



City Council Minutes – November 14, 2011

At 7:00 p.m. Mayor Dean Maxwell called the regularly scheduled Anacortes City Council study session of November 14, 2011 to order. Role call found present: Eric Johnson, Erica Pickett, Brad Adams, Bill Turner, Cynthia Richardson and Brian Geer. Nick Petrish was excused.

Chamber of Commerce Presentation

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stephanie Hamilton introduced Leah Hines, who runs marketing and promotions for the Chamber, and Mary Tolosi, who directs the Visitor Information Center. Ms. Hamilton reported how the Chamber has been using its 2% hotel/motel funds to entice visitors to Anacortes. She described the 2009 effort to develop branding for Anacortes, a process guided by Jim Clarke and Corey Hunter. Anacortes was defined as an authentic coastal community combining small town charm with the splendor of the San Juan Islands. Advertising was then focused and the slogan Coast In, Hang Out was adopted. Photos reflecting the diverse attractions of the community were selected. The Chamber also evaluated which print media were most effective for reaching the target audience. The publications selected reach over 2 million American and 258,000 Canadian readers. Ms. Hamilton described successful cooperative ventures with advertising partners in the U.S. and Canada and displayed examples. She also described the partnership with Washington State Ferries to advertise on the vessels including videos. Ms. Hamilton complimented Steve Berentson for his extensive library of promotional photos. Ms. Hamilton displayed examples of promotional brochures. She then described the new promotional billboard on SR20 and thanked Planning Director Ryan Larsen for his help establishing the location and the lease. She noted local business participation: Dakota Creek supplied the steel and built the billboard, Anchor Signs created and will update the images, and Simply Yards installed and will maintain the landscaping. Ms. Hamilton said local hotels asked the Chamber to focus on the shoulder seasons and she listed the range of events that the Chamber promotes to bring overnight visitors to town outside the summer months. Ms. Hines then reported on a marketing trip to Seattle with Town Crier Richard Riddell to promote Anacortes. She discussed the growth of web marketing including QR Codes, Google Ad Words and online animation. She explained that website visitors are coming from all over the country and Canada now. Ms. Hamilton described the bi-monthly eNews sent out to destination influencers. She reported that the VIC greets 20,000 visitors each year in person or over the phone. She then described planned new ventures including tours for travel writers. Mayor Maxwell thanked the Chamber for its efforts and for jumping on the opportunity to advertise on the ferries. Mrs. Richardson complimented the promotional efforts that are much more effective than in prior years.

Port/City Interlocal Agreement – Property Exchange

Assistant Planning Director Don Measamer described the interlocal agreement that the Port and City have been working on since before 2002 to straighten out property ownership in the vicinity of Market Street, 6th Street and R Avenue. Mr. Measamer thanked Kathy Pittis at the Port for facilitating that effort. In a series of slides Mr. Measamer depicted the property that would be transferred to the City, the property that would be transferred to the Port, the right of way that would be dedicated for Market Street and the various parcels that would be vacated in the vicinity of Market Street and S Avenue. He showed the resulting Market Street right of way which includes the existing pavement and room for potential improvements. Mr. Measamer noted that a portion of 6th Street will remain available for access to the Dakota Creek building in the future if needed.

Mr. Turner asked if the agreement is strictly a property exchange or if improvements are involved. Mr. Measamer said the agreement as drafted is purely for an exchange of property. He added that the City has been awarded funding to finish the Depot pavers in the Farmer's Market area once the property transactions with the Port are completed. Mr. Measamer said a third party consultant has confirmed all the legal descriptions and verified all the proposed rights of way in the field and that City Attorney Brad Furlong has reviewed the documents and made minor changes. He said the Port is reviewing the documents now and has made only minor changes. Mr. Measamer concluded that staff would like to bring the final interlocal agreement and the related street vacation ordinances back to Council on the consent agenda at its November 21, 2011 meeting so the documents can get recorded in the next few weeks. Mrs. Richardson thanked the Port for working with the City through this process. Mr. Geer asked if

the Depot grant was dependent on completing the transaction. Mr. Measamer said the grant has been authorized and is just awaiting the property exchange to execute the funds. Mr. Turner advised that the Public Works Committee strongly encourages that the work at the Depot be completed before the next Farmer's Market season opens in May. Mr. Johnson asked if there is funding for improving Market Street. Mr. Measamer said an earlier agreement with the Port of Anacortes regarding prilled sulfur shipments provides some fees that will be allocated towards improving Market Street.

Public Works Solid Waste Update

Public Works Director Fred Buckenmeyer introduced Marc Kruger and Matt Koegel from the Sanitation Division to present an overview of the extent and current state of the City's solid waste program. Addressing garbage service first, Mr. Kruger said the crew of four full time employees picks up 38,000 cans or 600 tons of trash each month. He noted that Anacortes has the lowest garbage rates in the county. He described how the City educates the public as to what goes into the garbage, the recycling and the yard waste. He said all garbage is hauled to the transfer station on Ovenell Road where it is compacted, loaded onto rail cars, and hauled by trains to the Allied Waste landfill in Roosevelt, Washington which recovers methane and gas to generate electricity. Mr. Kruger then described some of the department's other programs such as Trash Talks to encourage recycling among schools and service clubs; the recycling poster contest; and the free drop site for packing materials, jack-o-lanterns, and recycling fluorescent lights and rechargeable batteries at the City Operations Shop. Mr. Kruger then described the single stream residential recycling program contracted with Rabanco. He said in Anacortes 48% of the residential waste stream (by weight) is recycled including yard waste. He said plastics recycling continues to expand. He added that a color brochure depicting acceptable materials is available on the City website. Mr. Kruger said recycling is hauled to Allied's recycling center in south Seattle for sorting. In contrast, commercial recycling is an open market regulated by WTUC and in Anacortes is generally handled by Tri County, Waste Management or Skagit River Steel. Mr. Kruger then explained that yard waste collection including food waste is contracted to Waste Management Inc. Service is weekly March-November and monthly December-February. He said yard waste is hauled to Skagit Soils on Ovenell Road where it is composted and made available for sale. Finally Mr. Kruger described the roll on/roll off drop box service which is currently handled by Waste Management under contract with the City.

Mr. Buckenmeyer returned to the podium and described the new Skagit County transfer station that is under construction and on schedule to open in April 2012. Next Mr. Buckenmeyer addressed street sweeper debris. This is now collected at a special facility at the Operations Shop, decanted and drained into the sanitary sewer, and the drier material is hauled to Cemex in Everett. He said when the new transfer station opens all cities in the county hope to drop their sweeper debris there for more economical bulk hauling to Cemex. Turning to Spring Clean up and Saturday U-Haul, Mr. Buckenmeyer said this is still very popular but numbers are falling slightly. He said in 2012 there will be a free Saturday in April, then U-Haul on the first Saturday of the month May through August, then one more free Saturday in September. Mr. Buckenmeyer said only non-organic waste is collected at these events. He noted that electronics can be disposed of on the first Saturday of each month behind the fire station through a Kiwanis Aktion Club program. Finally, Mr. Buckenmeyer briefly mentioned the Solid Waste Governance Board which includes all Skagit mayors and the county commissioners. The Board sets rates, decides how to fund the transfer station, etc.

Mrs. Richardson noted that Anacortes is lucky to have three non-profit thrift stores where people can donate clothing and household goods that are too good to throw away. She said this reduces the waste stream and raises funds for worthy causes. Mr. Turner mentioned that methane collection from cow manure is now happening in Skagit County which is good for the environment and the economy. Mr. Johnson advised that the Aktion Club hauls 6000 pounds of computers and monitors to recycling centers every month. He said this program was supported and funded by electronics manufacturers but that the club has to charge to take scanners, printers, mice, keyboards and other peripherals because those manufacturers did not choose to participate.

There being no further business, at approximately 8:15 p.m. the regularly scheduled Anacortes City Council study session of November 14, 2011 adjourned.