

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

February 12, 2007  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Balducci, Davidson, Lee, Marshall, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately one hour and 15 minutes to discuss two items of potential litigation, one item of pending litigation, and one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 7:38 p.m. with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) Jeffrey Belts urged Councilmembers to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.
- (b) Eric Spechak, a junior at Bellevue High School, urged the City to commit to clean energy solutions that will reduce global warming and pollution by signing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

3. Study Session

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Noble noted the memo from Diane Carlson in Council's desk packet regarding the Eastside Human Services Forum's 2007 Legislative Agenda. The three major areas of interest are promoting early learning and healthy child development, affordable housing, and health care for children. Mr. Noble said the Forum is requesting that the City Council send a letter to state legislators advocating support for the first item. The Forum is urging the legislature to support legislation allowing the development of a new Department of Early Learning and to increase investments for statewide early learning programs.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for sending the letter. Mayor Degginger noted Council consensus supporting the letter.

Mr. Lee asked staff to provide information regarding the use of golf carts on neighborhood streets as is somewhat prevalent in the Tam O'Shanter neighborhood. The City Manager said staff will review the issue. He said this use has been going on for several years, due to the older population in that neighborhood, and no problems have arisen.

(b) Overview of State Transportation Tolling Policies and Options

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened discussion of proposed highway tolls. Transportation Director Goran Sparrman indicated that the staff presentation will review revenue considerations and pricing concepts, and provide a policy update. He said tolling has been used worldwide, although use in the states has been limited.

Kim Becklund, Transportation Policy Adviser, said City staff is working with Puget Sound Regional Council and others to review numerous system management options including HOV lane capacity alternatives, HOT lanes (travel time savings for those willing to pay for special lane), pricing (e.g., car and van pooling, transit, user-based fees), and tolls. A flat rate toll will be implemented for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which opens in the summer of 2007. A HOT lane demonstration project opens in 2008 on SR 167. Tolling is proposed for replacement of the SR 520 bridge. The I-405 corridor program is considering HOT lanes.

The Washington State Transportation Commission completed a comprehensive study this past fall. It documents the history of tolling in the state and makes policy recommendations. The Commission is considering statewide tolling. Tolls on SR 520 are aimed at producing revenue.

Ms. Becklund asked the Council to provide feedback on how it would like to proceed on these issues. She noted the draft Transportation Pricing Interest Statement provided in Council's desk packet.

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, said most of the conversation within the state legislature has been related to funding the SR 520 project, which is in need of approximately \$2 billion. House bill 1773 (HB 1773) would require that toll revenue be used on facilities and corridors, which they have broadly defined to allow use on pairs of corridors (i.e., SR 520 and I-90). Additional legislation has been proposed in the Senate.

Councilmember Balducci noted the need to articulate the reasons for charging citizens to use roads. People tend to be more accepting of tolls to pay for a new facility. However, new approaches involve charging people for using existing roads, as a transportation demand tool. She prefers charging only for the development of new facilities. Ms. Balducci said there is a need for public education regarding imposing tolls on roads that have been free up to this point. She described discussions within the Transportation Policy Board about projected travel times over the next 20 years, with congestion increasing some 20-minute trips today to 60 minutes.

She suggested communicating these concerns before taking a position on pricing and toll alternatives.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, Ms. Balducci said she would like the Council and staff to distinguish between the two purposes of tolling, paying for new facilities versus managing demand, and then provide a good explanation for the public as to why demand management is necessary.

Councilmember Noble concurred with Ms. Balducci's statement. He noted there is nothing in the interest statement about the Council's principles regarding managing the overall system. Instead it addresses financing and raising revenue. Referring to Item 2 of the interest statement, he questioned the ability to maximize capacity through pricing and tolling. He further stated that the rest of the sentence indicates revenue from one facility could be used for other facilities.

Mr. Noble questioned the extent of the area covered by systemwide tolling, the definition of overall regional travel balance, and the meaning of regional equity. He feels Item 4's statement about using revenue raised from one facility only for improvements on that facility sounds in conflict with Item 2. Mr. Noble questioned whether the tolling would have a sunset provision.

Councilmember Marshall concurred with Ms. Balducci and suggested the Guiding Principles be split into two categories: 1) Revenue generation for capital, and 2) System Management. Mrs. Marshall prefers a statement indicating that funds from one facility can be transferred for use to another corridor, unless all projects in the original facility are fully funded. She reiterated Mr. Noble's question about whether the tolls would have an ending date.

Councilmember Lee concurred as well about the need to identify the purpose of pricing and tolling. He feels tolls should be considered only to provide optional lanes, as an incentive, but not to be applied to every lane and thereby remove the option for free roadway use. He noted that citizens have already paid for the roads.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak commented that the interest statement does not reflect his position or what he would consider to be a reasonable or realistic approach. He feels there are alternatives to tolling that can and should be used, although he is not opposed to toll lanes as an option for drivers. Mr. Chelminiak cautioned that the imposition of tolling could create a backlash in terms of voter support for transportation ballot measures.

Councilmember Davidson suggested waiting for the results of the tolling study on SR 167 to be released in 2008 before making a decision about this approach. He is concerned about the policy implications of road use being dictated by who can afford to pay tolls.

Mayor Degginger noted Council's interest in more information including the rationale for tolling and policy implications. Mr. Sparrman agreed to provide more information to the Council. Ms. Balducci expressed support for enhanced public outreach on this issue.

#### 4. Executive Session

At 8:26 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to Executive Session for approximately two hours to discuss one matter relating to personnel.

The Executive Session concluded at 10:16 p.m. and Mayor Degginger declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

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