

**CITY OF UNIVERSITY PLACE  
MINUTES  
Special Meeting of the City Council  
Saturday, January 25, 2025**

**CALL SPECIAL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Figueroa called the Special Meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

Attendance was noted as follows: Mayor Figueroa, Mayor Pro Tem Wood, Councilmember Worthington, Councilmember McCluskey, Councilmember Flemming, Councilmember Boykin, and Councilmember Grassi(virtual).

Staff: City Manager Sugg, City Attorney Kaser, Assistant City Manager Faison, Administrative Services Director Petorak, Community and Economic Development Director Briske, Police Chief Burke, Public Works Director Ecklund, Business Outreach Liaison Metcalf, and City Clerk Genetia.

Facilitator: Michael Pendleton (Pendleton Consulting, LLC)

**MAYOR'S REMARKS/FACILITATOR OPENING**

Mayor Figueroa called the Special Meeting to order and welcomed the City Council and staff. He emphasized the importance of meaningful participation and communication among Council and staff to achieve the retreat's goals. Michael Pendleton, the retreat facilitator, welcomed the participants to the first retreat of 2025. He outlined the agenda and highlighted the unique aspect of the retreat, which includes a visit from County Executive Mello.

**GUEST SPEAKER** – Mayor Figueroa welcomed Pierce County Executive Ryan Mello and his team, thanking him for his attendance and for the opportunity to have a conversation about the importance of the City and County's partnership in delivering public service and addressing regional challenges.

Pierce County Executive discussed the importance of collaboration between the City and County in delivering public services, addressing homelessness, affordable housing, and improving public safety through initiatives like therapeutic courts and diversion programs. He announced the region's preparation for the 2026 World Cup, highlighting the economic impact and the establishment of fan zones, including one in Tacoma.

City Manager Sugg highlighted a few of the many services that the County provides for the City that are considered crucial and one that the City depends on, and that the County has reliably delivered year after year. He discussed ongoing sewer projects, including the use of ARPA funds to address areas still served by septic systems. Public Works Director Ecklund expressed his appreciation for the partnership, support and assistance the County Utility team has provided. With their assistance, the City was able to get a \$2M state grant. In addition, they were able to get the 67<sup>th</sup> sewer expansion project through the permit process quickly and in making sure that the City met the timeframe needed to get the ARPA.

City Manager Sugg touched on some of the challenges that the City needs assistance on relating to capacity restraints and interlocal agreements with the City of Tacoma. Community and Economic Development Director Briske noted that four housing projects are affected by this interlocal agreement and related that the County is trying to find work around for these, however, it leaves a level of uncertainty for the developers of these projects. The County has drafted a new ILA to resolve the paper capacity issue and is in its final stages of review before it gets sent to the City of Tacoma for review. Director Briske and Pierce County Utilities Manager Hartwig discussed the challenges and improvements needed in the commercial tenant improvement review process, including the need for faster reviews and better coordination with Pierce County Utilities. Mr. Hartwig explained the importance of grease interceptors for restaurants, addressing compliance issues and the potential for shared interceptors in certain circumstances.

Pierce County Executive Mello and Sustainable Resources Administrator Dicks discussed the future of Chambers Bay Golf Course, including potential revenue opportunities and improvements to the park and golf course.

## **COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS**

Mr. Pendleton led Council through a review and discussion of changes in Council assignments. The following changes were made to the assignment/representation matrix for 2025: Councilmember Worthington stepped down as representative to Rainier Communications Commission and was replaced by Mayor Figueroa, and Councilmembers McCluskey and Boykin's new appointments with National League of Cities' Small Cities Council were added. The rest of the assignments/representations remain the same.

**LUNCH BREAK** – Council took a 45-minute lunch break at 12:00 p.m. The meeting resumed at 12:45 p.m.

## **2025-2026 COUNCIL GOALS IMPLEMENTATION**

Recreation: Establish a recreation initiative to enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages with a focus on youth and seniors. Partner with organizations to develop tailored recreational solutions, provide ongoing parks maintenance support and program development.

Proposed outcomes for youth, senior recreation and specialized recreation programs are as follows:

- Council approval of partner ILA with Fircrest (2025)
- Council approval of school district ILA amendment (2025)
- Youth sport trial to begin with (softball/baseball/basketball)
- Council budgeted \$25K for 10 years (\$250K)
- Study potential senior recreation services (2025)
- Identify potential partners for senior recreation services
- Develop senior recreation services webpage
- Evaluate recreation programs for residents with special needs
- Review partnering with County
  - Program offerings: arts/leisure, camps, special events, fitness and sports, etc.
  - Metro Parks Tacoma, City of Puyallup, City of Sumner, City of Lakewood, PenMet Parks
  - \$20,000 total cost, approximately for 100 users (\$191/user)

City Manager Sugg provided an overview of Council's 2025-2026 goals which were adopted last summer. He indicated that the first goal, recreation, is a carryover from 2024 and will continue into the 2025-2026 goals implementation. In addition to youth recreation focus, senior recreation and specialized recreation were included.

City Attorney Kaser and Public Works Director Ecklund provided an update on the development of interlocal agreements with the school district and the City of Fircrest for youth recreation services, including potential costs and benefits for University Place residents. Director Ecklund also outlined plans to study and develop senior recreation services, including potential partnerships and resources for senior residents, as well as discussed the potential for partnering with Pierce County on specialized recreation programs for seniors and residents with special needs.

Attorney Kaser will finalize and send the draft interlocal agreement with the City of Fircrest for review and comments. Staff will also do a cost analysis to determine the bottom-line cost for the subsidy related to the recreation services agreement with the City of Fircrest. They will explore potential partnerships for senior recreation services and help develop additional resources for senior recreation services and arrange a presentation from Community Connection Place to inform Council about their current senior services and potential for expansion.

Economic Development: Foster economic development by prioritizing the diversification of city revenue and strategic collaboration on projects that enhance the quality of life for our residents and drive sustainable growth for our business districts.

Proposed outcomes for Economic Development are as follows:

- Promote City business districts (e.g., promotional video/social media)
- Expand awareness of existing businesses (business community profile)
- Wayfinding signs – construction begins 2025 (\$210K total \$160K was ARPA)
- Completion of 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Town Center business district plans (\$95K ea. ARPA)
- Work with partners to collaborate with the County (sewer utility) to improve permitting review times
- Design and participate in placemaking with owners of significant properties – i.e., Grandview Plaza, façade/frontage improvement program (\$30K)

Business Liaison Metcalf and Director Briske discussed the proposed outcomes for the City's economic development goals, including promoting business districts and expanding awareness of existing businesses through the implementation of wayfinding signs and promotional videos for each business district; improving permitting process; and plans for placemaking initiatives, including working with property owners on design and redevelopment projects. Director Briske provided an update on the construction of wayfinding signs for the business districts, with completion date expected in 2025.

Comments were provided with regards to exploring the use of social media to promote businesses and encourage patronage; exploring the business districts in collaboration with the City's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday; implementing a notification system to inform Council members about business closures in the City; data related to license growth; promotion of the 27<sup>th</sup> business district and its safety aspect; the importance of economic development and the 30<sup>th</sup> year celebration of University Place, highlighting the value of business participation; and the impact of wayfinding signs. Staff will evaluate to see if the \$30,000 budget for placemaking is sufficient and consider increasing it if necessary.

Health in All Policies: Integrate health considerations into policymaking through a "health in all policies" approach aligned with the Growth Management Act. Establish a checklist for staff and commissions to assess and report on legislative choices, utilizing defined health considerations to ensure comprehensive decision-making with a focus on University Place.

Proposed outcomes are as follows:

- Meet with TPCHD and review their work in this area
- Define health and its scope
- Develop U.P.-centric checklist (review with commissions for feedback)
- Update council bill form to show health in all policies consideration

City Manager Sugg discussed the health and wellness policies, focusing on meeting with the health department to define health and develop a checklist, and to update the Council Bill form to include health in all policies. Feedback from the commissions and the linear sequence of the plan is also needed. City Manager Sugg talked about the health policy checklist, comparing it to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and considering health impacts in decision-making processes.

Council expressed excitement about partnering with the health department, the potential outcomes and low-hanging fruit that could be implemented and noted the importance of considering the impact on peer groups and the quality of livability. City Manager Sugg remarked on the need for timelines to accomplish the goals, highlighting the importance of having an action plan and periodic updates to ensure progress.

Climate Action Plan: Develop a climate action plan, either stand-alone or as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Look at the intersection between climate action and public safety (wildland/urban interface, coastal properties) and seek solutions. Apply for and seek grant funding to address these issues.

Proposed outcomes are as follows:

- Identify statutory requirements
- Apply for the Dept. of Commerce Grant for the new Climate Resiliency Comprehensive Plan Element
- Develop a separate climate action plan (\$75K) that considers local goals, policies and strategies including, but not limited to:
  - EV charger strategy
  - City Hall building energy/battery backup

- Data and analysis of tree canopy, emissions, heat maps, climate impacted flooding
- Emergency management interface
- Public education, new webpage for climate action

Director Briske discussed the development of a climate action plan, including the integration of a climate resiliency element into the Comprehensive Plan. He highlighted the connection between emergency management and climate action and discussed the potential impacts of climate change on the community and the need for a living document to address these issues. He remarked on the importance of public education, hazard mitigation, and the potential for grants to support the plan and to fund the climate action initiatives.

Staff will apply for the state grant in July to fund the climate resiliency element of the Comprehensive Plan, develop a standalone climate action plan that includes details on EV charger strategy, tree canopy, emissions heat maps, and climate impact studies. Staff will also set up a new webpage for climate action activities and public education; will coordinate with the commissions to provide climate action information to the community; and ensure that climate action plan interfaces with the hazard mitigation plan.

Affordable Housing: Stimulate affordable housing development in U.P. by incentivizing developers to build condos, townhomes, and other alternative middle housing ownership opportunities. Prioritize the creation of attractive and accessible affordable housing options in the community.

Proposed outcomes are as follows:

- HB1110 compliance
- Continue implementation of Housing Action Toolkit
  - Consideration of R3 zone (gentle density)
  - Create cottage housing ordinance
  - Improve small-lot development standards
  - Pre-approved accessory dwelling unit plans (\$50K budgeted)
- Host development forum, partner with Lakewood
- Continued participation in SSH<sup>3</sup>P

Director Briske discussed the City's efforts to stimulate affordable housing, including the implementation of the Housing Toolkit, the potential creation of an R3 zone, and the development of a new cottage housing ordinance. He also noted the need to address issues with small-lot development standards and the pre-approved accessory dwelling unit plans. Director Briske mentioned the idea of hosting a development forum in partnership with Lakewood to hear from developers, finance experts, and real estate agents about barriers to development and potential solutions. This forum would help the City understand the challenges and opportunities in increasing housing availability.

### **30<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

City Manager Sugg discussed plans for the City's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration, including a two-day event (Friday, August 1, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Market Square, and Saturday, August 2, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at Cirque Park) with musical entertainment, an outdoor market, and various activities. He presented different options for the number of headliner bands and the inclusion of interactive arts and a skate jam.

Council provided feedback, stressing the value of including family-friendly activities, interactive arts, and contests to engage the community during the event. They suggested incorporating elements like a City booth, food trucks, opportunities for local businesses to participate, inclusion of a time capsule, more interactive contests, and the possibility of a fireworks show. They also discussed the importance of having a strong MC to keep the event engaging and well-coordinated. Council also discussed the need for shuttle services, parking coordination, and a detailed breakdown of costs for the 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration, and to consider the possibility of sponsorships to offset some of the expenses. Councilmember McCluskey relayed the interest of the U.P. Historical Society in participating in the celebration by displaying the City's history and artifacts. The group offered to maintain and repair the atrium and bring additional funding to the event.

Staff will provide a detailed breakdown of the \$28,000 costs for the movie in the park, including all the subcomponents; develop a plan for interactive community contests such as cake decorating, art, short-form video contest to generate interest in the event; identify and select a high-energy, UP-centric MC to ensure strong communications and engagement; plan and implement a shuttle service for the event to address parking issues and ensure accessibility; prepare a budget amendment for the event, considering a range of \$100,000 to \$150,000; and re-evaluate the event schedule to potentially start earlier in the day to allow more time for activities and engagement.

## **COUNCIL RULES**

Mayor Figueroa discussed the importance of reviewing the Council Rules annually to consider feedback from staff and Councilmembers. City Attorney Kaser led the discussion on the following sections of the Council Rules for potential changes to improve efficiency:

- Council Agendas (Review Procedure) – The process was clarified on how Council members can bring topics for discussion, including the legislative proposal process. Staff will check on the agenda setting/other provisions regarding the Mayor Pro Tem's authority to put an item on the agenda in the Mayor's absence. The legislative proposal process will be reflected in the Council Rules and the form will be revised to include a checkbox to indicate whether the proposal is for a study session, legislative action, or other purposes.
- Council Meeting Start/End – It was proposed to change Council Meeting start time from 6:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to allow for more discussion time and avoid late-night extension. The Council debated the pros and cons of this change. Council made no changes to the meetings' starting time and considered reviewing and possibly amending the rule regarding the point of order at 8:30 p.m. to align with the current practice.
- Council Comments/Reports (Time Limit?) – Relative to earlier comments above.
- Proclamations/Recognitions (Criteria and Process) - Concerns were raised about the current process for proclamations and recognitions, suggesting the need for a vetting process and clearer guidelines. The Council discussed the benefit of aligning the proclamations with the City's values and ensuring timely submissions. Staff to develop a detailed process for vetting and approving proclamations, including criteria for eligibility and a clear application process. A study session will be scheduled to discuss and finalize the new process, including the distinction between proclamations and recognitions.
- Presentations (Criteria and Process, Study Session v. Q&A) – No change of text. Council agreed to go back to the existing order of the presentations on the agenda.
- Appointment of Advisory Commissions (Interviews for Incumbent) – It was proposed to simplify the reappointment process for incumbents on advisory commissions by eliminating the need for a full application. Council discussed the importance of interviews and updating information for reappointments.
- Finance Committee (Full Council Quarterly Update, Special Meeting) – Council discussed the possibility of integrating the Finance Committee's quarterly updates into the regular council meetings as a study session item instead of holding separate Finance Committee meetings. They considered the benefits of this approach for better time management and information dissemination.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

City Manager Sugg thanked all the department heads and team members for their hard work and support, as well as the Councilmembers for a positive discussion and feedback. Mayor Figueroa thanked his colleagues for their time, candid comments and feedback.

**ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m. No other action was taken.

Submitted by:

Emy Genetia