CITY OF ELLENSBURG
Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session

Date of Meeting: May 12, 2008
Time of Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Place of Meeting: Council Chambers, 501 North Anderson Street

Councilmembers Present: Bassett, Bottcher, Niner, O'Brien, and Mayor Lillquist

Councilmembers Absent: Miller, Tabb

Others present were City Manager Barkley; Community Development Director Smith; Deputy Clerk Keno; and approximately ten members of the audience.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BIKE RACKS DOWNTOWN UNDER ELLENSBURG DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION'S 2ND ANNUAL BIKE RACK INSTALLATION PROGRAM

The Ellensburg Downtown Association (EDA) is requesting Council approval of two bike rack proposals for the EDA's 2nd annual art bike rack installation scheduled for Friday, May 16, 2008. The EDA has worked in conjunction with the Public Works Department to ensure the bike racks meet safety standards for the Public Works Department and the public. Both bike racks are fully funded.

Grant request to approve bike racks for downtown. Bassett

Affirmed

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: WORKING TOGETHER

Ron Criddlebaugh, Executive Director of the Ellensburg Chamber of Commerce, presented an overview of the Chamber and what it does. The Chamber is a 501c(6) corporation whose primary function is to serve as an advocate representing the interests of businesses. The Chamber operates as the lead tourism agency for the City and contracts with the City for those services. It operates the visitor information center and receives funding through a 4% lodging tax. Mr. Criddlebaugh explained the organizational chart. The Chamber concentrates on four areas: 1) tourism; 2) business retention; 3) business recruitment; and 4) working with the City and County to improve customer service. The Chamber currently maintains two websites and will be adding a third website in June.

Mayor Lillquist cautioned against any discussions involving regional retail since there is an application pending before the Council.

Council asked questions of Mr. Criddlebaugh.

Aaron Zimmerman, Chamber Treasurer, spoke about business recruitment and the Chamber’s meeting with the Tri-Cities economic development representatives. Ann Anderson spoke about the work the Chamber does with existing businesses such as monthly luncheons, educational seminars,
networking opportunities, Leadership Ellensburg, and a gift certificate program. Marshall Madsen spoke about working with the City to achieve better customer service. Mr. Madsen spoke about the City’s lengthy permitting process. The Chamber made several recommendations: 1) the City Council should conduct exit interviews after the building permit is obtained; 2) the City could e-mail builders or developers when certain milestones are made in the permit review process; 3) the City should move towards in-house plan review or look into hiring a local company in Ellensburg as opposed to shipping the plans to Seattle; and 4) plans should be reviewed in their entirety to speed up the plan review process.

Council and Chamber representatives discussed opportunities for distribution and warehousing in the community, revisions to Light Industrial zoning, customer service standards, and welcoming efforts for new members in the community.

Community Development Director Smith spoke about customer service issues. City Manager Barkley spoke about the over-haul of the City’s SEPA and critical areas ordinances and the extra 35-day comment period on SEPA. The International Building Code is causing issues not only in Ellensburg but in other areas of the country. The template process for downtown buildings is proceeding ahead and staff hopes to have something to Council within the month. Community Development Director Smith advised Council the reworking of the Light Industrial Zone is still at the Planning Commission stage. Staff hopes to have a presentation for Council on the West Ellensburg development plan on either May 19th or June 2nd.

Council asked questions of staff. Individual council members discussed their visions for the Ellensburg business community. City Manager Barkley tied the discussions to the City’s adopted comprehensive plan.

**ADJOURN** Motion to adjourn at 9:08 p.m. O’Brien

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: __________________________

City Clerk