



TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Lacey G. Simpson, Acting City Manager

DATE: April 26, 2022

RE: **March 12, 2022 City Council Work Session Information Requests – Opioid Addiction, Ketchikan Wellness Coalition Presentation**

At its work session of March 12, 2022, the City Council discussed opioid addiction issues in the community, what is currently being done to address these issues, and how the City might continue to be involved. The City Council requested that the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition make a presentation to the City Council on the work they are currently undertaking and ways the City may be able to assist.

Councilmember Bradberry has arranged for representatives of Ketchikan Wellness Coalition to address the City Council at the May 5, 2022 meeting to give a presentation to the City Council on their work and programs and to also offer ideas on how the City may be able to support in these efforts.

Special Ketchikan City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Kiffer at 2:00 p.m., March 12, 2022, with the following members present: Riley Gass, Judy Zenge, Janalee Gage, Mark Flora, Lalette Kistler, Abby Bradberry and Jai Mahtani.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all persons in the Chambers.

Staff present were Acting City Manager Simpson, Finance Director Johansen, Police Chief Walls, Port & Harbors Director Verfaillie, Acting Fire Chief Brainard, City Clerk Stanker and Deputy Clerk Lee.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Kiffer briefly explained the reason for this special meeting. He stated over time a variety of issues and topics have come up, and he felt a planning meeting was to have Council give direction on what they would like to see taken. He informed public comment would be limited to three minutes and each topic to thirty minutes.

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Agnes Moran said she has close to a half-million dollars in housing money that expires in September 2022 and in September 2023 with nowhere to spend on it. She indicated she could house 50 people for a year, but there is no affordable housing in Ketchikan. She said whatever we do today is not going to solve this long-term issue. She indicated there were no capital projects allowed for this funding. She answered questions from the Council.

John Stewart suggested the City work with the Borough as they have vacant land along the bus line. He felt if anything like that could be acquired to build housing to fill those needs. He said another subject is in regards to being able to accommodate parking for the busses coming from Ward Cove, and he understands there is something in the works with Berth IV and felt that was a better option as they are private companies. He cited other properties that are for sale in the area that could be purchased for this purpose. He felt we could alleviate some of the congestion on Tongass Avenue by using the 3rd Avenue bypass and offered other solutions for moving traffic in the downtown area.

Mary Stevenson said all of these topics could have been referred to a Tourism Steering Committee for discussion and felt there is value in the City moving forward with a Tourism Steering Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Kiffer said there are about eight different topics to discuss informally.

Opioid Addiction

Councilmember Bradberry said the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition (KWC) is working on multiple programs, including; youth initiatives, re-entry programs, a partnership with Residential Youth Care (RYC) and Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC). She said there was talk of KIC building a detox facility and wondered if that communication is open to the City.

The following ideas were discussed:

- City offers as an incentive for new construction, utilities to a piece of property they have.
- Open a communication line with KIC and give them as much support as we can with the construction of this type of facility.

- Advertising – Getting the information out on what KWC is doing. She noted the Police Department has stepped up with an upcoming event called “Hidden in Plain Sight”.
- Marketing the information KWC already has.
- Mayor Kiffer said he would contact KWC as we need to know what folks want us to do that we can realistically do.
- Refuse boxes for dirty needles and needle exchange programs.
- Availability and accessibility of Narcan within the community.
- Ask KWC to present to the Council what they are working on and how the City might be able to assist.

[Clerk’s Note: The Cooperative Relations Committee has as a proposed agenda topic for a resolution regarding the construction of KIC’s proposed detox center.]

Homelessness/Housing

Mayor Kiffer informed the Borough has been looking into this and published a report regarding housing.

Acting City Manager Simpson informed the report the Mayor mentioned is several years old but would still contain some valuable information. She stated the Borough is looking into using either property that they currently own or acquiring property and creating incentives for contractors to build median income housing. She asked if there is concurrence from the Council, she can ask the Borough to give the Council a presentation on what they are working on and the contents of that report.

Mayor Kiffer said he would like the Borough to present because they have land available that the City doesn’t. He stated the frustration is that there is no housing stock available. He asked what are some policies the City could implement to encourage the construction of more housing.

The following ideas were discussed:

- City auction off surplus properties with no minimum bid to encourage the development of housing.
- Establishing utilities for potential housing developments.
- Ways the City can incentivize developers.
- Workshop put on by Grow Ketchikan regarding possible funding for housing.
- Creating a co-op for the purchase of building supplies.
- Streamlining the permitting process through the City.
- Possible tax incentives for developers.
- Housing grants applicable to the City.
- Limiting the number of short-term, vacation rentals.
- Assist with funding to PATH for the creation of a new shelter.
- Alaska Mental Health Trust survey regarding homelessness needs assessment for the community and recommendations.

Mayor Kiffer summarized direction to staff is to look into the City’s codes and processes to make sure there are not any unreasonable roadblocks for developers; work on auctioning off surplus properties; ask Mr. Harney from the Borough to present to the Council; ask Grow Ketchikan to present to the Council; look into the Ketchikan Municipal Code relative to waiving or decreasing fees with developers/property owners; ask Southeast Alaska Building Industry Association (SEBIA) to present to the Council.