

**CITY OF OLYMPIA
GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 19, 2009**

Chair Kingsbury called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Chair Jeff Kingsbury, Councilmembers Craig Ottavelli and Rhenda Strub

Chair Kingsbury requested that the agenda be amended to consider an appointment recommendation to the Heritage Commission.

1. **Heritage Commission Appointment.** Moved by Councilmember Ottavelli, seconded by Councilmember Strub to recommend Denise Lyn Halloran for appointment to the Heritage Commission to replace Diane Wiatr who resigned. Unanimously approved.
2. **Approval of Minutes.**
Moved by Councilmember Strub, seconded by Councilmember Ottavelli to approve the minutes of the March 23, 24, 25 & 31 and the April 28, 2009 Committee minutes as presented. Unanimously approved.
3. **Traffic Photo Enforcement Program**
John Hutchings, Police

City Manager Steve Hall said that he recommends implementation of a traffic photo enforcement program in Olympia as soon as possible. He said we have learned more about the experience in other communities, which is covered in the staff report.

Committee members asked how/which intersections would be selected. Lt. John Hutchings replied that the vendor would do an on-sight monitoring of traffic count, which will supplement information from City traffic division to determine which sites and how many.

Councilmember Strub asked if the City collects data by accident type per intersection. Randy Wesselman, Transportation Engineering and Planning Supervisor, said the City has been collecting accident traffic collision history for about 20 years.

Councilmember Ottavelli asked if the City collects "yellow light" clearance data. Mr. Wesselman said that the City can do so, depending on location and configuration of intersection. He noted that lengthening the yellow clearance interval may not be the optimum solution for safety as motorists rely on the yellow time. He said that sometimes the City uses a one (1)-second all-red sequence for safety purposes.

Councilmember Ottavelli said that based on research he did on this topic, it appears that use of red light cameras does not decrease the number of traffic accidents. Mr. Wesselman acknowledged that red light cameras can introduce other types of accidents, such as "fender bender" and rear-end collisions. He noted, though, that the severity of the accidents seems to be less, with a decrease in the T-bone type accidents that may result in higher personal injury and vehicle damage.

Committee members discussed the City of Lacey experience using traffic photo enforcement with Lt. Chris Ward from the Lacey Police Department.

Councilmember Ottavelli asked if independent, third-party research and analysis is available from other Washington State communities on effect in reducing traffic accidents and injuries. He said that he is not interested in purported studies generated by the industry.

Councilmember Strub asked about the public records aspect of the videos generated by red light cameras. Darren Nienaber, Deputy City Attorney, and Debbie Krumpols, City Clerk, offered to do additional research and report back to the committee about the public records aspect and implications for records retention.

Councilmember Strub asked if the City may purchase the equipment or whether it is only available by lease. City Manager Steve Hall said that to his knowledge there are two vendors and the systems are only available on a lease basis, but staff could do additional research and report back.

Councilmember Ottavelli said that additional research is not needed on his behalf; he would prefer that the City not pursue the issue further. He stated his opinion that red light cameras create anxiety and fear and that they may violate rights. He said he feels that use of the cameras will negatively impact the way visitors feel when they come to the Capital City, and will impact the daily lives of residents in a negative way. He is concerned that use of the cameras is a supposition of guilt, possibly a violation of the 14th amendment, something about which he feels the Olympia community would be greatly concerned. He indicated that without overwhelming evidence of a positive effect on safety, the negative aspects outweigh the positive for him with regards to installing red light cameras in Olympia.

Councilmember Strub said that for her to consider the cameras, the City would need to completely eliminate profit motive for vendor and city. She said that she would not want it to become a money generator for the city, and she suggested that income in excess of program costs be dedicated for social service funding. She also expressed strong concern about the cameras generating public records that could potentially be used by insurance companies or an individual to harm the driver. She stated that she had a very negative experience with red light cameras in the City of Lacey.

Chair Kingsbury expressed strong support for a traffic photo enforcement program in Olympia. He noted that he personally witnesses multiple red light violations each day at the intersection of Plum and Fourth near his place of business. He said that the City does not have the human resources to have an officer sitting all day at that intersection, and that drivers should be ticketed if they run a red light - whether or not an officer is present. He suggested the City implement a pilot project at one intersection (the one he mentioned) and dedicate the funding for pedestrian-motorists-bicyclist education.

Mr. Hall said that it seemed as if additional information is needed before the issue could be referred to the City Council, in particular impartial data and analysis from other Washington state cities; whether or not the City could purchase and operate the equipment; and an analysis of public records issues. Councilmember Strub also requested information about how the vendors obtain vehicle license information. Councilmember Ottavelli reiterated that he did not need additional information; but that if staff is going to do more research about the impact of red camera use, it should be peer-reviewed, credible information and not studies generated by the vendors.

Chair Kingsbury said that he will report out to the full Council that there is not concurrence by General Government on this topic and that the topic may be scheduled at a later date on the General Government Committee calendar, if and when there is additional information to share.

4. Coffee Table Book for Commemorating the City's 150th Birthday
Debbie Krumpols, Administrative Services

Debbie Krumpols introduced Drew Crooks, a local historian, who helped develop the proposal and has agreed to assist with the project if it moves forward. She said that if the Council wishes to move forward for a commemorative book, the staff recommendation is to use \$10,000 Council goal money and \$3,000 Historic Preservation Account.

Committee members discussed the book production costs with soft and hard covers, and various distribution methods, including distribution by the Bigelow House Association. Committee members collectively said they are interested in 100% cost recovery.

Committee members agreed to recommend moving forward with the project with the understanding that at least 100 books out of a 500 book run would be hard cover, that distribution/sales would be handled by the Bigelow House, and that there would be 100% cost recovery. They agreed to recommend the funding sources recommended by staff.

Chair Kingsbury agreed to report-out the committee's recommendations at the Council meeting.

5. Police Auditor Recommendation Tracking Process
Ray Holmes, Professional Standards Lieutenant

Committee members reviewed a draft format for tracking auditor recommendations and Police Chief response to Auditor recommendations.

Councilmember Ottavelli said that the proposed format is very helpful in closing the loop and that it will be easy to flag individual recommendations. He suggested that the Internal Investigation number plus a title or summary be added to each item to help the reader understand or recall the issues.

Chair Kingsbury said the report will be helpful to him in informing citizens about what happened with recommendations on the auditor report. He noted that the committee only meets with the auditor once or twice a year even though the police auditor submits findings throughout the year. He suggested that the department's report be sent to the committee no more than quarterly and that it be available as part of the record for discussion when the General Government Committee or Council visits with the police auditor.

Committee members agreed with the suggestions of Chair Kingsbury and Councilmember Ottavelli.

There being no further business, Chair Kingsbury adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.