CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Meeting

Date of Meeting
July 31, 2006

Time of Meeting
7:00 p.m.

Place of Meeting
Council Chambers, 501 North Anderson Street

ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Barry, Bassett, Carlson, Lillquist, Niner, Perrie and Mayor O’Brien.

Others present were City Manager Barkley; Community Development Director Witkowski; Planner Smith; Animal Shelter Manager Hake; Planning Technician Johnson; Deputy Clerk Keno; and 40 plus members of the audience.

The purpose of the special meeting is to provide time for Councilmember discussion and consideration of comprehensive plan issues and draft policy language. Council is scheduled to complete fine tuning of the draft comprehensive plan as well as discuss its rationale for selecting Alternative #3 – West Interchange as the preferred land use scenario.

Chapter 6 – Capital Facilities and Utilities

Council reviewed proposed language from staff for insertion in Chapter 6 under Wastewater.

Page 152 of 227 (Page 11):

Council consensus was to add the following language as an issue under Wastewater:

“Compliance with regulatory federal storm water guidelines may result in the need to revise storm water management requirements and adopt funding strategies to address these requirements.”

Page 151 of 227 (Page 11):

Council reviewed proposed revised language from staff for insertion in Chapter 6 to add a narrative for the Animal Shelter between Police and Fire/EMS (Page 151 of 227; Page 10). Council consensus was to use the language from the handout to create a narrative for the Animal Shelter. Additionally, Council consensus was to add the bolded language from the handout as an issue under the Animal Shelter. The Animal Shelter was added as an Issue to the draft chapter at Council’s July 11, 2006 special meeting.

Chapter 9 – Economic Development

Debbie Strand, Executive Director of the Economic Development Group of Kittitas County, reported on the revised draft chapter 9 – Economic Development which was sent to Council in its July 28th Friday mail packet. The revised draft incorporates the suggestions of the Economic Development Group of Kittitas County as well as Councilmember Niner’s July 10, 2006 suggestions. In answer to
Council inquiry, Ms. Strand will provide Council a red-lined version of the draft chapter showing the changes and deletions. Council discussed the possibility of reviewing the chapter at its August 7th regular meeting. After discussion, Council consensus was to substitute the revised draft Chapter 9 received from the Economic Development Group for the current chapter in the draft comprehensive plan.

Council consensus was to change the word “monitor” to “evaluate” where it appears in the chapter:

Goal ED-1, Policy B, Program 2 AND

Goal ED-1, Policy B, Program 3

Chapter 11 – Historic Preservation

At its July 11, 2006 special meeting Council split Goal HP-3, Policy B into two policies leaving Policy C without any programs. Council reviewed and discussed proposed program language suggested by staff and included in Council’s July 28th Friday mail packet. Council asked questions of staff.

Page 224 of 226 (Page 4):

Council consensus was to add a Program 1 to Goal HP-3, Policy C to read as follows:

“Create a program that uses existing reinvestment incentives and institute other tax relief programs, such as new market housing credits or property tax deferrals, and/or building fee credits to encourage development of housing in the CBD in a manner consistent with the area’s historic character.”

Council discussed the need to define the boundaries of the South and West Interchanges to establish a baseline for future discussions including Council’s rationale for selection of Alternative #3—West Interchange.

Designation of South Interchange Boundary

Designate the South Interchange Boundary as being from Mountain View Avenue Bassett South to I-90 and Canyon Road East to Bull Road.

Council discussion.

Vote on motion. Bassett, Lillquist, Niner, O’Brien(Yes)

Barry, Carlson, Perrie(No)

Motion approved

Further Council discussion on boundaries.
Designation of West Interchange Boundary

Designate the West Interchange Boundary to be as delineated on the map basically Niner going south from the railroad tracks following the city limits on the west end to I-90 following along south and east of the city limits back to the railroad including the Newhall property.

Council discussion.

Vote on motion. Affirmed

On September 5, 2006, the City Council accepted the following definition that City Manager Barkley provided to the Council to be inserted into the minutes as a revised definition of the West Interchange boundary: from a point at the intersection of the BNSF Railroad right-of-way and the western city limits, as of this date, proceeding south along the existing city limit line until it intersects with the right-of-way for Interstate Highway 90, then proceeding south easterly until intersection with the southerly right of way boundary of the University Way right-of-way, then proceeding easterly to a point formed by the intersection of a line extending westerly from the south boundary of the Newhall property, then continuing easterly until said line intersects with the BNSF Railroad right-of-way, then continuing northwesterly along the southern edge of the BNSF Railroad right-of-way to the point of beginning.

Rationale for Selection of Alternative #3 – West Interchange

Councilmembers discussed their individual rationales for selecting or not selecting Alternative #3 – West Interchange.

Councilmembers supporting Alternative #3—West Interchange cited the following:

The Lamb property at the West Interchange is ready for development;

While there is concentrated vehicle use at both interchanges, there is more traffic and congestion at the South Interchange;

The West Interchange is ready for development now; the South Interchange will develop based on market demand after the West Interchange comes on line;

The West Interchange property, exclusive of additional properties requested for inclusion by property owners this evening, is in the City limits; a large junk of the South Interchange property is not in the City limits;

The West Interchange has less environmental impacts;
The West Interchange has businesses and city services in place (streets, utilities, sidewalks);

Big Box retail should go at the West Interchange. The South Interchange with its assets of ponds and creeks to draw people into town from I-90 is ideal for office/business park or mixed use residential development; and

Some councilmembers believe selection of Alternative #3 best represents the wishes of the majority of the people in the community.

Councilmembers supporting Alternative #4---South Interchange cited the following:

The need for one Central Business District—not two or three;

Dolarway Road should be utilized for traffic serving the industrial zoned property in the area of the West Interchange—not regional retail;

How much property is needed to start with? According to the Lamb proposal, only two large box stores are needed. The City already has Fred Meyer—only one additional large retailer is needed;

Traffic should be kept at the South Interchange to eliminate additional congestion throughout the town;

Speed should not be more important than accuracy; and

The City has a mandate (per studies) to protect the Central Business District and downtown Historic District.

Council discussed its rationale for not choosing Alternatives #1, #2 and #5. Council consensus was these Alternatives were not viable options. Alternative #5 (West Ellensburg Park property) was added to the draft document by a citizen. Transportation issues for this Alternative are insurmountable due to the barrier of the railroad tracks.

Alternatives #1 and #2 for downtown big box regional development in the Central Business District or alternatively, no additional big box development--just naturally occurring regeneration of businesses were discounted by Council for the following reasons:

The number of small, individually owned parcels downtown that would need to be consolidated is a hurdle to development;

Downtown property owners do not have the desire or interest to work together;

A number of downtown property owners are not willing to sell their property for a reasonable price and waiting is not feasible;

The City does not have the financial reserves to invest in downtown properties and take the risk for
development to occur;
Traffic concerns are valid for Alternatives #1 and #2; and
Retailers want to come here sooner rather than later.
Council consensus is regional retail or big box will develop in Kittitas County; it would be best for the City and surrounding communities if the development occurs in Ellensburg. In addition to Ellensburg benefiting from the increased tax base, the City would have control over the design of the development.
Rather than using the West Interchange for regional retail, the Council adopt Alternative Niner #4 for designating land use with first doing a subarea analysis to develop regional retail south of the interchange.
Council discussion. The intent of the motion is to substitute Alternative #4 for Alternative #3.
Vote on motion. Barry, O’Brien, Carlson, Perrie(No)
Lillquist, Niner, Bassett(Yes)
Motion defeated
The west interchange subarea be defined on the land use map without designating land Lillquist uses at this time. The following note would be made on the map:
“Land uses, which shall include regional commercial land uses, in this area will be designated pursuant to development of a subarea plan.” AND
Amend Land Use Goal 1, Policy B, Program 3 to read:
“Prepare a West Interchange subarea plan to identify an internal transportation system, appropriate site development standards, and designate appropriate land uses, to include regional commercial land uses”.
Council discussion.
Vote on motion. Barry, Bassett, Lillquist, Niner, Perrie, O’Brien(Yes)
Carlson(No)
Motion approved
Staff/Council discussion. Based on Council’s action, staff will revise the draft land use map to reflect
the west interchange boundary as defined by Council and remove the special designations from the current draft.

The public comment cards distributed to and collected from the audience during the meeting were reviewed.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 9:35 p.m. Carlson

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: ________________________________ City Clerk