ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Barry, Lillquist, Niner and Mayor O'Brien.

Excused absence: Councilmembers Bassett, Carlson and Perrie.

Others present were City Manager Barkley; City Attorney Pidduck; Parks & Recreation Director Case; Police Chief Miller; Deputy Clerk Keno; and nine members of the audience.

PROPOSED AMENDED LANGUAGE DEFINING GENERAL COMMERCIAL FOR DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

At its February 5, 2007 regular meeting Council requested staff bring back proposed definition language for the General Commercial Land Use District for inclusion in the draft comprehensive plan. Staff has provided suggested definition language for Council to consider incorporating into the draft that will be considered at the public hearing.

That the language represented on page 1 of Council's agenda be replaced for the Lillquist language on page 49, Chapter 4 of the draft comprehensive plan describing general commercial. Affirmed

CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

At its February 5, 2007 meeting Council set a public hearing for March 5, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. for final action on the draft Comprehensive Plan. At the time of setting the hearing the date was tentative based upon Councilmember Bassett's recent illness. Staff reports Councilmember Bassett is making good progress and expects to be able to participate in the March 5 public hearing.

Council confirmed the public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan will take place at the March 5, 2007 regular meeting.

PARK IMPACT FEES

Parks and Recreation Director Case distributed a memorandum on park impact fees. He summarized the history of park impact fees in the City, detailing how the fees were established and the involvement of the Impact Fee Advisory Committee. The current interim park impact fee, adopted July 5, 1994 by the City Council, is set at $612.50 for single family units and $525.00 for multi-family units.

Since 1994 the cost of developing park land has increased. Council reviewed cost estimates from
1994 versus proposed development costs in 2007 based upon a $35,000 per acre land cost. Some councilmembers felt this per acreage cost was low. In addition, the cost of landscaping, infrastructure and design fees have all increased substantially.

Director Case reviewed park impact fee policies from other municipalities across the state. Staff attempted to use comparable cities, however, in some circumstances information was received from municipalities with larger populations than Ellensburg. In addition, several cities contacted do not have impact fees.

Council reviewed a worksheet breaking down the revenues and expenditures in the Park Acquisition Fund - Fund #160 from January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2006. In addition to impact fees this Fund includes grant monies received from the County and Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) as well as contributions from the School District and the Vehicle Fuel Tax. The City needs to be able to show where the impact fees are being spent. The Finance Department has been asked to update the park impact fees distribution from 2004 through 2006. Council will receive an annual report on park impact fee expenditures from this point forward. In answer to Council inquiry, the fee is collected at the building permit stage.

Council discussed ways to finance park development, park maintenance costs, the current park plan and meeting goals in terms of field development. Staff recommended Council may wish to consider a draft ordinance that would adjust park impact fees for neighborhood park development in the Northwest and Southeast areas of the City where growth is occurring. The City needs to develop a model that will support the collection of park impact fees and show how the fees will be used.

Council consensus was that an increase in the park impact fee is needed and requested staff provide recommendations to make park impact fees equitable. Council liked the idea of a park impact fee based on the property value or an inflationary factor. Council briefly discussed critical areas and their potential recognition as part of a park-type setting.

**DISCUSSION OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SALES TAX**

In 2003 the State of Washington adopted RCW 82.14.450 (sales and use tax for counties and cities). The law allows the County Commissioners to place a proposition before the county voters to increase the sale and use tax collection rate for the County by three-tenths of one percent (three-tenths of a penny). The purpose of this law is to allow for local governments in the State of Washington a funding source for the increasing challenges associated with local criminal justice needs.

Police Chief Miller presented an overview of the Kittitas County Criminal Justice System and its struggle to maintain existing services in light of the 1999 passage of Initiative 695 which eliminated the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and the cyclical nature of Federal funding. In addition, there is no capacity to expand past basic services. The crime rate in Kittitas County is the fifth highest among the 39 counties in the State; Ellensburg's crime rate has grown by 39% over the past ten years. This
increase is attributable to several factors including the reemergence of methamphetamine use; the Department's limited ability to conduct drug investigations; a 22% increase in population over ten years; and a rising rental population as opposed to owner-occupied housing.

Law enforcement services and their costs must be balanced with other services the City provides. Criminal justice costs consume general fund dollars. The Department's portion of general fund dollars has increased by 73% over the last ten years while the Department has grown by three officers, 15%, over the same time frame. A significant portion of the yearly increases come from the dramatic increase in health care premiums and contractual obligations which reflect market rate wage adjustments. Additionally, jail costs have risen by 59% since 1999.

Council viewed a PowerPoint presentation entitled "A Sustainable Funding Plan for Public Safety in Kittitas Valley."

The Kittitas County Conference of Governments (KCCOG) and the Kittitas County Law and Justice Council voted to bring this sales tax initiative to the voters in 2007. Passage of the initiative would put the City's sales tax rate at 8.0% (currently 7.7%) which is lower than the 8.2% state average. If approved by the voters, staff estimates the City would receive an estimated $587,900 in criminal justice sales tax revenue, based on 2005 projections from the State of Washington Office of Financial Management. This funding would allow the Department to implement some of the recommendations presented in the 2004 Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Public Safety (WRICOPS) study, reduce the Department's dependence on general fund resources, put more police officers on the street, increase service levels and continue community partnerships.

The COG is tentatively planning a County-wide meeting on this topic for March 8, 2007. Staff provided for Council consideration a sample resolution requesting the County Commissioners place this issue on the 2007 ballot.

Council briefly discussed some legislative proposals under consideration that if adopted would financially impact local governments.

Council consensus was to wait on endorsing the proposed sample resolution pending input from the other cities in Kittitas County.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 9:06 p.m. Barry Affirmed

________________________________________ Mayor

ATTEST: ______________________________ City Clerk