

## TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

### MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

June 13, 2023 Page 1

**CONVENE:** 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Charlie Schneider, and Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Communications Manager Ann Cook, Economic Development Manager Austin Ramirez, and City Clerk Melody Valiant.

Others: Kelsey Hulse, Strategies 360, and Tumwater City Administrator Successor Lisa Parks.

**2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT:** Manager Ramirez recapped the outcome of Tumwater's 2023 Legislative Agenda and the region's Shared Legislative Agenda:

#### *Tumwater's Legislative Agenda:*

- Craft Brewing and Distilling | Integrated Malt System – Funded at \$255,000. The project will help fill some regional gaps in the brewing and distilling industry, as well as promote Tumwater's Craft District.
- Bush Prairie Economic Development (Habitat Conservation Plan [HCP]) – Requested \$4 million but not funded. The \$4 million request was a joint request between the City of Tumwater, Port of Olympia, and the City of Yelm. Manager Ramirez reported Ms. Hulse with Strategies 360 began working with the City on the request close to the beginning of the 2023 legislative session resulting in insufficient time to meet and discuss the funding request with legislators. Based on discussions with some legislators, the City will increase engagement with legislators before the next session because of the complexity of the project and the purpose of the funding request. Legislators requested identification of a specific property or a tangible asset as the explanations of purchasing some property for mitigation was not sufficient. It is important to clearly state the reason for the funding request, such as identifying a specific property. Additionally, it will be important to identify the purpose of the request as it can fall into areas of economic development, carbon sequestration, or mitigation for the protection of endangered species. Ms. Hulse noted that the request was a capital request that typically is for a capital project. It will be important to identify the right funding source, such as a capital request tied to a specific property or a programmatic request tied to the some of the benefits of the HCP. Manager Ramirez added that staff continues to seek all funding sources for the HCP. One feasible source is carbon sequestration funding as prairies have been

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**June 13, 2023 Page 2**

identified as a carbon sink to varying degrees and have been included in programs for carbon credits on the carbon market.

*Shared Legislative Agenda:*

- Budd Inlet Remediation and Restoration – Funded at \$2.2 million
- Young Child & Family Center; North Thurston Public Schools – Funded at \$1 million

Ms. Hulse acknowledged the efforts of City Administrator Doan and Manager Ramirez during the legislative session to promote the City's legislative priorities. The team acknowledged the benefit of beginning earlier to promote legislative funding requests. When she began working with the City to assist with the legislative requests, state agency budget requests had been completed and the Governor had released the draft budget making it difficult for the City to position its legislative requests and engage with the Legislature when the budget development process was nearly completed. Next year's session is a short 60-day session and it is anticipated that many of the issues central to this year's session will be repeated next year involving climate, housing, and behavioral health. The next session will not include a new budget. The City anticipates focusing on funds that have been appropriated for greenhouse gas auctions as part of the Natural Climate Solutions Account and opportunities to engage with state agencies to identify possible interest in a prairie carbon sequestration project using agency funds previously appropriated.

Ms. Hulse added that political changes will be occurring in the state over the next several years with the election of a new Governor and other state agency positions. It will be important to contact new individuals who assume leadership positions to ensure they understand the priorities for the City of Tumwater.

Councilmember Swarthout thanked the team for their efforts and acknowledged the difficulty of navigating the capital budget process. Seeking funding earlier is also important. Representative Doglio expressed interest in the HCP and protecting the gophers, as she understands the importance of the project to the City of Tumwater as well as climate benefits through preservation of prairie land.

City Administrator Doan said he appreciated Ms. Hulse working with staff. She offered some creativity, energy, and different ways to frame the legislative requests. The HCP/gopher request is an unusual funding request and will require some creativity and much storytelling.

**MAYOR/CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR'S  
REPORT:**

City Administrator Doan reported the Council previously approved allocating \$275,000 of ARPA funds to the Thurston County Housing Authority project to convert the Tumwater Inn and Suites property to housing. The Housing Authority received notification of receiving more

## **TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION**

### **MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**

**June 13, 2023 Page 3**

funds than requested from the Department of Commerce. Existing tenants located on the property will become displaced because of the project. The City has been asked to use the \$275,000 to pay for the relocation of tenants who meet eligibility requirements for relocation assistance. The Council supported the request to use the \$275,000 for relocation assistance for the Thurston County Housing Authority project.

Mayor Sullivan reported new City Administrator Lisa Parks is scheduled to join the City on Friday, June 16, 2023. The Council's regular meeting on June 20, 2023 has been cancelled as four members of the Council are attending the Association of Washington Cities conference in Spokane, Washington.

**ADJOURNMENT:**      **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
Puget Sound Meeting Services, [psmsoly@earthlink.net](mailto:psmsoly@earthlink.net)