

**Snohomish City Council Minutes
September 13, 2022**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Redmon called the Snohomish City Council Special Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m., Tuesday, September 13, 2022. 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.

COUNCILMEMBERS/MAYOR PRESENT

David Flynn
Karen Guzak
Judith Kuleta
Tom Merrill
Felix Neals
Donna Ray
Linda Redmon, Mayor

COUNCILMEMBER ABSENT

Lea Anne Burke

STAFF PRESENT

Emily Guildner, City Attorney
Nova Heaton, Public Works Director
Shari Ireton, Director of Community
Engagement & Strategic Initiatives
Scott James, Finance Director
Rob Palmer, Police Chief
Rebekah Park, HR Manager
Glen Pickus, Planning Director
Heather Thomas, City Administrator
Brandi Whitson, City Clerk

2. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- a. Snohomish Carnegie Use and Planning

Ms. Ireton provided a brief background of the Carnegie building and its latest renovation. She provided a slide show presentation listing what staff has learned since the renovated building as opened in 2020. Some issues covered included:

- Parking
- Multiple rental spaces: upper level, lower level, patio area, lawn
- Contract, policy and reservation site had inconsistent language
- Rentals not available on holidays
- Fees were inconsistent, complex, and structured toward private events
- Staffing utilized casual labor and impacted facilities staff; expectations of wedding/private event beyond staffing capabilities
- Government competition with private enterprises. Snohomish already had several high-end wedding facilities in the area, but community/public event spaces were limited.
- Revenues and expenditures are different than budget: utility costs are less due to upgrades, pandemic limited ability to rent, overspending on casual labor.
- Community perception and expectation of a public space; previous master plans envisioned a recreation/education center. Use by non-profits limited by fees and availability.

Ms. Ireton outlined some recommendations based on information that was available to staff:

- Revise/codify fee schedule to clarify and add consistency.
- Review/update use contract
- Implement digital process for contracts, scheduling, deposits
- Map/improve reservation process

- Allow parking 24/7 unless a private event was scheduled; property signage
- Collection/refund system for deposits; pro-rated cancellation refunds
- Expand advanced reservations; allow for better staff planning
- Security plan in collaboration with Snohomish Police Department
- Allow rentals during holidays if for public use and would serve the broader Snohomish community
- Addition of 1.0 FTE Facilities Specialist in the 2023-2024 budget, with 50% of time to manage Carnegie

Ms. Ireton requested Council discussion and input on utilizing the Carnegie as both a high-end private event rental facility and community space, but which to prioritize.

Council asked several questions:

- Difficult to identify exactly how many rentals over the past year due to the reservation process used, but estimated at about six times each month.
- Rentals primarily for private events but some public ones.
- Basic costs to keep the doors open--utilities, staffing, maintenance, janitorial, etc.--was unclear.
- Conducting request for proposal (RFP) for facility manager; hire third party to manage.
- Grants available to fund public events to help cover costs of building management.
- Utilizing interns or other staffing resources could be difficult due to quirks of the building, safety, and time to train.
- If parks and recreation programs were offered, interns and alternative staffing could be used for the programs, and not the building.
- Using RFP for events; prioritizing which events to hold. Any event leads to staff time to execute--contracts, special event permits, security, etc.
- Consider offering the building to rent for private events to maintain some sort of revenue stream; offering use of the building free-of-charge for community events.
- Reviewing other cities event permits or contracts for guidance.
- Flexibility in use; can review after a year or two and re-evaluate. Staff expects to monitor data and analytics to help in those reviews and budget considerations.

Public Comment:

Melody Clemans (in writing) supported using the building as a community space.

Morgan Davis did not feel the City should be landlords.

Terry Lippincott spoke to Andrew Carnegie's vision to create public spaces and community use of the building.

Renee Deierling supported options to prioritize the needs of the community.

Public Comment Closed.

Councilmember Ray expressed disappointment at hearing the City turned the building into a wedding venue. She understood the need for revenue, but preferred focusing on community events with private events second.

Council President Merrill referred to costs to keep the doors open, and referred to public comment of managing the building similar to the City parks. Once the baseline cost was established, nominal use fees could be set to help offset. He agreed with other comments of the Carnegie as the jewel of the town.

Councilmember Flynn concurred with the previous comments, and felt use by the community aligned with Council goals. Budgeting appropriately was important, and he questioned the difference in budget versus actual expenditures; could that surplus be used towards future considerations, maintenance, staffing, etc. Ms. Ireton affirmed, and further defined the difference in casual labor staff and hiring of a designated FTE.

Councilmember Neals remarked on his "Coffee with the Council" experience at the Carnegie and the topic of a community space was brought up then. He described the building having personality, and returning the veterans' memorial would add to the stories of the community.

Councilmember Guzak shared her history with the Carnegie, and felt its current use was counterintuitive and against what the community had been saying for several years. She appreciated the chance to review the use, and concurred with rentals to help cover costs but to find out from staff what the basic costs were.

Councilmember Kuleta commented on Andrew Carnegie's intentions behind the library donations, and her personal observations of the public using the space. She appreciated small venues for concerts and expected to pay for a ticket to attend such events. Grant money was also available for community events. She agreed there was a lack of community space in the City.

Ms. Ireton recapped that staff's next steps will continue with the recommendations outlined to determine an appropriate fee schedule, analytics and cost summary for Council to review.

Mayor Redmon called for **RECESS** at 7:09 p.m. for five minutes; returning at 7:13 p.m.

b. Finalize 2023-2024 City Council Goals

Council President Merrill led the Council on a detailed discussion of the draft Council goals as provided in the agenda packet. One addition was from Mayor Redmon, suggesting the inclusion of resources related to water conservation, pesticide use and chemicals washed down storm drains under Fostering Environmental Sustainability, to ensure the public was aware the City did consider this as part of its goal and to provide for budgeting. Council generally concurred to include Mayor Redmon's suggestion in the goals.

The other change was related to concerns on cultivating community equity and its associated items. The Council conducted lengthy discussion over the bullet points under all of the headings, and how detailed or vague they should be. Ultimately, Council agreed to leave the bullet points and wording as they were provided in the draft.

Council President Merrill then questioned the order, and whether the goals should be numbered, prioritized or left alone. He suggested grouping some topics together, and perhaps moving Public Safety to the top of the list as the most visible goal, but not necessary the highest priority. Ms. Thomas requested a numbering system of some sort for staff to refer to in their staff reports and presentations to Council, or some short-form naming. Council discussed including the goals in the budget discussions and how they could be referred to. Staff was developing forms and as budget discussions commenced, Council could work with staff on how best to connect them to the goals. It

was also decided to leave the bullet points, but not to prioritize, as inclusion could help if any grant funding options were discovered.

Public Comment:

Morgan Davis commented on growth and preserving Snohomish's small town vision.

Public Comment Closed.

Council President Merrill summarized the discussion and will work on the draft document to include the Mayor's goal, and would reorder as discussed. The goals would be numbered for reference, not priority. The final goals document will be presented to Council at the October 4 meeting for review and adoption.

3. **ADJOURN:** There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

APPROVED this 20th day of September, 2022.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

Linda Redmon, Mayor

Brandi Whitson, City Clerk