sound, but that the notion of traveling to the Town Center was not a widely known/accepted concept. She believes that is changing especially as there are more people living downtown. She also noted the difficulty in navigating the Town Center on foot.

Deputy Mayor Grausz noted that he was a supporter of the Town Center vision even though some of the architecture and design may not be ideal, but that the City cannot control that part. He is fascinated that a real community has slowly developed in the Town Center that will support the retail, utilize the parks and create some vibrancy. He thinks it is important to make clear what the Council will do and what the goal is, so as not to scare the property owners who have properties that can still be developed.

Councilmember Wong noted that many people he talked to during his campaign said that the Town Center is lacking character, a "feel". He noted that some spoke about a nice public gathering spot in the Town Center. He noted people stating that economic development is important to attract more business, restaurants, and retailers. He would like to work in a more coordinated fashion to attract business, and devote some City resources to get an outsider/advisor to look at Mercer Island's economic development.

Councilmember Cero believes that the Council should look at the vision, as the current policies are not fulfilling the potential on Mercer Island. He would like the Council to look at the parking issues in the Town Center as he believes that may have an impact on whether someone comes to shop downtown.

Councilmember Senn stated that she sees economic development as (1) supporting existing businesses and new businesses that come (help promote the Shop Local campaign); (2) building neighborhood (how are the people who live in those buildings creating a community); and (3) planning for the future. She spoke about how the new light rail station will attract people to the Town Center, but how will they know where to go, will there be a public space for meeting, how will the Council look at the available spaces and what could they become. She noted that short-term action items could occur now to help support the Chamber and boost local businesses.

### **Town Center Visioning**

The Council discussed creating a committee of Councilmembers and staff to develop a scope and bring it back at the Mini-Planning Session for review. There was a need expressed to understand the goal of the process; is it reviewing development standards, is it to find a public space, or is it to look at what other cities have done? Mayor Bassett noted that if nothing is done, the remaining properties will develop in the same fashion and the opportunity to create the "heart" of the Town Center will be gone. He spoke about creating a vision of a particular public space and about putting a ballot measure to the voters to decide if the space should be created.

The Council continued to discuss the need for a goal in the visioning process and for developing a succinct and well-defined statement for the vision of the Town Center.



### **Booster Committee (Economic Development)**

Councilmember Senn noted that a Booster Committee could help the Chamber implement effective, short-term items to help with economic development in the Town Center. She noted items could include supporting the Shop Local campaign, advertising opportunities for volunteers, how to donate or sponsor and get businesses involved in activities, help with the third Thursday art walks, create a happy hour Friday, and develop a Facebook page or website to help create a business community.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

The Council agreed to form a Town Center Visioning Committee to review the long-term vision of the Town Center. This Committee will work with staff to develop a scope for the Committee and bring it back at the Mini-Planning Session for review. The Mayor will appoint three members at a future date.

The Council agreed to appoint Councilmember Brahm and Councilmember Senn to the Town Center Booster Committee to work with the Chamber of Commerce to support local businesses.

### **COUNCIL TOPICS (PARKING LOT)**

The Council took up items identified for discussion by individual Councilmembers.

#### ***Email Disclosure Statement:***

Councilmember Cero stated that citizens should be warned that their email is public record if they provide it for a City-maintained list. Councilmember Senn spoke about proposed legislation addressing this issue.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

Staff will develop a disclosure statement for City-maintained email lists regarding email address privacy and will determine the appropriate places to put the statement.

#### ***Crime Status Presentation:***

Councilmember Cero stated that the crime statistics for 2013 show an increase and he believes that Council attention is needed to get ahead of it. He would like to have the Police Chief present to the Council the proactive steps the City is taking to improve the theft rate and crime rate.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

The Police Chief will present proactive steps the City is taking to improve the theft rate and crime rate to the Public Safety Sub-Committee.

#### ***Marijuana Stores Ban:***

Councilmember Cero would like to add a ban on marijuana stores to the Council's work plan. Mayor Bassett reminded the Council that there is no place on Mercer Island that a store can locate due to the 1,000-foot rule.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

There was no Council action on this item.

### **MERCER ISLAND CHILDCARE ISSUES**

City Manager Treat explained that if the Mercer Island School District's bond measure passes in February, there are two childcare facilities that will be displaced from the North Mercer campus at the end of August. He noted that relocation options are very limited for these organizations due to the state requirements for childcare facilities and the number of children enrolled at these daycares.

Youth and Family Services Director Cindy Goodwin explained that the City has received a facility lease request from Little Acorn Preschool asking the City to turn the MICEC Art Room into a preschool space. She noted that capital improvements and building upgrades would be required to turn the Art Room into a space that would meet the requirements for a licensed daycare.

Director Goodwin presented information regarding Mercer Island childcare providers and capacity. She noted that she focused on childcare, not just preschools. She noted that the two childcare centers being displaced at the

North Mercer campus (Little Acorn and Country Village) provide over half of the before/after care and over half of the infant care on the Island.

She also spoke about how cities provide financial assistance for childcare. She noted that unlike other eastside cities, the City of Mercer Island, through its Family and Emergency Assistance Coordinator, assists families in accessing funds through the WA State Child Care Subsidy program for parents who are part of the working poor and provides seasonal or temporary vouchers for childcare. These funds are sent directly to the childcare provider.

Tiana Traylor, President of Little Acorn Inc., spoke to the Council about her proposal to use the Art Room at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center for her preschool. She noted that the space is adequate, as she wants the program to stay small, but that capital improvements are needed to comply with licensing restrictions. She also spoke about her exhaustive search for another house or facility for the preschool, but either the cost or the licensing regulations prohibited each option from being viable.

Linda Tepper, Executive Director for County Village Day School, spoke about her program and explained what their programming and facility needs are. She stated that they have been working on the feasibility of the New Hope Church site at the south end of the Island as an option, but that there have been a few roadblocks with the site. There are fire flow issues and the site would not be ready by September 2014. City Manager Treat noted that staff has been looking at upgrading the fire flow system in that area, but have been unable to find a solution for a temporary flow boost. He also spoke about traffic impacts at the church site and that a Conditional Use Permit would need to be obtained to allow a daycare in that residential zone.

Deputy Mayor Grausz asked if portables are a viable option for Country Village in the interim. Ms. Tepper responded that it is very expensive to rent portables and the regulations from the Department of Early Learning are very stringent. Ms. Tepper has also explored two buildings in the Commercial Office zone (next to City Hall) but the property owners have not been as responsive as needed.

Councilmember Senn suggested relocating the school district administration to an office building for a year or two so that Country Village can use the administration building. City Manager Treat noted that he spoke with the Superintendent and they agreed that this request should come from the Council to the School Board to discuss the possibility of using the school administration building.

Mayor Bassett spoke about selectively helping some childcare providers and not others. He questioned what users and programs would be displaced by converting the Art Room to leased preschool space.

Ms. Trainer and Ms. Tepper thanked the Council for listening and for taking the time to help.

***Agreements & Direction:***

Council directed staff to:

- Review the proposal from Little Acorn to lease the Art Room at MICEC for a preschool.
- Review zoning for home daycares (parking, turnaround, CUP process).
- Continue analysis of utility issues at the New Hope Church property.
- Research temporary space for portables (recycling center property, Luther Burbank south parking lot).
- Meet with owners of two properties next to City Hall about a lease for daycare use.

**COUNCIL TOPICS (PARKING LOT) CONTINUED**

**Recording Executive Sessions:**

Councilmember Cero asked that discussion of recording executive sessions be added to the work plan. He believes that the recording will reassure the public so that if there is a question about the appropriateness of an executive session, the recording can be used for review.

***Agreements & Direction:***

There was no Council action on this item.

### **Cost Benefit Process & Standards for Sustainability Projects**

Councilmember Cero asked how to measure the return on investment for sustainability projects. Mayor Bassett agreed that more analysis is needed on large projects, but that he is not interested in coming up with a process & standards for all projects. City Manager Treat noted that when the sustainability metrics are developed staff would look at rates of return and cost benefit analysis.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

Staff will look at rates of return and cost benefit analysis when developing the sustainability metrics.

### **5% Impervious Exception**

Councilmember Cero stated that a citizen did an analysis of 5% impervious surface exceptions over the last 5 years and 100% of them were approved. Mayor Bassett disagreed with this finding, as the list does not include all of the people who did not apply for the exception because they did not reach the criteria or only went to the limit.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

There was no Council action on this item.

### **Town Center Parking Regulations Analysis**

Councilmember Cero expressed concern about parking at Aviara as there are still storefronts that have not opened and the parking garage is always full. He thinks the assumptions for the parking model for Town Center projects needs to be reviewed. City Manager Treat noted that he has asked staff to look at the issue. Assistant City Manager Kirsten Taylor noted that asking if the current code provides adequate parking is a good question and the right place for staff to start their analysis

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

Staff will review the current code to determine if the provisions provide adequate parking for Town Center projects.

### **Compressed Natural Gas Fleet Conversion**

Councilmember Cero asked if staff has researched converting the City's fleet to compressed natural gas vehicles.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

Staff will look into compressed natural gas vehicles for the City's fleet.

### **Compare and Contrast Kirkland's Records Request Model**

Councilmember Cero asked about comparing the City's Public Records Act policies and procedures to Kirkland's newly established records request model. City Manager Treat stated that, while the City has an established program, it would be good to have the new Assistant City Attorney look at Kirkland's program.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

Staff will look at the City of Kirkland's records request model in relation to the City's established policies and procedures.

### **Thanking Volunteers and Citizen of the Year**

Councilmember Brahm expressed her desire to have an annual event for volunteers to say thank you. She would like to ramp up how the City recognizes volunteers and special citizens for their service to the community. City Manager Treat noted that this topic has been discussed for the past few years and that it takes staff time and money to coordinate the event.

#### ***Agreements & Direction:***

There was no Council action on this item.

## **WRAP-UP AND FINALIZE WORK PLAN**

The Council reviewed its 2014 Work Plan based upon earlier discussions:

1. Legislative Agenda
2. I-90/Transportation Issues
  - WSDOT Tolling

- City Transportation Policy and Budget (if KC TBD does not pass)
- R8A & East Link
- Bus Intercept Plan/ST Loss of Mobility (dedicated parking/bus # limit)
- 3. Town Center Visioning & "Booster" Committee
  - Booster Committee for Town Center Economic Development
  - Create Town Center Visioning Ad Hoc Committee (Scope of Visioning)
- 4. Sustainability Work Plan
  - Sustainability Sub-Committee work on 6-Year Sustainability Plan and Metrics
  - Sustainability Sub-Committee work on mileposts for Climate Action Plan
  - Staff prepare info on paid intern/RCM for data entry and tracking
  - Green building
  - Solarize campaign
  - Solar array programs for public buildings (city/school)
- 5. 2015-2016 Budget Process
  - Streamlined approach with fund review
- 6. Mercer Island Library Renovation
  - Letter to KCLS Board re: project delay
  - Ad Hoc Advisory Committee (council & citizen)
- 7. Mercer Island Center for the Arts/Youth Theatre Northwest
  - MICA/Council Reps/Staff discussions re programming and financial/legal (public/private partnership) structure
- 8. Mercer Island Childcare Issues
- 9. "P" Zone
- 10. Coval Long Plat
- 11. Townhomes Long Plat
- 12. Thrift Shop Expansion Plan

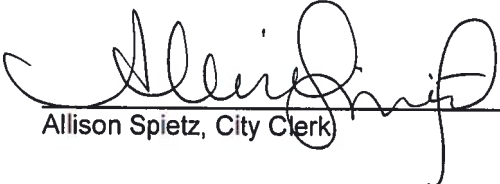
The Council decided to end the 2014 Planning Session and not return on Sunday. The Mayor thanked everyone for their participation.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the Planning Session at 5:30 pm.

  
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 Bruce Bassett, Mayor

Attest:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allison Spietz, City Clerk