

Friday Harbor Port District

Port Commission Meeting Minutes

San Juan Island Yacht Club

Friday February 9, at 10:00 AM

Members of the public unable to attend the meeting may email comments for presentation to the Commission during the public comment period. Please email to ToddN@PortFH.org with the subject line "Public Comment". Comments must be received 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Commissioners Present: Rich Goodhart
Graham Black
Barbara Marrett (Via Zoom)

Port Staff Present: Todd Nicholson, Executive Director
Phyllis Johnson, Auditor
Tami Hayes, Harbormaster
Amanda O'Brien, Executive Assistant
Mike Roling, IT System Administrator

Public Present: Jill Belcovson, League of Women Voters
Richard Grout, Citizen

Citizen comments/requests: Citizens can make a brief comment or may ask the Commission to schedule a topic for further discussion at a future meeting.

Citizen Richard Grout wanted to comment on the discussions that took place at the previous meeting regarding new proposals or repeat proposals that include any kind of housing or accommodations, whether they are temporary, seasonal, or not. Mr. Grout thinks that it is a terrible idea, and that the commission would be doing the citizens a disservice.

Mr. Grout stated that he heard commissioner Black's comment about since there is a newly elected commissioner, it is a "new day". He feels that mentality fails to recognize that it gives the citizens uncertainty. Mr. Grout expressed his frustration in feeling the need to continuously monitor the port's stance on this topic due to this uncertainty.

Commissioner Black addressed Mr. Grout expressing his fundamental disagreement on the role of elected officials. He stated that by design, the commission is obligated to respond to the needs of the community, and revisit relevant topics regardless of prior decisions made by a prior commission. He stressed the importance of continuously asking the question if the decisions made before are still the right decisions for the community now.

Commissioner Black went on to express he felt reasonable minds could disagree, but his feelings on the communal need for short-term employee housing is critical and that he doesn't see a genuine threat to the pilot community. He addressed the fears that some

people have of individuals living on 163 lands, even temporarily, that it would cascade into a dystopian future where people would not be able to fly in and out due to the need of the sleeping kayak guides and stated that this situation is unrealistic and highly unlikely and that FAA regulations would trump all else to keep the airports viability.

Citizen Richard Grout agreed to disagree with Commissioner Black. He explained that in his opinion Mr. Black's stance ignores the question of viability and puts the pilot community at risk. He mentioned prior issues like noise complaints and open fires, as well as the fact the Port has no system in place to police or enforce situations like this and that it is not the Port's responsibility to solve the community need for short-term housing.

Commissioner Marrett brought forward the question of whether or not proposals that include housing are the best use of the very limited airport property. She stated she feels it is incumbent on the Port to leave airport property for things like business incubation. On the topic of revisiting past decisions, commissioner Marrett felt like the commission should ensure that a decision is not made on any item that is not included on the agenda as an action item as the public would not have a chance to see the proposals before they were voted on.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Payroll and Vouchers 04499-04537 in the amount of \$315,128.56
- B. Approve January 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Black moved to approve the entire consent agenda; Commissioner Marrett seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Action Items:

- A. Fly Guys Lease (Argyle & Mullis)

Commissioner Black moved to approve the Fly Guys Lease; Commissioner Marrett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Discussion Items:

- A. Schedule for Workshop on Airport Non-aeronautical Lands

Executive Director Nicholson explained to the commission that as part of the Strategic Planning Exercise they held last year, the commission requested a follow up with some area master plans; one in particular being the non-aeronautical lands. Scheduling a workshop would give the public more insight into what activities the commission wants to see on what lands, as well as what lands they want to be developed and in what sequence. Mr. Nicholson stated that in the past the community and commission would come together over various 2-3-hour sessions to lay out maps, discuss objectives and draw pictures with the goal of ultimately ending up with site plans, and a series of objectives. He also detailed hypothetical circumstances that may require re-zoning certain parcels.

Commissioner Black asked for clarification as to what property or properties Mr. Nicholson was referring to.

Director Nicholson requested the commission review all remaining un-leased 167 lands.

Commissioner Black stated philosophically he would like the market to drive the uses for smaller available Port property and remove larger parcels from the short-term pool to see if there is a community need that should be addressed. However, he felt that the commission trying to dictate what they want to see, or micro-planning, is not their role and therefore he is not sure how much information they could really provide Director Nicholson with.

Commissioner Marrett expressed the importance of taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture. She stated, hypothetically the Port could fill every available parcel with storage and while that would address a community need, this scenario would not create new jobs and in her opinion would not be the highest and best use of the Port's limited resources. She stated that when the Strategic Plan was created, the commission promised the community to dive further into 163 lands and, to-date, this has yet to happen so she would like to see this discussion on the table sooner rather than later. Commissioner Marrett feels a higher-level discussion is necessary to look into the future and is interested in a workshop.

Director Nicholson stated he would review upcoming meeting dates in March to see which would be best to schedule the workshop and come back to the commission.

B. Interest and Schedule for Revisiting Lease Policy & Lease Proposal System

Director Nicholson brought forward the question of whether the commission was interested in taking a second look at the policy and if so, when?

Commissioner Marrett explained that the commission has voted against seasonal workforce housing at the airport numerous times, although this was not a unanimous decision. She reiterated the fact that she does not feel seasonal workforce housing is the highest and best use of airport property. To prevent future uncomfortable conversations commissioner Marrett would like to see a section included in the lease policy that states the commission will not entertain proposals that include a housing element with exceptions to inside the fence, and further explaining that *Island Air* is building a new hangar and there will be some temporary housing there for folks who are on-call for medical evacuations.

Commissioner Marrett stated she felt that when the commission voted at the last meeting, the public should have had a chance to review the proposals before they were voted on, and that by not doing so, she felt the commission violated their own 2-touch procedure.

Executive Director Nicholson explained that the current policy is a three-touch version, beginning with concept, full application, and then final approval. He stated that commissioner

Marrett's proposed edits would alter the concept stage to allow the public more time to review and respond to these concepts.

Commissioner Black agreed this topic should be on a future agenda and stated he has no issue in altering the concept stage. He explained his stance that no two proposals are the same and that he feels each should be reviewed independently. He would like the ability to continue to take a nuanced look at each proposal as they come.

Commissioner Goodhart stated that he agreed with his fellow commissioners in the sense that the one aspect of the last meeting that he was uncomfortable with was that the public did not get a say. He questioned if the work session would allow the commission to re-discuss the residential aspect of the 163 lands lease terms.

Commissioner Marrett stated she would like to see these changes up for a vote as an action item on the next agenda. She questioned if the commission was going to have the opportunity to discuss the two-touch rule at this meeting.

Director Nicholson responded stating that the commission could if they wanted but this particular item was not necessarily on the agenda.

Commissioner expressed her feeling that "what happened at the last meeting should never have happened". Stating that just because this was a lease policy, they shouldn't go against the two-touch policy and shouldn't vote on things that are discussions not action items even though technically they can.

Commissioner Black pointed out that in the current policy proposals do come back to the commission before final approval.

Commissioner Marrett agreed, but questioned whether it was appropriate to say yes so quickly, and then have the perspective proposals developed further only to say no. She would like to prevent this situation in the future.

Commissioner Black stated that the reason as to why that happened was because that was/is our current policy.

Commissioner Marrett stated that to her, the policy is separate from how they operate day-to-day as a commission and that they have standard ways they operate and when they don't operate that way, the public gets upset. For example, when they voted on the sculpture. That was not an action item and the commission voted on it which upset a lot of people. Again, to her these are two totally separate issues. She questioned why this policy should go against how the commission normally operates. She stated she felt that the public would read the agenda and not realize these topics were going to be voted on since they were presented as discussion items not action items.

Commissioner Black stated that the commission has not previously discussed applying a two-touch policy to the lease policy before. He reiterated that he has no issue adding it now, but he resists the idea that they did something wrong or out of sequence at the last meeting because he feels they followed the policy exactly.

Commissioner Marrett stated she would have to agree to disagree with commissioner Black. She explained she felt the need for the commission to decide going forward if they want to have a two-touch rule for everything or not. In her mind, the commission does need the two-touch rule for everything. She feels that they as a commission should have reviewed their own policy before the last meeting because she realized after the fact that there were concept proposals brought to the commission that were missing key requirements for the first step in our current policy. For example, some of the proposals did not include the required drawings, and in others necessary parking spaces were not clearly identified. She stated that she feels if the commission was allotted more time, issues like these would have been addressed.

Commissioner Goodhart stated that he agrees that the commission should be allowed to vote on anything they choose to, however he did personally have an issue with voting so quickly on the concept proposals at the last meeting.

Commissioner Black addressed commissioner Marrett stating that he feels she was correct, certain proposals should not have been presented to the commission especially since there were no site plans attached. He proposed to the commission that they bring this topic back as an action item without the housing element. He stated that this is directly related to Mr. Goodremont's proposal that was tabled. He feels they are separate issues entirely and made a point to note that nowhere else in the current policy is there a prohibition on a single type of use, and doesn't feel appropriate to have it there. He suggested the commission continue this conversation at the workshop.

Commissioner Marrett stated she felt like pushing this topic out further was merely "kicking the can down the road" as she was not going to change her stance but is in favor of transparency and allowing the public to voice their opinions.

C. Schedule and Method for Planning Airport Energy Efficiency Projects

Director Nicholson explained to the commission that he would continue to make the small manageable improvements suggested in the Veregy report like heat pumps and LED lighting and that once the Airport Wetland Survey is completed in May the commission could continue further discussions for larger alternate energy improvements. The commission agreed to table this topic until then.

D. Commission Role in Key Staff Hires

Commissioner Marrett stated that she benefitted greatly from hiring our current Executive Director so therefore she would like to propose that when hiring for key roles within the

establishment the commission be involved.

Commissioner Black stated he felt the current structure was working and saw no need to involve the community or commissioners in the staff hiring process.

Director Nicholson stated that he would not want to see large community or commission panels holding interviews for staff positions. He explained that the commission does currently get involved in the hiring process for key roles such as Executive Director and Port Auditor and he would not be against an inform-and-consent process where once interviews have been held, the potential candidates would be brought to the commission in an Executive session for discussion and recommendations. However, anything more involved than that may be more disruptive than helpful.

Staff Reports:

Executive Director Todd Nicholson

Director Nicholson updated the commission that the Sailing Foundation was having angst regarding current discussions. He explained that since the Sailing Foundation is a volunteer organization, and therefore they do not feel comfortable signing leases or providing liability insurance. This brings into question the legal requirements and business decisions. He stated in order to avoid any situation of a “gift of public funds” he advised the commission to decide if they would prefer to do a lease or a resolution.

The commission agreed to bring this topic back as a discussion item at a future date.

Director Nicholson explained to the commission that the FAA was originally going to allow hangars “E” and “G” to be rebuilt as they were, but that is no longer the case because we are unable to meet the FAA taxi-way width standards. Therefore, the FAA will not fund the replacement of the building. This does not affect “C” hangar. He explained that the Port has the option to use their own funds for the rebuild and how that would work.

Commissioner Black questioned if the commission was going to hold themselves to the same standard and requirements as our tenants are for hangar rebuilding. Commissioner Marrett agreed that should be a part of the future discussion.

Port Commissioner and Committee Reports:

Commissioner Goodhart

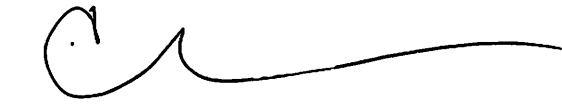
Commissioner Goodhart detailed highlights from attending the WPPA conference in January. He provided the commission with an informational animated video that portrayed what would happen in the event of a tsunami and the potential damage to the islands. He stressed the importance of disaster preparedness and questioned if the Port had the personnel and plans in place in the event our location was hit with a disaster.

Citizen comments/requests: Citizens can make a brief comment or may ask the Commission to schedule a topic for further discussion at a future meeting. **None.**

Adjourn: 10:47



Barbara Marrett, Commissioner



Gibb Black, Commissioner

Graham



Rich Goodhart, Commissioner