



## **City Council Study Session Minutes – May 23, 2011**

---

---

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Maxwell called the regularly scheduled Anacortes City Council study session of May 23, 2011 to order. Eric Johnson, Nick Petrish, Erica Pickett, Brad Adams, Bill Turner, Cynthia Richardson and Brian Geer were present.

### **Anacortes Farmers Market**

Anacortes Farmers Market Manager Keri Knapp reported that the market season opened May 14. She said in January the Market became a state non-profit and is working towards becoming its own 501(c)3 organization. The Market's mission is to support and strengthen small farms, local cottage businesses and the local economy. She said the Market receives incredible support from the community, local government, sponsorship from local businesses and other organizations. Last season Market vendors sold over \$400K worth of farm goods, food, crafts and art and sales have increased steadily over the past six years. The Market has over 50 vendors per week now. Ms. Knapp said two years ago the Market received a grant from the State that let it accept EBT food stamps, credit cards and debit cards in exchange for tokens that can be spent with market vendors. The token project has been very popular, providing a convenience to customers and increasing sales. This season the Market has several new farmers, more fresh produce, and a diverse selection of prepared foods including salsa, fresh pasta and tortillas. The expanded market café provides seating to enjoy food and music in the new plaza which has enhanced the ambiance of the market. Ms. Knapp announced several upcoming events including Ride Your Bike to the Market Day, Kids Day, Berry Festival in July, and a Harvest Celebration in September. The Market's goals are continuing to grow, educating the community about the importance of eating and shopping locally, and becoming a destination for visitors. She reminded that the Market is open every Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. through October 15 and like last year will be closing one block of R Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street for vendor space. Mr. Turner observed there is not a lot of farming on Fidalgo Island and asked where the "local" farmers are from. Ms. Knapp said this year a group from Guemes Island will bring produce to the market as well as farmers from the Skagit Valley and from Whatcom, Island, Snohomish, San Juan and Okanogan counties. Mr. Adams commented that the hard surfaces of R Avenue and the new brick plaza are a great improvement over the former gravel lot.

### **Preservationist of the Year Award**

Museum Director Steve Oakley reminded the community that a new exhibit opens at the Museum on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. called *Island Plants and People: A Twisted Path*. Mr. Oakley then read a statement from the Anacortes Historic Preservation Board presenting the 2011 Project Excellence Award to the Anacortes Adventist Fellowship for their efforts to restore and preserve the former Christian Science Church building at 1419 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Oakley said that since purchasing the building in August, 2010 the Fellowship has undertaken extensive work to ensure the building's revival and continuing life as a church. He listed many of the exterior projects already completed and said when interior renovations begin they will retain as many original features as possible. Mr. Oakley summarized the architectural, cultural and legal history of the Old Town landmark. He said the building is listed on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory and is eligible for both the Anacortes Register of Historic Places and the National Register. Mayor Maxwell presented a plaque recognizing the award to representatives of the Anacortes Adventist Fellowship. Fellowship member Kevin Welch said the award came as a surprise and called it a privilege and an honor to restore the building. He added that the group found the original plans for the church wrapped and stored in the rafters of the building. He recognized Fellowship Board Chairman Bonnie Bowman and Chaplain Pat Grant. Mr. Oakley recognized Susan Fahey, Susan Rooks, and Kay O'Connell of the AHPB. Mayor Maxwell congratulated and thanked the Fellowship for taking such good care of the historic building.

### **Envision Skagit 2060**

Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner with Skagit County and project manager for Envision Skagit, presented a summary of the project. He said Mayor Maxwell was instrumental in appointing the Citizen Committee including Cory Ertel and Peggy Flynn from Anacortes and Doris Robbins from Edison. He added that Planning Director Ryan Larsen serves on the project's Steering Committee. Mr. Johnson said Envision

Skagit 2060 is a long range visioning and planning process to develop a broadly supported 50-year vision for Skagit County and then work with policy makers and elected officials to implement the recommendations that are supported by their constituencies. He described the ten community meetings held around the county to find out what residents value about the county now and said participants have said they value the distinct small town character of their communities, agricultural land and an agricultural economy, the Skagit River and its floodplain, forested lands, and the 250 miles of marine shoreline in the county. Turning to the future, Mr. Johnson said in the next 50 years population will grow and Skagit County may have another 100,000 people in 2060. That population will need housing as well as jobs, education, transportation, recreation and health care.

Mr. Johnson said the first phase of Envision Skagit 2060 was looking at long term trends that need to be considered and developing a land use model. The next phase will be working with the public and the Citizen Committee to gather public input and form recommendations. The third phase will be working with elected officials to decide which recommendations should go forward as policy. Mr. Johnson said that the process has been locally driven. The Citizen Committee has made two field trips, has heard local and national speakers, and has participated in workshops on economic development with Don Wick, Bob Hyde, and Patsy Martin. He said over 300 citizens participated in the ten community visioning meetings and additional public input has been received on the Skagit County website. Mr. Johnson said the results of the visioning meetings have been provided to councilmembers.

Mr. Johnson said some of the issues the Committee is considering are natural resources and the environment, long term economic development needs, the need for 1600 additional acres of industrial land to provide jobs, population growth and distribution between urban and rural, balance between population and employment and tax base, and character of communities. He said the group is looking at Smart Growth and future development trends around the nation. They are partnering with the Urban Land Institute in Seattle on ideas for livable and walkable neighborhoods. He said the next speaker will be in Burlington on Wednesday presenting *Revitalizing Aging Commercial Strips: Learning from the Past to Build the Future*. Mr. Johnson said strip retail is a thing of the past and the future belongs to town centers, main streets and mixed use development. Mr. Johnson reported that the Citizen Committee will finish its work this month and will meet with the County Commissioners and mayors in June to share its recommendations.

Mr. Turner said the real work ahead is to make cities places where people want to live and to make urban cores denser but livable. Mr. Johnson said Anacortes appears to be a local leader in this trend. Mr. Adams noted that communities are cleaning up waterfront areas but that other areas in the valley will need to revitalize industrial properties such as mills and refineries. Mr. Johnson said the economic development panel projected that in 50 years we may have different industries, alternative energy, and a cleaner and greener economy. The Committee wants land available for future industrial uses but hasn't specified what those uses will be encouraged to be. Mrs. Richardson observed that balance is very important, that people need to be able to live and work in the same community and even neighborhoods need balance between commercial and residential properties. Mr. Johnson agreed that shortening commutes is a goal of the Committee. Mr. Eric Johnson asked what housing density will be required to absorb the population density projected for 2060. Mr. Kirk Johnson said Anacortes could keep accepting quite a bit of population under its current mixed use zoning and added that infill in existing residential neighborhoods can happen without fundamentally changing their character. He said multi-story development in the commercial core is another way to absorb population and revitalize town centers and that changing demographics are increasing demand for such space. Mr. Turner agreed there are still quite a few lots available to absorb people under current zoning. Citizen Committee member Corey Ertel thanked Council for the opportunity to continue the dialogue at this meeting and said the Committee's recommendations will be decided on by elected officials. Mayor Maxwell thanked Mr. Ertel and Ms. Flynn for serving on the Committee. The Mayor concluded that we'll all be living a little closer together in the future and that's not a bad thing.

There being no further business, at approximately 8:15 p.m. the regularly scheduled Anacortes City Council study session of May 23, 2011 adjourned.