CITY OF ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON
Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session
Date of Meeting January 13, 2003
Time of Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Place of Meeting Council Chambers, 101 North Pearl Street

Councilmembers Present: Collins, Lillquist, Perrie, Savidge, Sowards and Mayor Pro Tem Barry.

Mayor Bassett arrived at 7:30 p.m.

Others present were City Manager Barkley; Police Chief Richey; Community Development Director Witkowski; Planners Smith and Caspar; Deputy Clerk Keno and ten members of the audience.

KITTITAS COUNTY JAIL OPTIONS

County Commissioner Huston gave a historical overview of the planning process for a new jail and outlined the work performed by the Kittitas County Law and Justice Council on the project. Three sites under consideration include State Route 97, Currier Street and Cascade Way. All three sites are projected to cost $2.5-3 million to purchase and prepare for construction.

County Auditor Bowen outlined the options created by the Citizens Advisory Committee and the pros and cons of each option:

? Option 1: No Action

Positive – No major construction cost; no facility move

Negative – Legal and safety issues for staff and the public; probable state regulatory action for over crowding

? Option 2: Send long term prisoners to other facilities at a cost of $1 million +/- per year

Positive – Addresses immediate need; low short term cost

Negative – Not a long-term solution; existing facility still requires major remodel;

Bed rental costs will increase; available out of county space will decrease; transportation costs; exports money from Kittitas County

? Option 3: Remodel and expansion of current jail facility at est. cost of $16-28 million depending on square footage and design

Positive – Relieves overcrowding; increases officer safety; allows short term juvenile retention; keeps facility in downtown; prisoner exchange secured
Negative – Further expansion limited; increased construction cost

**Option 4: New off-site jail facility or Law & Justice Center at cost of $23-40 million**

Positive – Relieves overcrowding; addresses officer and public safety; allows short term juvenile retention; future expansion capabilities; prisoners exchange secured

Negative – High construction costs

The first two options are not viable—leaving options 3 (current site) and 4 (West Interchange area) for consideration. In answer to Council inquiry, the airport property is not a desirable site due to accessibility issues and the property’s proximity to CWU and residential areas. Additionally, the County cannot own the airport property.

The Board of County Commissioners will decide where the facility will be built. A bond election to fund the facility could appear on the ballot as soon as November 2003; however, spring 2004 is more likely. The Citizens Advisory Committee will make its report to the Board on January 21st.

Community Development staff expressed transportation concerns based on increased trip generation in the event the facility is split between the downtown and the West Interchange. Also, any major downtown business facility should be multi-story; there are no height restrictions in the downtown. The Comprehensive Plan does not address a Law & Justice Center; however, its Vision Statement stresses the maintenance of downtown as the center of identification for all the neighborhoods by retaining a strong mix of commercial, financial, governmental, judicial, professional, cultural, residential, and recreational activities. One audience member expressed environmental concerns about locating the facility at the West Interchange.

Council expressed its willingness to work with the County on this project. Commissioner Huston will provide Council with the minutes of the Commission’s meetings to keep them advised in the event Council wants to come forward with a recommendation. While Council consensus was a preference for keeping the jail downtown it acknowledged the limitations imposed by this site.

**PLANNING ISSUES**

Community Development Director Witkowski reviewed the list of planning issues scheduled for discussion. Issues include:

1. Combination of C-H and C-T zoning districts.
2. Expansion of medical/professional offices into non-office areas in the city.
3. Parking downtown and around town.
4. Arterial/collector based land use planning.
5. Extension of services in the north end to serve developing residential and potential commercial land uses.

6. Law and Justice Center.


Due to the short time remaining because of the jail presentation, issue 1 was chosen for discussion. As a result of Council’s recent decision to allow office uses in both the C-H and C-T zones, current uses in both zones are now similar although some major differences exist. These differences include issues relating to repair and construction services businesses, gas stations, adult entertainment establishments, vehicle sales, supermarkets, drive-in businesses, mini-warehouses, building height, on and off-premise signs, and landscaping. The majority of the discussion centered around potential development at the West Interchange. The City currently has no vision in its Comprehensive Plan for this area. The further extension of utilities in the West Interchange area for the relocation of some businesses is advancing development.

Council consensus was to ask the Planning Commission to review land use policies in the West Interchange and present Council with a recommendation for service needs in that area. The appropriateness of a sub area plan should be considered. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to Council on combining the C-H and C-T zoning districts. Council would like another study session in a couple of months to discuss the remaining issues.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Lillquist Affirmed

______________________________________ Mayor

ATTEST: __________________________________

City Clerk