

ISLAND COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

June 22, 2016

The Island County Council of Governments on June 22, 2016 met in the Commissioners' Hearing Room 102B, located at 1 NE 6th St., Coupeville.

The Council of Governments Minutes and recordings of meetings may be located at
<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Commissioners/Pages/COG.aspx>

Members Present: Curt Gordon, South Whidbey Port District Commissioner - Chair
Richard M. Hannold, Island County Commissioner
Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner – Vice Chair
Jill Johnson, Island County Commissioner
Tim Callison, Mayor of Langley
Mike Diamanti, Port of Coupeville Commissioner

Also Present: Captain Geoff Moore, NAS Whidbey
Mike Welding, NAS Whidbey
Lynda Richards, Island County
Catherine Reid, Island County
Joanne Pelant, Island County
Teri Anania, Island County Housing Authority
Candace Jordan, John L. Scott
Tony Bates, Remax
Paige Bates, Remax
Kathi Philips, Remax

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gordon called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Price Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Hannold to approve the minutes as presented of the May 25, 2016 meeting.

2016 VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR NAS WHIDBEY PRESENTATION

Presentation Captain Geoffrey Moore

Captain Moore made a PowerPoint presentation where he discussed the different functions of NAS Whidbey. The presentation included:

- The squadrons
- The Growler EIS Schedule
- The Platform Transitions for the various squadrons and the estimated timeframes
- Projected NAS Whidbey Island military growth
- NAS Whidbey Island Housing Market Area
- BAH Rates & Housing Types
- Restoration plan for Lake Hancock
- Upcoming Events – NAS Whidbey Island Public Open House on June 25, 2016

2016 ISLAND COUNTY HOUSING PRIORITIES PRESENTATIONS

Island County Housing Authority – Lynda Richards, Catherine Reid and Joanne Pelant

Ms. Richards, Ms. Reid and Ms. Pelant provided a PowerPoint Presentation – 2016 Island County Human Services Housing Update in which they discussed the following:

- 2015 Housing Data and Funding
- Lack of Housing/Rising Rents included housing needs assessments, increase of clients living in precarious living situations and rising homeless numbers
- 2015 Point in Time Count

- What is Island County Housing doing?
- What can be done to help the housing needs?

Housing Authority of Island County – Teri Anania

Ms. Anania discussed the various locations owned and managed by her office.

- She discussed the obstacles she came across during the Sunnyview Village building process and what she would do differently
 - In future pursuits, the Housing Authority would like the permit process to be simpler and they would be more knowledgeable of the zoning, have community awareness and involvement in the proposed projects

Due to the limited time on the Council of Governments schedule, Chair Gordon invited the Island County Housing Authority and Housing Authority of Island County to return to the July 27, 2016 meeting to further discuss the topic.

Chair Gordon invited Whidbey Island Real Estate Agents, Candace Jordan, Page Bates, Kathi Phillips and Tony Bates to the table to further discuss the housing trends and needs they are seeing throughout Island County.

REVIEW OF .09 RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDS RECOMMENDATION–CITY OF LANGLEY

Presented by Mayor Tim Callison

Mayor Callison discussed his meeting with Commissioner Hannold where they discussed the supplemental information he submitted for review. He discussed the most important items in the supplemental being:

- Findings from the Attorney General saying as a county there is a lot of latitude allowed to determine what an economic development activity is
- The fund availability through the Main Street Program and further loss of revenue due to the program going away
- Economic reliance on tourism
- Bicycling improvements

Commissioner Johnson understands the goal of the proposal but is fundamentally unable to support the application as economic development and encourages Langley to relook at what is being requested and address infrastructure related improvements. The public art piece of the application is not a necessity it is a value add and she thinks every community in the County would like rural economic development funds to pay for art. Since there is another cycle at the end of the year she would encourage them to relook at what has been requested and that it relates to some sort of infrastructure improvements. She feels that items on the application are not necessities in terms of rural economic development. She understands what Mayor Callison is saying about Langley's economy and why these types of investments are valuable but has concerns about using this funding source and then setting the precedence for every other community that will want the exact same beautification type of items.

Mayor Callison responded that he understands her concerns. If Langley was a bigger city with a bigger tax base and generating more revenues he could understand why she would say these funds would come out of the general fund for a beautification operation but Langley does not have that kind of income.

Port Commissioner Mike Diamanti stated the City of Langley's application covered a lot of ground and logically it can be argued that any improvement whether it is infrastructure or attracting more tourism is fine and meets the guidelines. But the Commissioners are the ones that have to decide how much each application is worthy of getting funds. He is in favor of the application. He understands infrastructure is the primary situation that everybody is dealing with because without infrastructure there isn't a facility or a thing that is going to service visitors, so the Commissioners will have to decide what parts or all of the application they deem worthy to vote on.

Mayor Callison said it is really a bridge, to date Langley is so dependent on tourism but they have to get away from that and diversify. That is the primary purpose of the economic development activity. He discussed the numbers received from the IRTPO and the percentage of the workforce that goes off the island daily.

Chair Gordon stated that the Port of South Whidbey is an economic development office and is open to the idea of recruiting a potential aide and sharing the aide. If Mayor Callison intends to apply in October for funds he should make a presentation to the Port of South Whidbey for the potential aide. There are some things that they are committed to take on in the Clinton area with a study that parallels the same thing. He said they can talk about that piece which is a separate piece from the infrastructure request. The one thing he will say about art as infrastructure, he does not think every town will have the same art infrastructure as Langley has tried to define its self as. Langley seems to be driving itself towards art; they are taking the lead with their funds and taxes that are used every year. But to say they need to wean off of tourism and then ask for funding for art to attract tourism is conflicting.

Commissioner Price Johnson said Island County particularly Central, South Whidbey and Camano are magnets for the artistic/artisan communities and they are small, sole proprietorship businesses that generate income for the County. They are living wage jobs for those families that have those businesses. Part of the thought as the discussion continues is that they think about it a little bit differently. If they want to promote sole proprietorship artisan jobs in Island County they need to be visible about that and show that it is a community that supports them by being visible.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mayor Callison if he was aware on the amount of art pieces the City of Oak Harbor has installed in the last four years. She said they have installed five and it is not a tourism economy. She stated she hears the argument but public art is not the driver for the artisan community. It is the culture of the people and how much they embrace it. She thinks art as infrastructure is out, the County has provided funds for various studies for the south end of the Island and she would like to see results before providing more money.

Commissioner Price Johnson said there is an existing application from the City of Langley and as an entity has not squandered funds. She suggested the infrastructure is what the Council is interested in funding, perhaps by dividing out part of this application for the bicycle enhancements and seawall access and take that piece and/or the public restrooms which she doesn't think anybody can argue are public investments for infrastructure that help promote.

Commissioner Johnson stated Langley keeps half of a percent of the two percent that they don't contribute to Island County Tourism and the reason for that were the bathrooms.

Chair Gordon asked if that was initially.

Commissioner Johnson said the reason given for not contributing the full two percent was because the one percent was for the bathrooms.

Mayor Callison said he did not know that.

Further discussion on contributions from City of Oak Harbor and City of Langley continued.

Commissioner Price Johnson asked if there was a way to clearly separate those pieces that were infrastructure related, and a willingness of the body to do that.

Commissioner Johnson said the Council can make a motion to forward the application to the Board and then they can discuss it at their table.

Commissioner Hannold said when he met with Mayor Callison that was his suggestion to fare it out. He can support the seawall and the bicycle racks because it is infrastructure and it is benefitting the people that are

coming in to visit and need a safe place to park and keep their belongings while they go out and perhaps shop.

Commissioner Johnson said in the two percent funds committee, an application is accepted or rejected and the committees were not going to parse out what they value and what they don't. Her question is, knowing that the council has a grant application coming up in the fall, they can present it to the Commissioners and they can parse it out, but why wouldn't they submit a revised grant application.

Commissioner Price Johnson asked Mayor Callison what he would prefer.

Mayor Callison responded he can do a redo of the grant application. That is fine. He said he can break it out into two parts.

Commissioner Hannold said they already provide that through the Island County EDC, the Port of South Whidbey is an ADO. He can't see funding rightly for person that would be separated out to a different entity that is an ADO.

Chair Gordon stated for the record, it sounds like the City of Langley is going to withdraw their application and reapply a more specific application in the fall and the rest of them will carry on to the Island County Commissioners for approval.

OTHER ITEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

No items for discussion

ITEMS TO DISCUSS IN JULY MEETING

- Follow up meeting to discuss Housing with Island County Housing Authority and Housing Authority of Island County.
- Invite Saratoga Housing Community, Builders and developers – Bellwether Housing, Camano Island Real Estate Association
- Opportunity Council – Greg Winters
- Economic Development Council Goals

The meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

The Council of Governments will meet next on July 27th, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.

Approved this 27th day of July, 2016.

Council of Governments,

Curt Gordon, Chair