

**CITY OF OLYMPIA  
ISTHMUS BALLOT AD HOC COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
JUNE 1, 2009**

Committee members present: Mayor Doug Mah, Councilmembers Joe Hyer and Joan Machlis.

Mayor Mah called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon.

**Minutes.**

Councilmember Machlis moved, seconded by Councilmember Hyer, to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2009 meeting as submitted. Unanimously approved.

**Reports and Discussion Topics:**

Mayor Mah said that the purpose of today's meeting was to receive and discuss information requested at the May 20 meeting. He said he would also like to provide an opportunity for community members in attendance at the meeting to comment.

**1. Percival Landing.**

Linda Oestreich, Director, Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department, reported the following costs and funding commitments for Percival Landing Phase 1. She noted that Phase 1 does not include moorage and dredging (an estimated \$4.5 million additional cost), upland improvements in section A (an additional \$2 million investment), and future phases. She noted that Phase 1 is for improvements in the oldest portion of Percival Landing, which is in the worst condition.

Phase 1 Estimated Cost: \$15.1 million

Funding Commitments, as of June 1, 2009:

State legislative appropriation 2009/2010:	\$3 million
State Building for the Arts Grant:	\$250,000
State Heritage Resource Center Grant:	\$570,000
City of Olympia commitment	\$4 million

Funding Requests as of June 1, 2009 (notification sometime between fall 2009 and spring 2010):

Federal Congressional requests	\$3 million
Federal Transportation Reauthorization Funds	\$3million

Committee members noted that there is a potential funding gap for Phase 1 of \$7.28 million, if requested federal or other additional funds are not secured.

## **2. Heritage Park Fountain Block.**

Ms. Oestreich and Keith Stahley, Director, Olympia Community Planning and Development Department, said that the projected cost for acquisition, demolition, clean up, improvements for the remaining parcels (Traditions Café building) on the Heritage Park Fountain Block is \$2.273 million.

Mayor Mah noted that it is lower than his initial \$3 estimate.

Councilmember Hyer commented that there is currently a property owner and a different building owner for the target parcel. City Manager Steve Hall confirmed that the owners are aware of the City's long term acquisition interest.

Committee members discussed the relationship of this potential land acquisition to priorities identified in the 2004 Parks and Pathways voter-approved increase in the city's private utility tax. They noted that the prioritization of land acquisition with the utility tax money is a Council prerogative.

## **3. Capitol Center Building**

Mr. Hall said that he had contacted the owner's representative, but they were unable to provide additional environmental cost estimates.

Mr. Stahley said that the estimate for Phase 2 environmental assessment is \$50,000. Clean-up for environmental purposes will most likely be needed. The estimate in the feasibility study is a wide range from \$200,000 to \$4 million. Given the prior site uses, he suspects the costs will be on the high side.

Mr. Hall said that the City would probably go through an agreed order with the State Department of Ecology, similar to the new City Hall, particularly if the site is converted for public use. He noted that once action is taken and "we touch the dirt," such as building demolition, then site clean-up is needed. He said that if the city owns the property, we could potentially get reimbursed some costs up to half. He cautioned, though, that the State has cut back on funds for environment remediation.

## **4. Trust for Public Lands.**

Ms. Oestreich said the City paid \$21,700 to Trust for Public Lands for a community phone survey, feasibility assessment, technical assistance, preparation of ballot language on the Parks and Pathways issue. Their rough estimate for this project is \$30K. She is still trying to connect with their principle in the Seattle office on availability.

## **5. Ballot Measure Options/Legal Limits.**

Jane Ragland Kirkemo, Olympia's Administrative Services Director, described the differences between "Excess Levies" and a "Levy Lid Lift."

Exc ess levies are for capital, no operations and maintenance. 60% voter approval is needed for passage.

Levy lid lift - two different types; the second has been in place since 2001 with the passage of Initiative 747 limiting the growth in property taxes.

- First Option: bumps the lid up one time (such as raising the "lid" from \$2 to \$2.10). 50% voter approval needed for passage. It may be placed on the ballot at any time. Purpose of money raised

by the “lift” does not have to be specified. The lid lift may be for any amount of time unless the proceeds will be used for debt service on bond, in which case the maximum time period is nine years.

- Second option: Is a multiple/multi-year lift and still only requires 50% voter approval needed for passage. The issue may only be placed on the ballot at the same time as the primary and general election (not special election dates). It cannot be used to supplant existing funds. Regarding the proposed ballot measure, it is the City Attorney’s opinion that funds from this type of levy lid lift could be used as long as every dollar from the 2004 Parks and Pathways 2% utility tax increase dedicated for parks is being used for park acquisition and development. If used for general city operations, it may be a supplanting. The amount of levy lid lift may change for up to six consecutive years (e.g. 10 cent increase in year one, 20 cent increase from base in year two, etc). If the lid is not made permanent at the end of the time period specified in the ballot title, the base for future levies will revert to what the dollar amount of the levy would have been if no lift had ever been done. The mechanism for the “lift” and the initial rate must be stated in the ballot title. There is a limit of 75 words to describe the measure.

## **6. Other Jurisdictional Plans.**

Mr. Hall said that the Olympia School District is expecting to place a measure on the ballot in Spring 2010 for operations, and possibly North Thurston, too. Intercity Transit is considering a sales tax measure in the fall of 2010.

## **7. Possible Community Workshop.**

Committee members discussed whether to have a community workshop on June 18 or have a more focused discussion, perhaps on June 11, with invited community leaders who are knowledgeable about and interested in the topic.

Mayor Mah opened the floor for comment on the workshop or any other issue related to the proposed ballot measure.

Jerry Reilly said that he likes the idea of getting interested parties together before a community workshop. He suggested a small group discussion format, and that the session be opened to the public for participation as well. He said that it would not be good to go out prematurely with a community workshop until there is a proposal that leaders can support.

Bob Jacobs expressed strong support for the idea of polling to assess community interest about the type of proposal that may have a high probability of support. He said that is important for ballot measures to pass; that it is demoralizing when they lose and it undermines confidence in government. Mr. Jacobs cautioned the city to be upfront with the city funds available for Percival Landing and the amount already spent on repairs. He said that it is important to look at options for levy lid lift, particularly with 50% approval instead of 60%. He noted that there have been other worthy ballot measures that came close but did not meet the 60% approval threshold for the excess levy. He said that while the provisions of the second levy lid lift option may be complex, there may be ways to craft a statement that is straightforward.

Sharon Foster expressed support for a focused discussion meeting on June 11. She suggested inviting interested groups to send 2 or 3 representatives each to the session to participate in small group discussions.

Jeff Jaksich said that he and others are looking at sources of funding and additional potential sources. They are preparing a letter to reflect the vision of this community as to what ought to be on the isthmus and broader quality of life in the community.

Bonnie Jacobs said that bringing people together around a table is a positive. She commented that the community shares a core value of "what is best for Olympia," the differences are in the details of how and where the vision is implemented.

Mike McCormick expressed support for bringing people together for an initial focused session. He said that in his experience, you only get one chance with this sort of effort, and if you can't bring people together it will fail.

Committee members agreed to schedule a session with invited community leaders on this topic for Thursday, June 11, 5:30 p.m., place to be determined. Since the session is a public meeting, others who attend are welcome to participate, too; although the primary purpose is for the ad hoc committee and community leaders to try to reach agreement on scope, schedule and budget of a potential ballot measure, prior to other community outreach.

Committee members suggested a small group format, with an initial plenary session to share general information; then break into three small facilitated discussion groups; then come back into a plenary session to share discussion group comments and recommendations. They agreed that someone other than committee members would facilitate the discussion, and they asked the City Manager to identify a location, potential discussion questions and format, and to issue invites to no more than two individuals from each identified stakeholder perspective in addition to other potential community stakeholders, such as from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Committee members agreed that staff should continue to pursue contact the Trust for Public Lands.

They asked that the June 18 workshop be removed from the Council agenda, and that notice be given instead of the June 11 committee work session.

It was agreed that suggested names of invitees be send to Cathie Butler, Olympia Communications Manager.

Mayor Mah adjourned the meeting 1:20 p.m.