

Meeting: Port of Tacoma Commission September Regular Commission meeting
(Rescheduled 9/19/19 regular meeting and location change)

Date: September 26 at Pacific Grill Events Center 1530 Pacific Ave. Tacoma 98402

Commissioners present: Don Johnson, Vice President and president. Don Meyer, Richard Marzano, John MacCarthy. Excused: Clare Petrich.

Others Present: Eric Johnson, Port Executive (CEO), commission staff and other port employees, several representatives of companies with interest in proposals before commission, very few general public.

LWV Observer: Rosemary Powers

Vice Chair Don Johnson opened the meeting at 12 noon (following a 10 am executive session dealing with 2 litigation/potential litigation items and 2 real estate purchasing/leasing items).

After the flag salute, the Commission recognized the long service of Tom Rogers of the Tacoma Sea Scouts, and approved the consent agenda (minutes from three August/Sept Special Commission meetings), with one item removed to clarify a request for wire transfer approval and an emphasis on the importance of transparency about requests for large payments.

Public Comment: 1) One urged collaboration between Tacoma Port and Grant County (related to fast track of Columbia Basin project and moving freight); 2) one (from deputy mayor of Fife) stated Fife's support of Wapato Creek restoration project; 3) one from president of Union Local 22 urging recognition of a retiring union member who had worked for Port since 1974. In addition, Commissioner Johnson asked for public comment after each agenda item, and received additional responses.

Action Agenda: Port staff presented a variety of action items, most of which included request for funding approval:

- 1) A request for approval of an amended international travel request for commissioner and staff (three persons) to attend November's 130th anniversary and sister port conference in Kitakyushu, Japan (sister port) (for \$11,500 a person). Approved, with support for the commercial benefits of this association but some concern about how many of such sister cities and sister port relationships the Tacoma port can/should support. Commissioners emphasized importance of reviewing such travel and sister port arrangements as part of strategic planning process.
- 2) Project authorization for preliminary design on Thorne Road Property of \$390,000 (Overall project request may be as much as \$40 million). Twenty-four acres with four acres wetlands intended for off dock cargo and logistics operations. Request was approved, but there was lengthy discussion of policy about such approvals, with concern that these large requests can feel like a piecemeal approval. In this case, an earlier design project investment of \$211,000, did not require commissioner approval but now requires a large additional investment to complete the design process. Commission requested more clarity on early decisions about design consultant hiring process, others emphasized that this is largest remaining port property for development, will clearly be an expensive piece to develop, but will be essential to meet needs to be determined through 2020

strategic plan. Expressed importance of mitigation needs, support for fish habitat, and importance of hearing options related to environmental bank as project moves forward.

- 3) Project authorization for Lower Wapato Creek Habitat (about 14 acres). Part of project will be related to Thorne Rd mitigation (near SR 509 and Alexander Ave), but most will be developing habitat. Request for \$525,000 to complete design and permitting process for a \$10 million + project. Involves grading and landscaping, monitoring and long-term stewardship developed in consultation with Puyallup tribe and others. Completion date projected 2032. Involves intertidal and freshwater wetlands, trees and other planting and will also serve as buffer to industrial areas. Commissioners emphasized the importance of projects like this that more strongly address the values strengthening habitat in contrast to projects that challenge habitat and then require mitigation. Urged greater communication with public about this positive tribal consultation with mutual support (whereas port and tribe have not been on same page in some other situations). Authorization was approved with much enthusiasm.
- 4) Commission authorized defense and indemnity for past CEO and then-current members of Commission, in regard to state court cases involving good faith actions and in the scope of official work of these persons, understanding that current members are covered by current policy. This was approved without any discussion or comment.
- 5) Request that recently-hired CEO Eric Johnson or designee develop strategic plan project team with request for approval of funds not to exceed \$300,000 for a consultant specializing in port strategic plan development to work with commission, port staff and public to prepare a strategic plan for formal adoption by full commission. This proposal led to a lengthy and spirited discussion about the process itself and how much the full commission should be involved even at this early stage. Presenter from planning staff noted constraints and essential elements that would include working with Tacoma on the Subarea Plan, the distinctive role of the Tacoma Port since the creation of the Northwest Seaport Alliance, the process for the project team to select a consultant, and suggested general purposes to cover in a strategic planning process. Commissioner Johnson opposed having a project team involving only two commissioners bring to the full commission something that not all had weighed in on. Several discussed the importance of having all Commission members be involved early on in determining what all members wish to cover in any strategic plan. Commissioner McCarthy amended the request to require that the CEO return to full commission with proposal for a contract for services for an outside consultant firm for their approval. In invited public comment, a port union president urged commission to be explicit in involving labor in the entire process. The authorization request was approved as amended, with Commissioner Johnson opposing.

First Readings (items F,G,H) Final agenda item was a *First Reading* of three items (with no action requested) regarding leasing or selling of certain Port properties. The most consequential appears to be the proposed sale of two warehouses currently involving Prologis and PCC Logistics (that require major repair) currently involving a frozen meat and seafood business with a proposed 50 year lease and possible 25 year extension for the 14 acre land parcel. Some reservation expressed at the prospect of this valuable property being committed for a potential 75 year lease when the Port itself is only 100 years old. Some opposition to relinquishing what the Port is itself set up to do, as well as setting precedent of selling buildings close to Port terminals.

Note: Agenda for this meeting was available online at Port Commission meetings page <http://portal.veconnect.us/p/portoftacoma> well in advance as well as in print at the meeting. Ninety-five full color pages of presentation Powerpoint slides were also available on line and in print. A video version of the meeting was archived and made available on Commission Meeting webpage at <http://portal.veconnect.us/p/portoftacoma> on Sept. 29. The meeting space, while not the usual Port location, was accessible and with appropriate seating, amplification, and view of commissioners and presenters. The Port Commission has a number of different meetings each month, with its regular meeting scheduled for the third Thursday of the month from noon to 2 pm at the **Fabulich Center 3600 Port of Tacoma Road, Tacoma, WA 98424**. The Commission webpage states that meeting times may need to be changed (as was the current meeting). This occurs fairly frequently, which can create difficulties for members of the public (and LWV observer) who may wish to attend but who learn about changed dates after they have made other commitments.