

**Snohomish City Council Minutes
April 5, 2022**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Redmon called the Snohomish City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 5, 2022.

COUNCILMEMBERS/MAYOR PRESENT

Lea Anne Burke (*arr. 6:50 p.m.*)
David Flynn
Karen Guzak
Judith Kuleta
Tom Merrill
Felix Neals (*arr. 6:01 p.m.*)
Donna Ray
Linda Redmon, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT

Brooke Eidem, Planner
Emily Guildner, City Attorney
Scott James, Finance Director
Rob Palmer, Police Chief
Rebekah Park, HR Manager
Glen Pickus, Planning Director
Wendy Poischbeg, Economic Development and
Communications Director
Heather Thomas, City Administrator
Brandi Whitson, City Clerk

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. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order.

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

3. **CONSENT ITEMS:**

- a. AUTHORIZE Mayor to Execute Amendment for Renewal with Snohomish County Public Defenders Association for Indigent Defense Services
- b. APPROVE minutes of the March 15, 2022 regular meeting.
- c. AUTHORIZE payment of claim warrants #76528 through #76603 in the amount of \$572,023.91, issued since the last regular meeting.

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

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Jesse Podoll, in writing, updated Council on the development at Walsh Hills and Terrace Avenue sidewalk issues.

M. Richardson commented on maintaining remote access for Council meetings.

Morgan Davis commented on placing a gateway sign at Highway 9 and Second Street.

Milt Grover commented on Terrace Avenue and concerns regarding emergency access.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

a. Developing Tree Protection Programs

Ms. Eidem provided information on several options the City could consider in relation to trees and preservation of an urban tree canopy. Going through the process could also lead to applying for Tree City USA designation. She outlined a tree inventory process, planting prioritization plan, tree management plans and schedules, tree management coordination, tree code update (Chapter 14.240 SMC), and public coordination. Actions could include requiring permits for tree removal on private or public property, regulations on replacing trees, and identifying existing trees for preservation.

Councilmember Ray questioned including trees as part of the proposed review of First Street infrastructure, and potential role of a City Tree Board. Ms. Eidem replied trees would be included with discussions regarding First Street. She would research additional information regarding tree boards, but suggested perhaps a designated board could review permits related to tree code requirements.

Council President Merrill inquired about benefits of being designated a Tree City USA. Ms. Eidem remarked the designation was purely a distinction, but would alert the general public of the City's commitment to trees. The benefits would largely be from the trees themselves.

Councilmember Neals asked about benefits other cities have seen from their Tree City USA designation, and results of tree canopies, related to species and age. Ms. Eidem answered she would reach out to other cities for more information.

Councilmember Kuleta questioned addressing fewer tree canopies in marginalized communities. Ms. Eidem replied the proposed tree inventory would help identify areas in the City lacking canopy, which would then direct the first target areas for planting.

Councilmember Ray asked if the tree policy could be its own chapter in the code. Ms. Eidem replied currently trees were addressed in the fence and retaining wall section of the code, but would consider a new chapter for ease of identification.

Public Comment:

Jesse Podoll (in writing), Morgan Davis, Mark, Don Dillinger, Alice Armstrong, Elle C., John First, and M. Richardson all spoke in support of developing the program.

Public Comment Closed.

Council considered benefits of developing a robust tree policy in relation to the Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, and Council goals. They also discussed:

- Public outreach and education on importance of tree retention.
- Incentives for tree retention and planting.
- Including parks in the overall discussion and review of trees.
- Climate impacts of trees and public safety, such as last year's heat dome.
- Preference to focus on trees and obtaining Tree City USA designation only if it did not distract from the ultimate tree retention goals.
- General support of requiring permits for tree removal.

- Reviewing Woodinville’s or Monroe’s tree policies as a starting point.
- Support to proceed with the proposed programs even if the City was not awarded the DNR Community Forestry Assistance Grant it had applied for.

b. Proposal to Re-establish the Public Works Director Position

Ms. Park provided a brief description of the issue to re-establish the Public Works Director position. Staff considered the position as part of the 2023-2024 budget discussions, but with a new City Administrator and several upcoming capital projects, staff recommended moving forward now. Ms. Thomas added budget amendments for 2021-2022 would be brought back for Council review, but that the financial impacts were within the means of the City.

Ms. Park requested direction from Council on whether to move forward now on recruitment, and indicated competition for applicants so it could take longer to fill.

Councilmember Guzak expressed concern over the competitive job market and inquired on potential interest. Ms. Park responded the position would be open until filled, with first review in three or four weeks. She conceded finding a qualified applicant could take time.

Councilmember Flynn questioned the combining of the City Administrator position previously. Ms. Park replied she had limited understanding of the decisions, as it occurred prior to her starting with the City. Ms. Thomas added there was a definite need for the position now, considering succession and backfill planning for proper staff coverage in the Public Works Department.

Public Comment:

Jesse Podoll, in writing, supported the position, and suggested re-evaluating Parks Department staffing overall as well.

Public Comment Closed.

Councilmember Guzak supported moving forward to hire a Public Works Director. Councilmember Ray concurred, but questioned the opportunity to review overall staffing levels as well as a better understanding of budget impacts in relation to other positions that might be needed.

Council discussed the need, and their general support, to reinstate and fill the Public Works Director position now, especially with the number of capital projects expected over the next few years. Councilmember Neals remarked the Director would then be able to help identify other areas where Public Works staffing may be needed, allowing Council to review in terms of the 2023-2024 budget.

Ms. Thomas confirmed staff would move forward, and open recruitment later this week.

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

7. COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS/LIAISON REPORTS:

Councilmember Ray wished to recognize the work of the Park and Recreation Board and the Public Safety Commission. She requested Council provide clear direction to the committees.

Councilmember Kuleta thanked City Engineer Yosh Monzaki for meeting with her and providing information on infrastructure to help with making informed decisions.

Councilmember Neals visited the development site on Terrace Avenue. He remarked Council is continuing discussions about what makes sense and what Council can actually do in regards to the community's concerns. He shared a municipality app that could be used locally to see climate impacts of decisions made by leaders. Republic Services has a new initiative regarding recycling. Information on these are still in early stages and he will report back at later meetings.

Councilmember Flynn shared discussions with the School District and Green Snohomish, such as potential art collaborations with students and the City.

Councilmember Burke reported Green Snohomish will be hosting the annual Mother's Day Tree Tour on Sunday, May 8.

Councilmember Guzak attended the School Board meeting at which the Easter Parade was commented on. Snohomish County Tomorrow's meeting was postponed. In response to a public comment, she explained a gateway sign was not installed on Second Street at Highway 9 in the past because it was not funded. She met with Ms. Thomas to review co-ownership arrangements of the Fire Station properties, Harvey Airfield expansion, Snohomish County's Eastside Rail with Trail, and the need to work on affordable housing in the City.

8. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS:** Council President Merrill attended a Housing Authority Regional Taskforce meeting, discussing how the new sales tax fund should be used. He shared that City staff has been exploring numerous software options to help streamline processes, including some for reviewing projects and Council meetings to help reach all demographics.

9. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:** Ms. Thomas remarked on the following:
- Getting up to speed with City projects, partnership and finances.
 - Toured the Terrace Avenue development area.
 - Meeting with Councilmembers and City staff one-on-one to help identify workforce and cross-training needs.
 - Staff was working with consultants on costs for a shop site feasibility study.
 - Participated in an AWC briefing on a statewide opioid settlement.
 - Meeting with key partners on investments in health and housing needs.
 - The annual City Clean-up at the City Shop is Saturday, April 9. Les Schwab would be onsite to collect old tires.
 - WSDOT's projects this summer include a roundabout at SR9 and Bickford, and widening SR9 between SR96 and 176th Street. She requested Council let her know if they would be interested in a presentation from WSDOT.
 - Carnegie Veterans Memorial Committee wrapping up its meetings.

10. **MAYOR'S COMMENTS:** Mayor Redmon reported the following:

- Meet-and-Greet with the Mayor at The Oxford on Thursday, April 7 from 6-7 p.m., for informal comments and questions.
- Easter Parade April 16, starting at 11 a.m., along First Street.
- Representative Berg and Senator Lovick would be hosting a chat session at the Library.
- Future Council meetings would continue to offer remote access options, even after in-person meetings resume. Other options and services were being reviewed and considered.
- Staff have held several discussions regarding Terrace Avenue. A broader policy discussion was planned for the May 3 Council meeting.
- Acknowledgement to Assistant Planner Tom Kreinbring for his efforts with the Veterans Memorial committee. Input from their meetings will be incorporated into a design for project management and next steps.

11. **ADJOURN.** There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Council met in closed session to discuss Collective Bargaining, pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4) after the regular meeting adjourned.

APPROVED this 19th day of April, 2022.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

Linda Redmon, Mayor

Brandi Whitson, City Clerk