

**Snohomish City Council Minutes  
February 21, 2023**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Redmon called the Snohomish City Council Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., Tuesday, February 21, 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, Felix Neals, Tom Merrill, and Donna Ray; Mayor Linda Redmon

- b. Pledge of Allegiance

2. **PROCLAMATION:** Black History Month

Mayor Redmon read a proclamation declaring February 2023 as Black History Month.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Morgan Davis** commented on Snohomish County's public hearing related to the UGA and Harvey Airfield.

**Bonnie Headley** commented on trees, and Mountlake Terrace's grant-funded "Trees for Terrace" program.

4. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order.

Mayor Redmon requested a motion to amend the agenda by moving Discussion Items 7a. and 7b. to precede the Consent Agenda.

**MOTION** by Ray, second by Merrill to amend the agenda as stated, and to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

7. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:** *(moved at beginning of meeting to precede Consent Items.)*

- a. Joint Housing Discussion with Planning Commission--Guest Presenters Chris Collier, Alliance for Housing Affordability; and Joe Tovar, Department of Commerce

Planning Director Brooke Eidem introduced the topic and guest speakers Chris Collier and Joe Tovar. Each speaker provided a slide show with information related to housing, with Council and Planning Commission members asking questions. Topics covered included:

- Impacts the pandemic had on housing, commuters.
- Why 92% of the workforce in Snohomish did not live in Snohomish; actual wages versus wages needed to purchase/rent.
- Data confidence and aspects of data collection used in the reports.
- Governmental subsidies from local, state, and federal programs; regulations and benefits of Section 8.
- Neighboring communities need to work together for optimal benefits.

- Solutions will take several years; problems will not be resolved overnight.
- Updating the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Background, guidelines, and updates of the Growth Management Act (GMA); local planning guided by state and federal laws.
- Regulations (control) versus plans and policies (guidelines); what local communities can do to plan for and accommodate affordable housing.
- Housing costs and homelessness were the top two concerns of a recent statewide survey.
- Strong support for missing middle housing and more diverse housing.
- The City's responsibility related to the GMA and Comprehensive Plan.
- Population increases kept in urban areas to reduce sprawl, impacts to rural areas; few changes made or expected in the Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Encourage regional cooperation, such as through Snohomish County Tomorrow.
- Subsidies can help with home ownership, not just rentals.
- Construction history of single-family homes; multifamily dwellings outlawed or restricted by zoning.
- Housing needs change over a person's lifetime (e.g., downsizing).
- New regulations related to Section 8; how the program worked.
- GMA language related to ecological loss and protection of green spaces. Local governments are not always able to monitor protections after a development is done.
- Construction done by private sector versus governmental agencies; GMA's impact on housing costs.
- The Department of Commerce can provide training and assistance to local agencies in developing Comprehensive Plan elements and incorporating recent legislative updates.
- Licensing requirements for landlords and short-term rentals.

b. Planning Commission 2022 Annual Report, Bylaws, and 2023 Workplan

Director Eidem provided the annual report, outlining the many accomplishments of the Planning Commission in 2022. The 2023 Work Program was introduced, and noted items could change as needed throughout the year. Updates to the Planning Commission bylaws were also shared, largely to accommodate remote attendance at meetings and recent changes to the OPMA.

Council asked questions, to which staff responded:

- Regulations of Airbnbs and vrbo's were adopted last year and being monitored. Staff would provide an update to Council after more information was gathered.
- Several bills in the state legislature that could affect City plans.
- Initiation of a Civic Ambassador Program to increase and broaden community outreach and involvement, especially with the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Community concerns tended to be related to open space and infrastructure, more than development and zoning.
- APA membership, and its benefits, for Commissioners.

At 8:16 p.m., Mayor Redmon called for a ten-minute **RECESS**.

**5. CONSENT ITEMS:**

- a. ACCEPT Settlement Agreement with SRV Construction, Inc.

- b. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Execute Lease Extension and Amendment for 1301 First Street
- c. CONFIRM Mayor's Reappointment to the Design Review Board
- d. APPROVE minutes of the February 7, 2023 regular meeting
- e. AUTHORIZE payment of claim warrants #78273-78354 in the amount of \$223,196.01, issued since the last regular meeting

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

6. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. DECLARE Emergency Related to Water Transmission Main - PASS Resolution 1446

Mayor Redmon explained the emergency proclamation. City Administrator Heather Thomas provided an update of the repairs.

Councilmember Flynn questioned transferring the utility customers to other authorities. Administrator Thomas responded meetings have been requested with Snohomish County and Snohomish PUD to discuss the long-term approach to doing so.

Public Comment:

**Jim Lewis** commented on the planning discussions.

**Morgan Davis** commented the affected customers should be serviced by PUD.

Public Comment Closed.

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Neals to PASS Resolution 1446, declaring an emergency related to the Water Transmission Main. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

- b. MODIFY Fee Schedule - PASS Resolution 1445

Administrator Thomas explained the updated fees based on cost of living increases, special event permit updates, Carnegie building usage fees, and the annual water/sewer connection fee adjustments. Fees were also updated based on true construction costs.

Public Comment: None

Public Comment Closed.

Councilmember Burke questioned increasing fees in light of the presentation earlier on housing affordability, and what benefits were offered to offset the financial impact. Administrator Thomas replied potential tools may be available to help offset some fees in terms of housing affordability. Other increases were to help recoup infrastructure installation and maintenance costs. Councilmember Burke remarked on recouping costs through utility fees and property taxes, and collected over the life of the infrastructure itself, and not on initial installation or hookup.

Councilmember Neals requested information to better understand the chronology and context of the increases being considered. Administrator Thomas shared that staff was working on ways to provide that type of information through master plans, rate studies, and cost recovery analyses to share with Council and the community. Mayor Redmon remarked similar considerations would be included as affordable housing options were researched.

**MOTION** by Guzak, second by Merrill to PASS Resolution 1445, revising the City's Master Fee Schedule. Motion passed (6-1) with Councilmembers Ray, Kuleta, Neals, Merrill, Flynn and Guzak voting in favor, and Councilmember Burke voting against.

- c. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Execute Agreement with Gray & Osborne for the Swifty Creek Storm Improvement Project Design

City Engineer Yosh Monzaki provided information and background on the project to increase stormwater carrying capacities for Swifty Creek, especially during high rainfall events. Increasing the size of the pipe should help alleviate flooding; however, location of the actual culverts south of Second Street was unknown, together with other issues related to access, easements and maintenance of the system. Gray & Osborne was selected to provide engineering design services for the project.

Council briefly asked questions, which staff responded to, indicating the larger pipe would provide sufficient capacity for runoff and sediment, and once installed, should help relieve blockages that may exist in the pipe farther upstream.

Public Comment:

**Morgan Davis** supported the contract.

**Jim Lewis** suggested running conduit for broadband when installing sewer and water lines.

Public Comment Closed.

**MOTION** by Guzak, second by Flynn to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to sign and execute the Professional Services Agreement with Gray & Osborne, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$279,876, including a Management Reserve, for the design of the Swifty Creek Storm Improvement Project. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

- d. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Sign Republic Services Contract Amendment

Administrator Thomas provided information related to the proposed contract amendment. Republic Services was able to amend rates based on CPI, as per the contract. They also notified the City of services collected at City facilities that were not being billed. A proposal was made to roll the cost of those services into the rates of the residential and commercial customers, which was standard practice for most other cities. Otherwise, the City would be billed for those services, which would total about \$50,000 annually.

At 8:57 p.m., **MOTION** by Neals, second by Burke to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Council asked questions related to the service charges, to which staff responded. Wendy Weiker with Republic Services was in attendance and also helped answer questions.

- Republic Services would increase rates effective April 1 regardless of what the City chose to do about the previously unbilled services.
- Adding the previously unbilled services across all customers would increase the average ratepayers monthly fees 49 cents.
- Additional service locations not included in the original contract were added over time and not budgeted for prior to 2023, totaling about \$50,000 annually.
- Republic was not back-charging for services.
- Other options to address the increase in the additional services would require a contract extension, which City staff did not recommend; instead, a general RFP for collection services would be issued later this year.
- A decision was needed on this so Republic could provide 30 days notice to its customers. Delaying a decision on the additional services, potentially adding a second rate increase in a short timeframe, was not an appropriate option.
- Options for spending the funds saved if the cost was added to the ratepayers.

Public Comment:

**Morgan Davis** commented on maintaining affordable utility bills for the ratepayers.

Public Comment Closed.

At 9:22 p.m., **MOTION** by Neals, second by Merrill to extend the meeting to 10:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Council deliberated on the issue, commenting on the short timeframe allowed for them to consider the issue. It was noted that the cost of the additional services was paid by the ratepayers indirectly through taxes, but had been accounted for in the City's 2023-2024 budget. Council generally felt that consolidating the fees would best serve the community during the RFP process later this year, rather than as a rate increase now.

City Attorney Emily Guildner clarified for Council that if no action was taken, the CPI rate increase would go forward, and the City would continue to pay for the additional services. Action was needed only if the Council chose to add the cost of the additional services to the ratepayers.

**MOTION** by Guzak, to approve Amendment No. 1 to the Comprehensive Garbage, Recyclables, and Organics Collections Contract between Rabanco, Ltd. dba Republic Services of Lynnwood and City of Snohomish. Motion died for lack of second.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS:**

Council President Merrill inquired about the County hearing referenced during public comment. Director Eidem stated she would attend the hearing and report back.

Councilmember Flynn asked about the recent theft incident on the riverfront trail. Sergeant Chris Veentjer had no updates to provide other than it appeared to be random, and going forward there would be increased patrols in the area. It was mentioned lighting along the trail could help increase safety.

**9. COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS/LIAISON REPORTS**

Councilmember Ray, in response to comments made during Other Business, requested clarification if there was a specific ask of the Public Safety Commission. Councilmember Flynn responded nothing specific, other than if they had any insights or suggestions related to safety given the incident.

Councilmember Neals remarked on the occurrence of a racially-charged crime in addition to the riverfront trail incident. He commended the Police Department on their work and noted crime was still lower in Snohomish than other areas.

Councilmember Flynn mentioned the Lions Club meeting, art community efforts, and encouraged organizations to apply to the LTAC for use of Hotel Motel Tax funds.

Councilmember Burke, in response to public comment, referenced Snohomish's receipt of a DNR grant last year, currently being used for the tree inventory.

Councilmember Guzak reported on several attendees at the Chamber's meeting, and reminded all of the art show this weekend at the Carnegie.

**10. COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS:** None.

**11. STAFF BRIEFINGS:** None.

**12. CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:** Administrator Thomas reported two utility improvements projects would start soon, with potential traffic disruptions: Avenue D between First and Second Streets, and Rainier Street between Maple and Willow Avenues.

**13. MAYOR'S COMMENTS:** Mayor Redmon shared the DEM Advisory Group would discuss water provision issues and population islands at its next meeting. She would be reading at Sno-Isle Library's "Baby Story Time" next week.

**14. ADJOURN.** There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

APPROVED this 7th day of March, 2023.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

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Linda Redmon, Mayor

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Brandi Whitson, City Clerk