

League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce Co.

Observer Report Form

Name of Agency: Puyallup City Council

Date: Jan. 9, 2018

Observer Reporting: Nancy Dahl

Length of Meeting: 2 hrs. 40 min.

Members Present/Absent: _All members present

Others Present (i.e., media, public): _Many members of the community present due to swearing in of new council members, election of council leadership and current negotiations with city public works employees.

The major agenda items of this meeting:

- Because this was the first meeting following the November election, the new members of the council, Jim Kastama, District 1, and Cynthia Jacobsen, District 2, were sworn in. After the swearing in, the council moved on to establishing the leadership for the next biennium. City Manager Yamamoto explained that protocol adopted by previous councils requires that the mayor is determined by seniority. Since there are two members on this council with the same seniority, CM Palmer and CM Swanson, the City Manager asked for nominations for Mayor. Several members nominated CM Palmer, but suggested that a good solution would be to elect CM Swanson the Deputy member. A vote was taken for mayor and CM Palmer was elected 5-2. CM Swanson was then nominated and elected Deputy Mayor.
- New Interim Police Chief Scott Engle made a presentation on the status and challenges of the Foothills Trail Homeless encampment. The property was owned by WADOT and was annexed to the city in 1991. It is located between the Foothills Trail and the base of the hill below Crystal Ridge. It is adjacent to a privately-owned property where there has been significant criminal activity. The City property is not accessible by roads and is very wet making it difficult for the Outreach Officer and emergency services to access the property. The Outreach Officer has visited the property up to 20 times over the last two years. There seems to be confusion about whether the homeless population squatting on this property is involved in the criminal activity associated with the adjacent property, but the city has received complaints from trail users and property owners in the area. After the presentation, the Council discussed the viability of cleaning out this property. Interim Chief Engle pointed out that the property conditions would make it very expensive to clear this property and that it would be very difficult to keep it from being inhabited again after. A representative of Spooner Farms spoke to the challenge this encampment has had on their operations as well. (For more detail, League members may want to read the Matt Driscoll article in the TNT dated 12/1/2017.)
- CM Farris will serve as the council representative to the Pierce Transit Board.
- The other major agenda item was a presentation by Kirsten Hoffman from the City Planning Department about the update to the City's All Hazards Mitigation Plan required by State and Federal Law every five years to reduce the impact and risk to communities. This update will address changes to Federal law and the county regional plan. The city is required to develop a draft and submit it to the state and FEMA.

Public Meetings of interest to League – Members interested in Puyallup Homelessness may want to check the online minutes of the council meeting to be held January 23, 2018 as zoning changes related to homeless drop-in centers/overnight shelters will be discussed.

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Process & Protocol:

The council was prepared for the meeting. Members were courteous to each other and the public. There was no response to my presence.

Reminders

The purpose of the LWV Observer Corp is:

1. To promote public interest in local government and to be a “presence” to elected officials.
2. To alert the League Board to upcoming agenda items on which we have program positions on which we can speak.
3. To identify areas for future LWV study and action.

Observers play an important role as they learn about issues and processes and are in touch with what is happening in our community. A LWV Observer is impartial, silent, and respectful. It is, however, appropriate to ask questions for clarification. Remember to wear your awesome ID Badge!

Please attach the Agenda and any other materials received at the meeting that you feel are important to your report. Please try to submit your report to the LWV Observer Chair, Paula Eismann, within one week of the meeting.

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