



Council Study Session Minutes – May 24, 2010

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Maxwell called the regularly scheduled Anacortes City Council study session of May 24, 2010 to order. Councilors Nick Petrish, Erica Pickett, Brad Adams, Bill Turner and Cynthia Richardson were present. Kevin McKeown and Brian Geer were absent.

Chamber of Commerce 2% Tourism Funding Update for WSDOT Ferry

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Mitch Everton reported to Council on the Chamber's marketing programs using the \$100,000 Tourism grant it received last year from the 2% hotel/motel tax. He said approximately half the grant is used to promote the Sidney, BC ferry run and half to promote tourism more generally in Anacortes though there is inevitably crossover but all to the benefit of Anacortes. Mr. Everton said this year's marketing efforts have focused on "trips on a tankful" for visitors who can drive here in a few hours. The Seattle metropolitan area and Vancouver, BC are the primary markets. Mr. Everton noted that the current exchange rate makes Anacortes a very desirable destination for Canadians. The marketing includes 105,000 rack brochures distributed up and down the I-5 corridor. Mr. Everton distributed copies of the brochure which features the ferry run and also directs viewers to the Chamber's website. The "Coast In. Hang Out" tag line continues to be used in magazine advertising in *Seattle*, *Seattle Met*, *Victoria Boulevard* and the *Victoria Times-Colonist* and the NAS Whidbey phone book. Promotional spots appear on KCTS TV. Mr. Everton distributed a summary of the demographics of the KCTS audience and it includes a huge number of Canadian viewers. Mr. Turner commended the Chamber for targeting Vancouver and mentioned he has met quite a few visitors from Canada, noting that the bicycle trails in town are a draw. Mr. Everton said the marketing focus is increasingly web-based as it is most cost effective and reaches younger audiences. He invited the Council to visit the Chamber's updated website. Mr. Everton distributed broadsheets from the *Victoria Times-Colonist* newspaper that feature a large format advertisement for Anacortes as a destination including co-op marketing with local businesses and promoting the international ferry run. These will run before each long weekend in Canada this summer. Mayor Maxwell corrected a reference in the ad to "67 miles of parks" which should say "trails". In summary, Mr. Everton reported that Chamber website visits have been stable and Visitor Center traffic is up slightly. He said he relies on hotel/motel receipts to measure the strength of the tourist industry in Anacortes and said they were down only 3% last year so the advertising appears to continue to be working. Mayor Maxwell announced that representatives from the Washington State Ferries will be present at the Chamber business lunch on Thursday. He said the ferry tariff advisory group is recommending a disproportionate 8% fare increase for the Sidney run and reminded that the City continues to have to advocate for that run which is a large part of the local economy. He encouraged Councilors and the community to come to Anacortes Lutheran Church at 11:30 to participate. Mr. Everton observed appreciatively that the mayors of both Anacortes and Sidney are very involved in promoting the ferry run. Mayor Maxwell said the key is to keep the run in the public eye. Mr. Everton thanked the Tourism Funding Committee for its continued support.

Mrs. Pickett suggested to Mr. Everton that he contact the King County Convention Center about sending groups up to Anacortes for day trip outings. Mr. Everton noted the suggestion and said the Chamber does focus efforts on concierges in the Seattle area hotels. Mr. Turner asked if local restaurant receipts are tracked and said they seem to be doing well. Mr. Everton said Department of Revenue provides industry level data six months delayed and sales tax receipts two months delayed so he doesn't have current data but the latest he has shows increases from last year. Mayor Maxwell reported that Washington State Ferries is considering adding two marketing positions and noted that Tourism Victoria spends many times as much as Washington State promoting tourism. The Mayor and Mr. Everton agreed they would both like to see the WSF marketing program give significant support to the international run. Mr. Adams asked if the Chamber website tracks where visitors click and what links are most active. Mrs. Richardson said she's heard fewer people walk into the Visitor Center but more and more people look for information on line. Mr. Everton said the Visitor Center is as busy as ever but that website traffic is indeed growing. Mrs. Richardson asked if the Chamber still mails out hard copy information. Mr. Everton said yes, about as much as in past years--it prints 5,000 of the 105,000 brochures in a format for mailing. Mr. Turner noted that travelers in their twenties do virtually everything electronically now so the web is indeed the way to reach the visitors of the future. Mr. Everton agreed.

Storm Drainage Review

Assistant Director of Planning Don Measamer reviewed with Council a set of proposed revised storm drainage regulations. Mr. Measamer recalled that in 2009 Council adopted an interim ordinance for storm drainage per the 2005 Dept. of Ecology (DOE) Storm Drainage Manual with which all Phase Two NPDES permit holders were required to comply. Since then staff has worked with DOE to determine what additional requirements need to be met and how to implement them. Mr. Measamer said DOE also suggested adding a voluntary Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater guideline in the code which staff supports and has proposed to add. Over the past few months staff completed SEPA, a determination was issued and no comments were received. The draft regulations have been circulated and reviewed by DOE which has expressed no concerns. On May 12, 2010 the Planning Commission suggested a couple of organizational changes to the document which will be incorporated. Mr. Measamer concluded that the two significant changes in the revised regulations are the optional LID standards and the requirement DOE adopted in February 2010 that jurisdictions take over maintenance of private stormwater detention facilities if the private owner fails to maintain them; the City can recoup its costs from the property owner. Mr. Turner asked how that would happen. Mr. Measamer said failure to maintain would be a violation of the City's stormwater regulations so staff would notify the owner; then rectify the situation if the owner did not respond in a given time frame and charge the owner for those services.

Mr. Petrish asked if the draft regulations were written by staff or adapted from a state model. Mr. Measamer said staff intern Stephanie Hartin and staff engineer Kim McKinnon worked on the initial draft and that more recently Mr. Measamer has finalized it with DOE. Mr. Petrish asked if the new regulations are enforceable. Mr. Measamer said yes, that was specifically addressed. Mr. Petrish asked if a developer wants to develop vacant land, does the City determine what drainage issues have to be addressed on that site or does the developer? Mr. Measamer said about half the time staff does visit the site before an application is made so staff can steer the developer towards an engineer who is familiar with the stormwater regulations. Once staff receives the engineering drawings and stormwater management plan those are reviewed for compliance with the regulations, then staff can discuss them with the developer who revises the plans as required. Staff then inspects during construction to ensure compliance. Mayor Maxwell added that during the building boom individual projects sometimes proposed stormwater management that was inconsistent with capacity upstream or downstream so the Mayor asked staff to bring the storm drainage review back in house to make sure the system works community wide. He pointed out that LID measures are often a good tool but remain voluntary. Mr. Measamer concurred and noted that larger jurisdictions are required to implement LID standards but Anacortes isn't. Mr. Turner recalled past problems with storm drainage but said he feels the system is working well now and that new projects are being built to handle future loads. He commended the Engineering staff for their efforts. Mayor Maxwell agreed and listed a number of notable improvements in the system. Mrs. Richardson said she is pleased to have options for stormwater management because each neighborhood has different existing infrastructure and different needs. Mr. Adams asked if the proposed AMC Chapter 13 will require an ordinance. Mr. Measamer said staff will bring back to a regular City Council meeting an ordinance updating Chapter 13 including repealing superseded ordinances.

Executive Session – Fifteen (15) Minutes

At approximately 8:10 p.m. the Mayor and Council convened in Executive Session to discuss potential litigation for approximately fifteen minutes. At approximately 8:25 p.m., the Council reconvened and without taking any action, the regularly scheduled study session of May 24, 2010 was adjourned.