

March 18, 2021

MEETING HELD TELEPHONICALLY DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SPECIAL BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO DISCUSS SKAGIT FIRST STEPS PROJECT

Mayor Steve Sexton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, J. DeGloria, R. DeGloria, Scott Green, Chris Loving and James Stavig. Staff present: Janice Burwash, Geoff Hawes, Leif Johnson, Sandy Kottke, Mike Luvera, Katie Olafson, Marv Pulst, Joe Stewart, Travis Schwetz, Sarah Ward, Greg Young and Mickey Zitkovich.

MAYOR'S OPENING COMMENTS

Mayor Sexton explained the purpose of the meeting was for Council to get a deeper understanding of the Skagit First Steps Project. The meeting will focus on many aspects of the project and provide in depth and valuable information to Council. Council will also have the opportunity to address questions or concerns regarding the project. **Mayor Sexton** introduced **Commissioner Lisa Janicki**, **Friendship House Director Tina Tate** and **Community Services Division Manager Sarah Hinman**. Opening comments were held from these three partners all of which spoke with excitement in seeing the success of this project come to fruition.

COPY OF WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED TO DATE

A copy of all the public comments submitted regarding the Skagit First Steps Project were provided to Council for their review.

SKAGIT FIRST STEPS CENTER OVERVIEW

City Administrator Greg Young shared the City of Burlington in partnership with Skagit County, the City of Mount Vernon and the Friendship House is proposing to develop a site for transitional housing to serve selected individuals and families in Skagit County. The center will occupy a parcel of land and existing building in Burlington upon which approximately 45 Palletshelter Cabins will be placed. The Cabins will be occupied for up to 90 days to provide transitional housing and support services to aid these persons in their quest to improve their lives. **Young** further shared site and building renovation details, capital improvement financing and capital operation financing. A lengthy discussion was held amongst Council and staff about specifics of the project overview.

OVERVIEW OF STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA) AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT PROCESS – DISCUSSION

Community Development Director Brad Johnson gave an overview of SEPA process stating every major land use action requires environmental review. Environmental

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review is done at the same time as the review of all other land use permit components, such as plan review, conditional use permit or subdivision. The process includes a notice of application and a publication notice. **Johnson** also gave a short overview of the SEPA Environmental checklist. A discussion was held amongst Council and staff of specifics of the SEPA process.

SKAGIT COUNTY CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION MONIES - \$400K INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

City Administrator Greg Young explained the City of Burlington and Skagit County have drafted an interlocal agreement to allow Skagit County to provide up to \$400,000 in funding for the proposed shelter in Burlington. This one-time funding opportunity will allow Burlington to be reimbursed for those qualifying expenses that occur. As long as Burlington maintains the proposed shelter for at least two years, the contract will be satisfied. If the shelter were to close before then, or not comply with the basic requirements of the interlocal within two years, the County may demand that some or all of the funding must be returned. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** asked about the 60% capacity rule where Burlington could be on the hook for funds. **Young** shared 27 of the 45 units would need to be occupied for a two-year period to comply with the 60%. **Councilor Keith Chaplin** asked about possibly reducing the number of cabins. **Young** shared the interlocal requires a minimum of 40 cabins. **Councilor James Stavig** asked about amending the agreement with the County. **Community Services Division Manager Sarah Hinman** shared the County wants to be in partnership with this project and the agreement can be amended. **Commissioner Lisa Janicki** explained the goal is to make this project successful and spoke in support of starting with a reduced number of cabins. **Hinman** and **City Attorney Leif Johnson** shared an amended version of the interlocal agreement could be ready by the next scheduled Council meeting.

A motion was made by **Councilor Chaplin/Stavig** to defer the authorization of the Interlocal Cooperative Funding Agreement for Burlington Shelter Project between Skagit County and The City of Burlington to the March 25, 2021 Burlington City Council meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE OPERATIONS – PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

City Administrator Greg Young shared details of the MOU explaining the responsibilities of the City of Burlington and The Friendship House. **Councilor Keith Chaplin** asked if there are any other organizations that would be able to provide this service. **Mayor Sexton** shared when looking at track record and years of experience, The Friendship

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House is without question the best partnership for this project. **Chaplin** asked how other cities are managing similar projects. **Mayor Sexton** explained most cities use city staff to manage similar projects but felt this was not the direction the City of Burlington wanted take. **Councilor James Stavig** spoke in opposition of city staff running this project.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Chaplin** to approve the 2021 Friendship House MOU and authorize the Mayor to sign. **Councilor Bill Aslett** recused himself from the vote due to a family conflict of interest. **Councilors R. DeGloria, Loving** and **Green** in favor; **Councilor J. DeGloria** opposed. Motion carried.

SKAGIT FIRST STEPS FUND CREATION ORDINANCE

Finance Director Joe Stewart shared in order to account for the construction and ongoing operating costs for the Skagit First Steps Center, the City needs to create two new funds. The construction fun will account for all initial capital expenses and any local, state or federal contributions towards the project. The operating fund will account for the ongoing operating cost of the center and any contributions from participating agencies of private parties. In both cases, the funds will be restricted or committed to the First Step Center. **Councilor James Stavig** asked about the billing process, how the bills will be approved and how will legitimacy of the bills be tracked. **Stewart** explained the person who is closest to the work will be the one approving purchases and shared this process is still a work in progress.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Chaplin** to approve the Ordinance creating the First Step Center Operating and Construction Funds and authorize the Mayor to sign the Agreement. **Councilors Aslett/Loving/R. DeGloria** and **Green** in favor; **Councilor J. DeGloria** opposed. Motion carried.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF REET & 1406 DOLLARS

City Administrator Greg Young shared in the previous agenda item, Council approved the creation of two new funds for managing the operations and construction funds for the Skagit First Steps Center, now this item makes working capitol money for funds, REET and fund 1406. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** suggested putting this item off until the next meeting. **Councilor James Stavig** spoke in opposition of delaying the approval of this item and shared this money will be reimbursed. **Stavig** further explained the City will need startup money as there will be bills to fund right from the start.

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A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Chaplin** to approve the transfer of \$470,000 in REET dollars from Fund #301 to Fund #303 with the understanding that any capital dollars reimbursed by the County would be returned to Fund #301 and transfer \$26,667 dollars from the General Fund to Fund # 103 and authorize the direct deposit of future 1406 dollars into Fund #103. **Councilors Green/R. DeGloria/Loving** and **Aslett** in favor; **Councilor J. DeGloria** opposed. Motion carries.

SOLE SOURCE CABIN PURCHASE RESOLUTION

City Administrator Greg Young shared the City and its partners have spent considerable time researching appropriate shelters for the site. Given the specific needs of the Center, it was the consensus that the product made by Palletshelter offered a unique blend of portability, durability, and cost that was unmatched by other products available.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Chaplin** to approve the Sole Source Resolution and authorize the Mayor to order the Cabins that Burlington will purchase with a caveat of a purchase of 20 cabins. **Councilors Aslett/Loving/R. DeGloria** and **Green** in favor; **Councilor J. DeGloria** opposed. Motion carried.

SKAGIT FIRST STEPS CENTER – DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE “PROTECTION AREA ORDINANCE”

A discussion was held amongst Council and staff about a possible ordinance establishing a certain described area that is located immediately adjacent to and approved temporary building encampment to prohibit certain activities in permit perking areas and other public spaces that adversely affect the operations of the encampment, residents of the encampment and the adjacent area.

DISCUSSION

No Discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Sexton adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Joe Stewart
Finance Director

Steve Sexton
Mayor

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

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