

## **PORT OF ANACORTES**

### **Minutes-Special Meeting**

**November 15, 2011**

The Port Commission of the Port of Anacortes held a Special Commission Meeting on November 15, 2011. The purpose of the meeting was for the Commission to attend a Chamber of Commerce sponsored "Community Roundtable" forum. This meeting was held at the Anacortes Public Library in Anacortes, Washington. No official action was taken.

In Attendance: Commission President Rubin, Commission Vice President Mooney, Commission Secretary Niver, Commissioner Hopley and Commissioner Short.

Also in attendance: Executive Director Hyde, and Executive Assistant Lindsey.

Commissioner Rubin called the Special Meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance. He noted that this meeting was an informal roundtable format to provide an opportunity for the Commission to interact with and hear from the community, and no action be taken. He introduced Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stephanie Hamilton who served as monitor for the meeting. Ms. Hamilton noted the Chamber was glad to partner with the Port in holding this meeting again for a third year. She invited the Commissioners to introduce themselves. Each Commissioner did so and included which district they represented.

Ms. Hamilton encouraged anyone asking a question or making a comment to please state their name and address for the Port records.

*1. Mrs. Virginia "Bunny" Heiner, 804 K Avenue, Anacortes, addressed the Commission in regards to parking. Mrs. Heiner stated she was surprised to learn the Port is buying more land for parking and inquired whether the parking policy passed earlier in the year by the Port Commission would remain in effect..*

Commissioner Short commented that the Port had no parking problems at the moment, but in looking at the Port's long-range plan and the current parking at the Cap Sante Boat Haven it was possible to run short. He noted the Port also acquires property for business use and believed that when property was available at an advantageous price the Port should purchase it. The parking policy is still in affect with need seen by the Commission to change it at this time.

Commissioner Rubin stated for the audience that each individual Commissioner was sharing their own opinions and that the Commission was not considering any actions as a board this evening. He noted the piece of property recently purchased by the Port is sited between the Boat Haven and adjacent to "Q" Avenue and it fit the Port's Comprehensive Plan, prompting the purchase decision.

Commissioner Mooney stated he was against selling or leasing parking spaces to non-adjacent businesses. He also noted he favored an increase in businesses and in acquiring more property to have it available for business development.

Commissioner Niver observed parking space was something the Port had to have, not necessarily something the Port wanted to have, explaining the Port wanted to develop properties to their highest and best use.

Commissioner Mooney noted that if anyone present had been to a function at the Transit Shed they would know the parking challenges faced there. He believed parking was needed there and elsewhere for business development.

*2. Mr. Hal Rooks, 1219 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Anacortes, also inquired about the piece of land recently purchased by the Port adjacent to the Cap Sante Boat Haven. Mr. Rooks noted he had attended most of the meetings during which the Commission discussed and adopted a parking policy. He thought it would be a shame to use the property only for parking and inquired what kinds of businesses the Port would consider for that property.*

Commissioner Mooney responded that the objective for buying the property was not necessarily for parking but for its proximity to the Boat Haven. He noted that the property would not instantly be used and was not designated for permanent parking. Commissioner Rubin agreed, and observed that possible use for parking was the only considered use the local newspaper reported on. He explained the Commission had also discussed purchase of the property to stimulate jobs and infrastructure at the marina. Commissioner Short noted the Commission had discussed keeping a section of the property as a dog run for Boat Haven customers. He believed possible future uses could include retail businesses and a multi-purpose conference center, all of which would require parking.

Commissioner Niver noted he would like to see the results gathered by the Anacortes Futures Project in determining the needs of Anacortes, and whether the Port could be involved in a non-competitive way with private businesses. He believed the findings of the Futures Project would be important in terms of marketing and growth decisions.

*3. Mr. Brian Geer, 4605 Glasgow Way, Anacortes, a member of the Anacortes City Council and on the Chamber Board of Directors, observed the Port Commission should be actively working with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Anacortes to find and set marketing and growth goals. He stated he appreciated the Port working to continue connectivity between the Boat Haven and the Central Business District and hoped the property recently purchased by the Port would assist in that effort.*

Commissioner Niver agreed. He recalled that the Port's 2008 Comprehensive Plan process a number of people talked about connectivity with just as many different views expressed as to what that entailed and how it was defined.

*Mr. Geer noted the Cap Sante Boat Haven is the third most used marina in the state and connectivity was needed to bring people from their boats to the downtown.*

Commissioner Hopley explained that the property purchase was opportunity driven at a good price and that parking was not a deciding factor. He noted the Port would be going through a Comprehensive Plan update in the near future to reflect property acquisitions and that process will offer another opportunity for public input.

Commissioner Rubin noted an update to the Comprehensive Plan would most likely occur in the spring.

*4. Mrs. Robin Pestarino, 810 "E" Avenue, Anacortes, addressed the Commission and questioned Commissioner Niver as to whether he meant the Port would not be moving forward with development of its marina properties until after the results of the Anacortes Futures Project and the Buxton study were complete..*

Commissioner Niver responded that the Port has a Comprehensive Plan and will follow that plan when considering development on Port properties. He clarified that Anacortes' overall development issues should be handled by the City. He noted that if the Port decided to market property for a specific use it would be advisable to work with the City.

*Mrs. Pestarino noted the Port-owned Anacortes Airport comprised 26 acres.*

Commissioner Niver affirmed that all of the currently usable acreage at the Airport was under lease. Commissioner Mooney explained the City had placed restrictions on the Airport. Commissioner Rubin noted the Port will begin work on updating its Airport Master Plan, a two-year process, in January of 2012.

Executive Director Hyde explained there were about 4 acres available in the Airport's South East corner; however the acreage is an embankment and would require some adjustment before leasing.

In regards to the Cap Sante Boat Haven, Commissioner Short believed the upland areas should include a coffee shop, a small nautical supply store, not as large as West Marine, but convenient to the Boat Haven. He believed having these amenities would increase pedestrian traffic, bring boaters up from their boats and enhance operations at the Boat Haven.

Commissioner Mooney noted the Port has three designated future building sites in the West and North ends of the Boat Haven.

*5. Mr. Mark Bunzel, 11004 Biz Point Lane, Anacortes, and a board member for the Chamber of Commerce applauded the Commission for allowing the rental of the Transit Shed. He noted the Futures Project had explored the need for a large meeting venue, but questions remained about such a facility being economically feasible, The Transit Shed with up to 34 events scheduled has parking issues, and some infrastructure upgrades, such as restroom facilities need upgrades. Mr. Bunzel noted the Chamber of Commerce likes that The Transit Shed is at the end of Commercial Avenue since events there bring people to the downtown area.*

Commissioners Mooney stated he would like to see the Transit Shed floor leveled and acknowledged the need for more restrooms.

Commissioner Rubin noted the Commission had discussed the Transit Shed and the challenges and issues included in using the rustic facility. Of these, he believed the biggest to be zoning. The facility is located in an industrial area where the nearby ship yard does work such as sandblasting and painting. Commissioner Rubin saw the Transit Shed's use for events as temporary and hoped private business would see the need in the community and build a facility,

Commissioner Hopley agreed the Commission saw use of the Transit Shed facility as temporary, but believed in reality its use was becoming seen as permanent. He explained that if a water-dependant use for the facility came along it would have priority

and that the prolonged temporary use for events could frighten off those who might have an interest in the Transit Shed for business development. Commissioner Hopley agreed that additional bathrooms were needed. While the Transit Shed use for events was not a profitable one for the Port, he saw the impacts from people coming into the downtown area as a financial contribution to the community and wished to see that documented.

Commissioner Niver also saw the current use as temporary. He noted a problem in the building of another private facility was that no private business could compete with the current fees charged by the Port. He saw the only great value in the event use of the Transit Shed was it demonstrated the need for such a facility in Anacortes.

*6. Mr Pat Barrett, owner of Barrett Financial, 1019 "Q" Avenue, Anacortes stated he likes the Transit Shed facility and appreciated the Port making it available despite the need for bathroom upgrades. In regards to the Boat Haven, Mr. Barrett believed with the replacement of docks E & F with larger docks, boats 30 feet and under were getting priced out of the marina. He stated he spoke in this capacity on behalf of the Small Boat Center and boating community. Mr. Barrett noted the Small Boats Center appreciated the Port working with them on their lease and with some problems with the P/Q dock hoist for small vessels. He also thanked the Commission for their vision that the small boating community is good for Anacortes and the business community.*

*7. Mrs. Robin Pestarino addressed the Commission once again and inquired whether there were any plans to move the Port's offices.*

Executive Director Hyde responded that the Port is doing a space analysis of the Transit Shed at this time. Commissioner Niver noted that a permit for a facility of its type would not be attainable today.

Moderator Hamilton interjected that she and been using the building for 18 years as an event organizer and had seen the Port make some upgrades but without first asking and listening to what people would like to see improved, such as using the name "Transit Shed" for example. While she appreciated the Port's partnership she wished to be part of the process for Transit Shed improvements.

Commissioner Rubin observed the facility was not without difficulty, with an annual survey of Port staff noting complaints about noise, dust, and fumes, which he found problematic. He explained that Executive Director Hyde had solved some of these issues by allowing staff to telecommute or relocate to the Boat Haven office as needed.

Executive Director Hyde noted there had been discussion at one time about the Port having offices near the new Marine Technical Center. However the Center is doing so well and they may look to expand.

*Mr. Mark Bunzel addressed the Commission a second time. Mr. Bunzel believed there was a need to create a plan for the Transit Shed and thought that should be a Port objective for 2012. He noted he understood the economics and cautioned against making too much of an investment in any sort of new facility.*

Commissioner Mooney noted the Port has a variety of advisory boards for its operating areas and suggested having one for the Transit Shed. Commissioner Niver recalled that development from a sometime use to now nearly every weekend use without a plan was evident.

*Mr. Bunzel stated that as a citizen, he was asking for the Commission to develop a plan for the Transit Shed.*

Commissioner Niver observed that the Port would need to open its Comprehensive Plan to do so. Commissioner Short noted the input received tonight was good. In regards to the Port's offices he explained that some parts of the building are not insulated. The Port is currently in the process of putting in insulation, new windows and an HVAC system which will help to eliminate part of the problems for employees.

Commissioner Niver noted that in the Port's development agreement with Dakota Creek Industries the Port understood the dry dock would be moved, but they have not yet done so at this point and it appeared might not.

Commissioner Hopley observed that as long as the Commission considered the Transit Shed to be for temporary use there was not much funding available.

*Mr. Brian Geer addressed the Commission for a second time. He stated he appreciated the Commission attending the roundtable this evening, for opening and cleaning up the waterfront, and for creating jobs and opportunity. He hoped the demand for the Transit Shed and issues regarding it would not overshadow the operations and needs of the Port's marine terminal tenants since he believed the waterfront jobs were more important. He hoped the Port would not wait for the City, but proceeded to use its flexible Comprehensive Plan and hoped the Port would stay aggressive in developing the Boat Haven and continuing the connection between it and the downtown area. He stated the Port is a big part of the economy of the City and that he would always be in favor of jobs with no negative impacts from zoning changes.*

*Mrs. Heiner addressed the Commission for a second time as well. She noted she found the dry dock used by Dakota Creek Industries at Pier 1 beautiful and often brought guests down to see it, and moved to Anacortes in part for the character of its working waterfront community.*

*8. Ms. Kristi Gabrielse, 1212 Hartford Avenue, Anacortes, President of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Commission. She agreed that the dry dock was an attraction and suggested that a viewing platform be built so that there could be a better view of the industrial activities for visitors. She noted that Tacoma has done this. Ms. Gabrielse observed that the esplanade around the Boat Haven was beautiful, but the Port activity at the end of Commercial Avenue was also attractive in a different way.*

*9. Mr. Ian Slone, 2302 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Anacortes, owner of Anacortes Rigging, addressed the Commission. Mr. Slone noted he had been a resident of Anacortes for almost 6 years and wished to echo the comments made about the interest in the shipyard and dry dock. He believed the working waterfront made Anacortes what it is, and a much more complex community than it appears. Mr. Slone observed there were a lot of small and large businesses in Anacortes. He explained in his work he is frequently out on the water and the shipyard operations and dry dock are always of interest to people. As regards the Transit Shed, Mr. Slone voiced appreciation for its rustic feel and would not invest in many upgrades considering its location.*

*Mr. Pat Barrett addressed the Commission once more. Speaking in regards to properties, he inquired whether the Commission had any more discussion about the DNR Property at the south end of Fidalgo Bay.*

Commissioner Rubin noted the Commission's discussion of that property was about two years ago, with the Commission deciding not to explore any options for the property. Commissioner Niver noted this was due in part to the interests of adjacent property owners, and Executive Director Hyde observed there were multiple proposals for the property. Commissioner Rubin further explained that the MJB Corp and the City of

Anacortes are neighboring owners of the property and would have precedence in regards to the property. Commissioner Niver explained that the property is in need of environmental cleanup and wasn't the same situation for the Port as the Seafarers' Memorial Park, which was owned by the Port and for which the Port and the Department of Ecology were able to obtain state funds and settlements from prior owners to fund the cleanup. The Port used its available environmental funds for needed cash flow for the project, not leaving much for discretionary spending. Commissioner Niver noted over the next five years the Port has a large number of maintenance projects that will take precedence.

*Mr. Barrett expressed it would be nice for another government agency, such as the Port or the City, to obtain the property from the state of Washington and the DNR and develop it for public access rather than restrict its use as a private owner might do.*

Port Executive Director Hyde explained the zoning of the property is industrial and the DNR looks at it as waters of the state that have been filled and that coverage would need to be mitigated for as well as clean-up performed.

Commissioner Rubin noted that ownership by private industry could mean jobs for the community and while he supported public access he would not want to hinder a private industry who had the funds needed to assist in the redevelopment of the property.

*Mr. Bunzel noted that he had attended and been a speaker at the recent Washington Public Ports Marina Conference in LaConner and reviewed various northwest marinas. The most popular of these among boaters in our region is Roche Harbor with 18,000 boat nights, followed by Friday Harbor with 14,000 boat nights, and Cap Sante Boat Haven was third with 13,000 boat nights. Mr. Bunzel applauded the Port for making the improvements to the Boat Haven and for competitive fuel pricing, making it a high choice of boaters. He noted that Roche Harbor built their numbers by hosting 34 boating rendezvous last year, and encouraged the Port to look to at marketing rendezvous in promotion of the Boat Haven. Roche Harbor also has "party barges", dock floats that can be moved to create more gathering space for boaters, and saw them as a tool to attract business. Mr. Bunzel observed the great cooperative effort of the Port and Chamber in pulling in the Trawlerfest and Latitudes and Attitudes group events.*

Commissioner Short noted he had looked at a couple of designs for activity floats and shared them with the Commission. He agreed that transient boaters provide the biggest profit for the Port's investment dollars, and that marketing efforts and amenities those groups would enjoy, such as a coffee and/or ice cream shop, should be readily available at the Boat Haven, which would enhance the perception of Anacortes as a preferred destination.

Commissioner Niver observed that connectivity is a two-way street and he felt it would be better to advertise that the Boat Haven was in such close proximity to the downtown.

*Mr. Barrett concurred, noting that a coffee shop was not so much an amenity the Port should provide, but rather the community.*

Commissioner Niver recalled that at the first roundtable meeting two years ago, a member of the business community told the Commission that the Port was competing with private business. He noted it was important for the community to inform the Port if they believed this was happening. He explained that Port Resolution No. 1226 provided

a policy for ideas, proposals, or concerns to be taken to the Executive Director who is authorized by the Commission to review them.

*9. Mrs. Sharene Elander, 1406 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Anacortes addressed the Commission and noted she was very involved in a Grand Banks boating group and that to market to that group a marina needs to provide facilities for meals, meeting and so on.*

Commissioner Short saw amenities at the Boat Haven as not pulling people away from downtown, but rather bringing a new group of people to the marina as an attraction, and this would spill over into the community.

*Mr Slone noted with shops such as Calico Cupboard and West Marine close by, the Port did not need to add those types of amenity at the Boat Haven.*

*Ms. Gabrielse agreed, noting that as a downtown merchant, sales and interest by at her store attributed to transient guest boaters from the marina was significant. She praised the Port staff for meeting visitors at the dock with a smile, directed people to services, and made their visit pleasant.*

Executive Director Hyde noted the Port is going to include concierge service for its rendezvous groups next year and was contacting boating groups to promote this service.

*Mr. Slone noted the new E & F Docks had larger slips and voiced concern that smaller boaters would be squeezed out. He was also disappointed there was no public ramp in the Boat Haven..*

Commissioner Niver explained that he was in his tenth year as a Commissioner and that the question of slip configuration was debated for a long time before it was adopted, as was the absence of a public ramp in the Boat Haven, and that both were included in the Port's Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Rubin observed that any new ramp would have to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In regards to the slip configuration, he explained that even if placed in larger slips, visiting smaller boats pay for moorage by boat length as opposed to permanent customers who pay by slip size. The Port also installed a small craft hoist last year to assist in launching small boats.

Executive Director Hyde observed that you can place two 20 foot boats in a 40 foot slip, but not vice versa.

Commissioner Short noted the Port also offers a get 12 months moorage for the price of 11 when paid in advance for the year. He agreed that he would like to see a 22' ramp for small boaters to self launch for a small fee.

Ms. Hamilton thanked the members of the community, those present from the Chamber and the Port Commissioners for attending.

*Mr. Bunzel stated that he had visited over 120 marinas in the last one and one half years and was incredibly proud of the community and the Port had done in Anacortes.*

*Mr. Vic Childs, 2301 C Avenue, Anacortes, noted the 12 for 11 program was too large an amount to pay in advance for many and that he would prefer a pay for twelve consecutive months get the 13<sup>th</sup> free type of program instead. He noted that locally, dry storage was filling up quickly, rather than pay for in water moorage.*

Commissioner Niver observed the Port's job is to represent the public as a whole and not just plan for facilities in promotion of tourism. He noted the Port did this with lots of input from the public for its Comprehensive Plan and was seeing that in the Futures Project as well.

Commissioner Mooney believed the Commission needed to look at property acquisition in order to have an inventory for availability.

Hearing no one else who wished to address the Commission, Commissioner Rubin thanked everyone for attending and stated the Commission had received a number of things to consider in the next year.

With no other business to discuss at this time, Commissioner Mooney moved to adjourn. Commissioner Short seconded the motion. Commissioner Rubin called for a vote on the motion, which carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 P.M.

**Attest:**

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Keith Rubin, President

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Pat D. Mooney, Vice President

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Ray Niver, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
William L. Short, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Hopley, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Johnson Lindsey, Executive Assistant  
November 15, 2011