



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES PLANNING SESSION JANUARY 24 & 25, 2020

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Benson Wong called the Planning Session to order at 12:11 pm in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center, 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

Mayor Benson Wong, Deputy Mayor Wendy Weiker (arrived 12:41 pm), and Councilmembers Lisa Anderl, Jake Jacobson (by phone 12:29 pm), Salim Nice, Craig Reynolds, and Dave Rosenbaum were present.

Mayor Benson Wong welcomed Councilmembers and staff to the 2020 Planning Session and introduced Dave Uhler as the Planning Session facilitator.

Uhler reviewed the Planning Session meeting norms and the agenda. He explained that decisions are not made at the Planning Session, but agreements are reached, and staff will bring issues back for Council action at regular meetings.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Introductions and 3 Things Exercise

Council and staff introduced themselves and briefly responded to three questions:

- What accomplishment are you most proud of from 2019?
- What major lesson or takeaways do you have from 2019?
- What is one thing that you would really like to accomplish in 2020?

City Council Goal Setting (Part 1)

Facilitator Uhler and Interim City Manager Bon led Council through a goal setting exercise using the following questions:

- What does success look like?
- What really needs doing?
- What tradeoffs are we making by choosing one goal over another?
- Is it a SMART goal? **S**mart, **M**easurable, **A**pplicable, **R**easonable and **T**ime Bound
- Is this goal something I will be proud of? And the community will be proud of?

As a result, Council identified the following goals:

- Recalibrating Public Safety (Regional)
- Fiscal Stewardship/Sustainability
- Economically Healthy Community
- Enhancing Community Trust & Communications

- Long-Term Vision for City Services
- Maintain Environmental Sustainability Actions
- Reshoring “City Hall” Foundation
- Prepare for Impacts of Growth and Change in Town Center

Mayor Wong updated Council on liaison appointments and Mayor/Deputy Mayor meetings with City Manager and wanting to invite one councilmember to join those meetings.

Council Consensus: Post liaison assignments to website after February 4 formal appointment.

Council Rules of Procedure

- Review the start time of Regular Business for the City Council meetings – consider an earlier start.

Council Consensus: Start Regular Meetings at 6:30 and Study Sessions or Executive Sessions start at 5:30 pm. Aim for 7:00 pm start time for Public Appearances.

- Review the process for Board and Commission Appointments – consider an open vote by the full Council.

Council Consensus: Establish an open vote by the full Council.

- Discuss whether City Council members may join the Council meetings remotely – the technology in Council Chambers is limited.

Council Consensus: To allow remote participation using existing technology and research cost to improve existing technology and whether voting can occur remotely, without participating in discussion.

- Consider scheduling additional council meetings (ex. twice a year) where citizens can discuss items with the full Council and not be limited to the three-minute public comment restriction.

Council Consensus: Consider scheduling extra meetings for full Council to participate in “town hall” style meetings.

- Revise proclamation procedures – allow for proclamations to be included on the Consent Calendar agenda to save time and/or limit the number of proclamations brought forward (note: staff has already scaled back the list).

Council Consensus: Put all proclamations on Consent Calendar and reduce the overall number of proclamations.

- Consider adding a standing agenda item to allow reports/updates from Regional Boards & Committees near the top of the meeting agenda

Council Consensus: If a councilmember serves on a regional committee and need a Council vote, add the item to the agenda for action, with the burden on the Councilmember to create the report.

- Add the Pledge of Allegiance to the Council meeting agenda

Council Consensus: Add to the agenda

- Communications:
 - Establish rules regarding councilmembers serving as “leads” on social media sites.

Council Consensus: No

- Rules regarding councilmembers commenting on social media posts related to City business.

Council Consensus: Staff will draft guidance for NextDoor use.

- The City has a “no text messaging policy” for employees, but this does not apply to the City Council. Consider whether a text messaging policy should be developed for the City Council. This has public records retention implications.

Council Consensus: Bring a no text messaging policy back for discussion.

- Evaluate whether to continue the Sustainability Committee, suggestion is that sustainability work should go to the full Council.

Council Consensus: Yes, sustainability work should go to the full Council.

- Joint meetings?

Council Consensus: Revisit meeting purpose and frequency with MISD, continue joint meetings with boards and commissions for major work items and key milestones.

Small Group Discussion

Due to the time of day, the Small Group Discussion was removed from the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Session adjourned for the day at 4:06 pm.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2020

CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Mayor Benson Wong called the Planning Session to order at 8:34 am in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center, 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

Mayor Benson Wong, Deputy Mayor Wendy Weiker, and Councilmembers Lisa Anderl, Salim Nice, Craig Reynolds, and Dave Rosenbaum were present.

Councilmember Jake Jacobson was absent.

Mayor Wong re-introduced Dave Uhler as the facilitator for day two of the Planning Session.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

“Big Dreams” Exercise

Facilitator Uhler asked Council and staff to identify one BIG dream for the Mercer Island community over the next 50 years, which included:

- Locate City Hall in downtown as a “centerpiece.”
- Solve inter-island mobility issues.
- Keep parks beautiful.
- Safe place to live.
- Sustainable, inclusive, full-service City.
- Keep Island green – cure climate change crisis.
- Help MISD remain strong, safe, and inviting.
- Develop brand of who we are and what do we want to be.
- Vibrant downtown with healthy retail core.
- Maintain Mercer Island as a great place to work with quality employees.
- Expanding MIFD to handle calls with less regional support.
- Successful and realistic fiscal sustainability. Create and support quality of life on Mercer Island.
- Have clarity for Town Center vision.
- Safe, welcoming community. Co-locate MIPD and MIFD. Stay on Island for services.
- Find solution to landslides and maintain utilities infrastructure.
- Infrastructure replacement and reinvestment roadmap. New City Hall.
- Pride in working for Mercer Island. Live the Mercer Island brand. Maintain green space.
- Community well-being. Economic diversity. Work here; live here.
- Embrace future technology.
- Infrastructure, future staff and council will look back at good decisions made. Catch up and keep up.

City Council Goal Setting (Part II)

Facilitator Uhler asked Council if the 50-year vision exercise generated new ideas for goals and if they wanted to consider changes.

Council Consensus:

- Articulate, confirm, and communicate vision for effective and efficient City services.
- Stabilize organization, optimize resources, and develop a long-term plan for fiscal sustainability.
- Prepare for impacts of growth and change.
- Implement an economic development program.

Fiscal Sustainability and Long-Term Finance Discussion

Finance Consultant Mike Bailey discussed the various roles of the budget makers, which included:

- Policy makers (Council),
- City Manager,
- Departments, and

- The Stakeholders (public)

Other topics discussed included:

- Government Accounting Terms and Acronyms,
- Budgeting Accounting and Reporting System (BARS),
- Fund Accounting,
- Primary Resources of Governmental Funds,
- Restricted Revenues & Funds,
- Proprietary Funds, and
- Fiduciary Funds

Consultant Bailey further explained that a budget is an economic plan that focuses an entity's financial and human resources on the accomplishment of specific goals & objectives established by its policymakers (City Council). He reviewed the mission of the budget process, its requirements, and sample budget policies for Council to consider. He also explained what to look for in budget reports, which included comparing year-to-date expenditures and revenue estimates compared to budget appropriations, determining whether there are any funds with cash flow issues, and looking for debt analysis.

Consultant Bailey also reviewed a detailed Mercer Island Fiscal Model to illustrate his fiscal sustainability discussion. The model was designed to assist Council and staff with its long-term financial forecasting efforts.

Decision Card Process

There was Council consensus to incorporate the following decision cards regarding budget policies into the biennial budget process in 2020:

7. Update/Revise REET Policies

Review and update policies regarding use of REET funds. REET 1 and REET 2 allow for the use of funds for maintenance projects with limitations. New legislation in 2019 expanded the use of REET 2 for affordable housing and projects related to homelessness. The City is currently using all REET funds for capital projects. Policy suggestions include:

- Improving policy definitions
- Discuss use of REET to fund maintenance activities
- Discuss of REET to fund ARCH projects

9. Equipment Surplus Policy

Review and update the equipment surplus policy, including review of the valuation threshold for City Council approval. Suggestion is to require City Council approval prior to surplus equipment valued at \$500 or more.

10. Policy to Incentivize Department Savings

Research and evaluate a policy to incentivize department savings where credits could be applied to future biennial budgets. For example, allow savings in 2020 to credit to next Biennium. Add GL code and process whereby savings are "booked" by Directors for each department to City Financial Systems. Provide this report in Council packets along with Payables. Determine minimum reporting standards.

11. Expense Savings Policy for Budget Development

Establish a spending reduction threshold (ex: 5%) to guide the development of the 2021-22 biennial budget.

12. Funding Policy for Permanent FTEs

Research and evaluate a financial policy related to funding requirements for new FTEs. Suggestion included establishing a budget policy that requires an ongoing/sustainable (6-year) funding source for any new FTE/headcount added outside of a balanced budget (i.e. cannot use one-time-money or surplus to add permanent positions). Contract positions with stated terms would be allowed.

13. Capital Funding and Reinvestment Policy

Utilize asset management data (through the CityWorks system) to establish/update policies for capital reinvestment and replacements. Utilize the data to confirm the prioritization and replacement schedule for infrastructure.

Each Councilmember submitted their top 10 decision card/work plan priorities via a ballot. Staff collected the ballots and placed the votes (using sticky dots) on the respective decision cards.

6 Votes Received:

6. Review/Update Town Center Development Code
42. Review/Update Regulations regarding Camping, Temporary Structures, and Overnight Parking on Public Property

5 Votes Received:

48. City-Wide Shuttle Service
29. Citywide Classification and Compensation Study

4 Votes Received:

1. Staff Position for Economic Development
2. Citywide Economic Development Plan
21. Implement System to Track Employee Works Hours
28. Compensation Policy & Philosophy

3 Votes Received:

5. Update Town Center Parking Regulations
15. Levy/Long-Term Funding Strategy for School-Based Mental Health Counselors
17. Implement System to Track Employee Works Hours
20. Integrate City Business Systems with Finance System
23. Growth Management Planning
35. Permanent Protection for City Parks and Open Space

2 Votes Received:

25. Regulations for Short-Term Rentals (ex. Air BnB)
30. Organizational Assessment for Human Resources
44. Develop a Climate Action Plan
45. Update Integrated Pest Management Policies

1 Vote Received:

18. Consolidate City-wide Online Payment Options
19. Electronic Payment Processing for Vendors
24. Housing Action Plan

- 26. Flexible Single-Family Development Code
- 38. Scan and Catalogue
- 39. Interactive Map for All Active Permit Applications
- 52. Formation of a Public Utility District (PUD)

The remaining 21 decision cards/work plan items did not receive votes.

The decisions cards were then reorganized based on votes received and Council discussed the work plan items receiving the highest number of votes. Following discussion, there was Council consensus to prioritize these work plan items in 2020:

6. Review/Update Town Center Development Code

Suggestions currently include:

- Revisit the retail frontage requirements and whether the requirement for retail should be extended south.
- Evaluate and consider restoring the pre-2015 or 1992 zoning regulations.
- A light rail integration plan to address bike and pedestrian connections to the new station. Also includes design aesthetics to ensure new infrastructure complements and connects to existing infrastructure.

1. Staff Position for Economic Development

Identify/allocate resources to support a staff position who will help coordinate economic development activities, per the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Citywide Economic Development Plan

Proactively engage the community to develop a Mercer Island strategy for economic development, inclusive of all island businesses. Develop a plan with specific short, medium, and long-term action items for implementation by the City to support local businesses.

5. Update Town Center Parking Regulations

Review and update Town Center public parking regulations in preparation for light rail opening in 2023. The current parking ordinance in Town Center calls for a wide range of parking zones on Mercer Island. This needs to be reviewed and updated. Regulations for public parking (outside of Town Center) may also need to be reviewed.

42. Review/Update Regulations regarding Camping, Temporary Structures, and Overnight Parking on Public Property

Study possible updates to current regulations regarding camping, temporary structures, and overnight parking on public property. Explore potential options for partnerships with area shelters (see *Martin v. Boise*).

48. City-Wide Shuttle Service

Review the potential of implementing a shuttle service on Mercer Island to serve businesses, schools, the Park & Ride, and other areas on Mercer Island.

28. Compensation Policy & Philosophy

Develop a City-wide compensation policy and philosophy.

29. Citywide Classification and Compensation Study

The City's compensation levels and strategies need to be reviewed and updated. This includes reviewing and updating the classification system for all positions, and a salary study for non-

represented staff.

21. Implement System to Track Employee Works Hours

Implement a system to track employee hours against specific projects and work items. Employee hours for capital projects and Public Works maintenance functions are currently tracked. Parks maintenance hours will be tracked once CityWorks goes live in February 2020 (soft launch). Facility maintenance hours will be tracked when CityWorks is implemented in 2021/2022.

15. Long-Term Funding Strategy for School-Based Mental Health Counselors

Review the options to secure long-term funding for school-based mental health counselors and review/confirm mental health counseling levels of service. This may include a ballot measure such as a levy.

35. Permanent Protection for City Parks and Open Space

Consider a referendum or other measure to permanently protect parks and open space and/or to require a vote to divest or modify use of park land. The Parks and Recreation Department is currently working on an update to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. This policy discussion may be something to include as part of that work item in 2020-21.

Councilmember Nice requested that **40-inch Fence Heights in Residential Zones** be added to the work item list for 2020. There was Council consensus to add this to the Residential Development Standards Review scheduled for later this year.

Staff will return to the Council with information on how these items can be delivered and if additional resources are needed.

2020-2021 Work Plan Review

Department Directors provided a brief update for each department:

- Community Planning & Development
- Administrative Services (IGS, HR, Facilities & more)
- City Attorney
- Finance
- City Manager

Planning Session Debrief

Council and staff made the following suggestions and comments regarding the Planning Session:

- A larger room is needed.
- Facilitator Dave Uhler received numerous complements.
- The sessions felt more cooperative and more collaborative.
- Several liked that the sessions started with Council ideas rather than staff ideas.
- Good sense that staff and council were working together.
- Uncertain whether goals were sufficiently connected to the Workplan.
- Pleased and surprised with how the votes coalesced.

Citizen of the Year – Nominations and Selection, Policy, and Key to the City Policy

Councilmembers nominated Mercer Island community members for the 2019 Citizen of the Year award. Following discussion of the nominees, the Council made their selection for 2019. The nominee will be honored at an upcoming 2020 Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Session adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Benson Wong, Mayor

Attest:

Deborah Estrada, City Clerk