

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY OBSERVER REPORT

By Lydia Zepeda

City of Tacoma City Council Telephone meeting

May 12, 2020

Present: Woodards, Beale, Blocker, Hines, Hunter, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker

Public Comments are only permitted via written comments submitted to cityclerk@cityoftacoma.org by 4:00 p.m. May 12.

There were five public comments on Tide Flats ORD28671, none of the comments were read.

Items filed with the City Clerk

Minutes of the Greater Tacoma Regional Convention Center Public Facilities District Board, January 16, 2020.

Consent Agenda - approved unanimously

Minutes of the City Council special meeting, April 24, 2020.

Minutes of the City Council meeting, April 28, 2020.

Minutes of the City Council special meeting, May 1, 2020.

RES40601 sets 1:30 pm Thursday, June 25, 2020, hearing on the request to vacate a portion of the dead-end segment of East "T" Street, also referenced as East "R" Street, to develop and construct a private entrance into Swan Creek Park.

Resolutions

RES40602 declares as surplus and authorizes the sale of 4.74 acres of Tacoma Water property, located in unincorporated Pierce near Bonney Lake, to Nash Cascadia Verde LLC, for the amount of \$125,000. The site will be used by the buyer to install pipeline to convey stormwater from residential lots developed uphill to a retention pond downhill. The purchase agreement was signed February 13, 2020 with the closed stipulated as April 10, 2020. **Approved unanimously.**

RES40603 amends the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan, to reprogram uncommitted Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Program funds (HOME); allocates additional funding received under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; amends Citizen Participation Plan, to reduce the amount of time for public comment and public availability of documents to five days if related to COVID-19 relief; and lifts the 15% public service cap for 2019-2020 CDBG funds.

- a. Specifically, the funds include \$2.5 million in uncommitted CDBG funds, \$206 thousand in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), \$1.3 million in HOME Investment Partnership Programs (HOME), \$1.5million in additional CDBG Coronavirus, \$759 thousand in additional ESG Coronavirus.
- b. These funds are allocated to provide \$1.5 million for rental assistance, \$645 thousand for emergency income payments, \$645 thousand for business emergency services assistance,

\$197 thousand for administration and management and the \$759 thousand in ESG-CV for shelter.

- c. Reprogramming of CBDG funds allows the city to have access to HUD dollars. The lifting of the 15% public service cap permits a larger share of CBDG funds to help renters. CBDG cannot be used for rental assistance, but can be used for emergency income payments.
- d. The City's rental assistance program closed last week. Although approving this will increase funding for rental and emergency income assistance, they do not know when the programs will reopen. They want to evaluate to see if they need to adjust the programs.
- e. The reduction in public comment is only for COVID-19 programs to allow for expedited allocation of funds, the 30 days will remain for all existing programs.
- f. City staff have not determined whether the business emergency services assistance will be in the form of loans or grants to businesses. The city staff will bring back to council how best to allocate the money.
- g. See Report of the City Manager below for information on allocation of current funds for rental assistance.

A 10 minutes recess was requested by Mayor Woodard and approved by Council.

RES40603 Adopted unanimously.

First Reading of Ordinances

ORD28670 authorizes financing through a Local Agency Lease with the Office of the State Treasurer, to purchase equipment and other property to convert bio-gas into natural gas, and generate enough revenues to repay the financing.

- a. Sale of 20 year bonds to convert gas to eliminate 2000 tons GHG per year.
- b. Sale requires a pledge of city's bond capacity.
- c. Once repaid the conversion will generate money for Tacoma wastewater.

No questions by Council. **Final reading May 19.**

ORD28671 extends for six months the Tide Flats Interim Regulations, as originally approved by Amended Ordinance 28470 and extended by Ordinances 28542, 28583, and 28619. **May 19 final reading.** The current ordinance expires June 2.

- a. The ordinance expands public notification of heavy industrial use permits, prohibits new non-industrial use of the Port of Tacoma Manufacturing and Industrial Center, prohibits new residential development along Marine View Drive and Northeast Tacoma slopes, prohibits certain new heavy industrial uses.
- b. The ordinance was adopted in 2017 and has had 3 extensions.
- c. Sixteen people testified at the public hearing last week and they received 100 letters. The majority supported extension of the ordinance. Most of the testimony and letters related to fossil fuel industry. There were some concerns about risks to Northwest Detention Center; concerns about air quality, especially in light of poor air quality exacerbating risk of COVID-19; and some said the regulations were unnecessary and restricted innovation and investment.
- d. As part of the last extension, the Council requested a report on amount and distribution of fossil fuels through Tacoma. Apparently the contractors tasked with this were not able to do it and so they are attempting to collect this information inhouse.
 - (i) Rail transport of crude oil began in Washington in 2012. The State legislature enacted safety legislation in 2015 due to risk of oil spills.

- (ii) Oil travels through Washington state three ways: by vessel, rail, and pipelines. Tacoma is the home of the only oil refinery in Washington south of Anacortes.
- (iii) Rail brings oil to Washington from North Dakota, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Pipeline brings oil to Tacoma from Alberta and British Columbia. Oil passes in and out of the Port of Tacoma.
- (iv) Crude oil movement in Washington State increased between 2017 and 2019 by 10 million barrels, almost all by pipeline and rail.
- (v) City does not know how much oil is delivered to Tacoma or how much passes through it.
- (vi) City is unable to confirm how many rail cars with oil go through the city.

Community Forum - there were two comments regarding killer hornets, the comments were not read. **Woodards states she misses the Community Forum, so please send her your comments.**

Reports of the City Manager

The rental assistance program had 606 applications, 563 were entered into a lottery, the difference is due to ineligibility. Of those eligible, 56 were chosen by lottery and 16 by direct referrals; these 72 households will get rental assistance if they provide documentation. The city manager expects to begin fund allocation next Tuesday, May 19.

There will a more information provided about allocation of rental assistance funds at the Council on Friday May 15 at 2pm.

Mayor Woodards announced that the **City is now accepting donations to fund rental assistance**: 100% of the donations will go to some organization that uses a portion of the money to provide rental assistance.

Mayor Woodards noted that it was brought to her attention the **Council forgot to acknowledge Teacher Appreciation Week last week**. She declared that they would extend Teacher Appreciation Week another week to acknowledge teachers.

A **motion** was made that the Council go to **closed session** to discuss potential litigation. **Passed unanimously.**

The Council went into closed session at 6:02pm.