

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: D- 1 (c)
DATE: January 14, 2010
SUBJECT: Council Meeting and Retreat Schedule
CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

ISSUE:

The issue before the City Council is to discuss dates for council retreats and other special council meetings.

POLICY:

The adopted Council Procedures establish regular meeting days on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Special meetings, such as council retreats and joint meetings with the planning board may be held as determined by the mayor and city council.

Many city councils in Washington State schedule annual planning retreats. Retreat agendas are generally set by the mayor and staff with council input. The council will discuss the February retreat agenda at the council meeting on February 11, 2010.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Council Retreats

Schedule three council retreats to allow in-depth discussion of council goals and policies, and other topics as identified by the mayor and city council. Generally, the council does not take action at its retreats. Rather, council gives general direction to staff. Key issues are brought back to the council for discussion and action at a regular council meeting.

- Saturday, February 20, 2010 - Study session on strategic initiatives
- Saturday, June 5, 2010 - 2011 budget priorities
- Saturday, October 2, 2010 - Mayor's recommended budget

Joint Meetings

This year, the council may also want to consider setting special meeting dates with the planning board throughout the year to discuss the revised comprehensive plan goals

and policies. The council has a joint meeting with the planning board on January 19, 2010. Other meeting dates identified in the comprehensive plan timeline include:

- Tuesday, April 22, 2010
- Tuesday, June 29, 2010
- Tuesday, September 28, 2010

SUMMARY:

Since 2007, the Council has scheduled certain types of community and council meetings in advance. The purpose of prescheduled meetings is to provide opportunities for in-depth understanding of city issues prior to bringing the issues forward for discussion at a regular council meeting. Council approval will continue this practice.

DISCUSSION:

Council Retreats

It is difficult to adequately discuss all the long range needs of the city during a regular council meeting. The Sultan City Council, like many other city councils, volunteer a weekend of their time away from distractions to meet in retreat to discuss and plan the long range goals and programs of the City.

The City Council held a half-day retreat in February 2009 to discuss a number of topics including vision, land use, public safety and financial policies. The Council held a half-day retreat in June to discuss and set budget priorities and an evening in October to discuss the mayor's recommended budget.

The feedback from the Council on last year's retreats was positive.

Joint Meetings

The major work plan item for 2010 is updating the comprehensive plan goals and policies to be consistent with the multi-county planning policies (Vision 2040) issued by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and the county-wide planning policies.

The council and the planning board must work hand-in-hand to review and approve the revised goals and policies by September 2010.

The city council adopted a public outreach plan (Attachment A) to update the comprehensive plan goals and policies. The plan includes workshops and joint meetings with the planning board.

The council and the planning board may need to discuss other planning issues throughout the year. Setting joint meetings provides an opportunity to exchange information and provide direction.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed joint meetings and retreat schedule are a full schedule of activities in addition to the regular bi-weekly council meetings. For some staff members this schedule may require one to two night meetings per week per month.

The payoff for this level of effort should be better decision making and public process. The balancing act is to have just enough joint meetings and retreat opportunities to inform the council's policy making responsibilities along with enough public participation opportunities to keep the community interested enough to give up an evening of personal time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There may be a small fiscal impact in the form of overtime costs for additional joint meetings if hourly employees need to attend (e.g. planning board secretary).

Additional council retreats may result in professional service expenditures if the Council hires a facilitator. Otherwise, the costs would be limited to food and beverage expense (approximately \$250) unless an off-site location requires a room rental fee. There was no cost to the City for the Monroe library meeting room used for past council retreats. The Monroe library room has been reserved in advance for the proposed retreat schedule. Joint meetings will be held in the council chambers.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the staff recommendation to approve the three Council retreat meeting dates and joint city council/planning board meetings.
2. Recommend a modified schedule. A decision to reduce or eliminate proposed meetings could result in more time and energy informing both the city council and the public about important topics at the end of the decision making process rather than at the beginning when input and direction are most valuable.
3. Do not make a decision and direct staff to areas of concern. Although the City Council adopted a similar meeting schedule for 2009, there may be a need to discuss how the council and mayor will together and receive input from the community before making a decision.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Schedule three council retreats to allow in-depth discussion of council goals and policies, and other topics as identified by the mayor and city council. Generally, the council does not take action at its retreats. Rather, council gives general direction to staff. Key issues are brought back to the council for discussion and action at a regular council meeting.
 - Saturday, February 20, 2010 - Study session on strategic initiatives
 - Saturday, June 5, 2010 - 2011 budget priorities
 - Saturday, October 2, 2010 - Mayor's recommended budget
2. Discuss setting special meeting dates with the planning board throughout the year to consider the revised comprehensive plan goals and policies and technical analysis:
 - Tuesday, April 22, 2010
 - Tuesday, June 29, 2010
 - Tuesday, September 28, 2010

ATTACHMENTS

- A – Comprehensive Plan Timeline
 - B – 2010 Calendar
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COUNCIL ACTION:

DATE:

Attachment A

City of Sultan 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update Process



