



City of Tacoma

City Council Study Session Minutes

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/89496171192 Passcode: 896569

February 23, 2021

12:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the study session to order at 12:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 8 - Beale, Blocker, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Hunter

Council Member Hunter arrived at 12:07 p.m.

All Council Members participated virtually.

Briefing Items

1. [21-0173](#) Affordable Housing Action Strategy

At approximately 12:03 p.m., Jacques Colon, Tacoma 2025 Strategic Manager, Media and Communications Office, introduced Steven Sawada, Senior Continuous Improvement Analyst, Human Resources; Felicia Medlen, Housing Division Manager, Community and Economic Development; ChiQuata Elder, Landlord-Tenant/Crime Free Housing Coordinator, Office of Equity and Human Rights; and Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services; and provided opening remarks on the City's Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS), noting impacts of COVID-19.

Council Member Hunter arrived here, at 12:07 p.m.

Ms. Medlen reviewed the AHAS objectives. Mr. Colon provided an overview of AHAS teams, work underway in 2020 and 2021, and work planned for 2021. Mr. Sawada outlined highlights from 2020, noting new housing units, rental assistance, and utility services.

Mr. Colon provided updates, goals, and next steps related to inclusionary

zoning and diverse housing types, noting the Home in Tacoma project, 2021 objectives, and next steps; a comparison of the two housing growth scenarios forwarded by the Planning Commission; and updates, goals, and next steps related to multi-family property tax exemptions.

Mr. Sawada reviewed updates, goals, and next steps related to surplus land property.

Ms. Medlen reviewed updates, goals, and next steps related to increased participation and resources for new homebuyers, noting ongoing work on the disparity study; and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, noting reallocation of rental assistance funds during the COVID-19 recovery, potential funding from House Bill 1590, and goals to release a notice of funding availability in late spring.

Mr. Sawada, Ms. Medlen, and Mr. Colon reviewed updates, goals, and next steps related to streamlining the permit review process, owner-occupied housing repair, improved tracking of existing affordable housing projects, tenant protections, resources for housing and rental assistance, and new or expanded funding for support services.

Mr. Colon concluded by highlighting various projects and giving appreciation for the departments, technical advisory group, and community members who have participated in the process; and outlining the staff request for City Council input on diverse housing types and updates to the Rental Housing Code.

Discussion ensued regarding progress, working with landlords, permit process streamlining and staffing, the status of single-family housing options, measuring the value of inclusionary zoning, strategies for zoning changes, development standards, gathering data on non-corporate landlords, business license requirements, "just cause" evictions, tenant protections, possible impacts of the COVID-19 eviction moratorium, transit corridors in the zoning proposals, development impacts, volunteer opportunities, language support, tracking housing projects, project scale and impact on communities, and providing real world examples.

2. [21-0180](#) House Bill 1590 and RCW 82.15.530

At approximately 1:57 p.m., Jeff Robinson, Director, CED, presented an update on House Bill 1590 (HB 1590) funding options, including background and history, eligible activities, how the AHAS aligns with HB 1590, sales tax impacts and projected revenue, potential next steps and bonding prospects, a timeline, and strategic spending plan elements.

Discussion ensued regarding costs of permanent supportive housing; timing for City Council action; developing an action plan, parameters, and metrics for sales tax revenues; prioritizing projects, local labor, and minority-owned businesses; the process to approve and implement the tax; possible impacts on the City's homelessness strategy; public sentiment and trust; populations that could be served; the housing disparity study; comparing local sales tax rates; outreach and communications; and next steps.

3. [21-0181](#) Homelessness Update

At approximately 2:52 p.m., Linda Stewart, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services, presented an update on the City's homelessness response, including funding resources and current staff activities; background on the 2017 homelessness emergency declaration; the three phase plan; current investments; number of unsheltered Tacoma residents compared to bed availability in Tacoma shelters; shelter inventory and exit performances by shelter type and location; the COVID-19 response related to homelessness; transitioning from an emergency response to a strategic response; and the draft five-year homelessness strategy, noting areas of focus, outreach, and engagement.

Discussion ensued regarding data and measurements, community support and public perceptions, program options and costs, enforcement, rates of individuals accepting shelter and housing services, sustainable housing options, the importance of education, strategies before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, sanctioned encampments, the City's success with case management and the stability site, the high visibility of homelessness and related issues, the point-in-time homeless population count, the emergency declaration, transition sites, staff efforts, and next steps.

4. [21-0182](#) Systems Transformation

Mayor Woodards stated the City Manager will present an update on systems transformation during the regular City Council meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Other Items of Interest

There were no other items of interest.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

5. [21-0183](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, February 18, 2021

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli stated there are two ceremonials on tonight's agenda, proclaiming February 28, 2021, as Make-A-Wish Day, and March 1, 2021, as COVID-19 Victims and Survivors Memorial Day; and no changes are expected to tonight's agenda.

Executive Session - Pending and Potential Litigation

This item was not addressed.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk