

PORT DISTRICT OF SOUTH WHIDBEY ISLAND

Minutes of the Special Meeting

September 21, 2006

Freeland, Washington

Present at the meeting were:

Commissioner Rolf Seitle, Langley
Commissioner Lynae Slinden, Clinton
Commissioner Geoff Tapert, Freeland
Ed Field, Port Manager

Susan G. Crowell
Dennis Gregoire, GT Environmental Planning Svcs.
Elizabeth Guss, Cohesion
Rich Parker, The BigMind Group LLC
Helen Price Johnson, The BigMind Group LLC

Absent: Amber O'Brien, Port Clerk

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

This Special Meeting of the Port District of South Whidbey Island's Board of Commissioners was convened September 21, 2006, in the conference room at the Port office at 5492 S. Harbor Avenue in Freeland, WA. Commissioner Slinden, President, called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. The purpose of the Special Meeting was to interview candidates for the position of consultant Facilitator/Editor for the 2007-2013 Comprehensive Plan. Port Manager Ed Field noted that candidate Carolyn Brown Tamler had contacted the Port to indicate that she had prior commitments during her scheduled 8:00 interview, and since it was not possible to reschedule her for another day, she said she could not attend. (It was also noted that, due to the Port Clerk's unexpected illness, the tape recorder was not available for recording Minutes.)

During the vacant 8:00 interview period, the Commissioners finalized the questions to ask and the scoring process to follow. Seven standard questions were agreed upon (**EXHIBIT A**). It was decided that the candidates would be introduced by President Slinden and be given the opportunity to take a brief opening statement, and then Ed would ask the same seven interview questions to each candidate, with encouragement to keep their responses brief (approx 2 minutes per question) to meet the overall schedule.

2. INTERVIEWS:

- A. 8:15 am - Susan Crowell:** Ms. Crowell opened by submitting a Preliminary Proposal for Workflow Support (**EXHIBIT B**), and she noted that she had two major areas of expertise: 1) Management and editorial capabilities for large documents and groups of people, and 2) Diverse experience with various types of organizations.

Question #1: Crowell indicated that she has more time in editorial positions (17 years), but has skills and abilities to manage and establish relaxed forums for good listening and analysis.

Q #2: Crowell said she had no familiarity with the Port planning beyond a recent review of the current Comp Plan, but has background in community development from her anthropology training and has written major documents for business and industry.

Q #3: Crowell said she would seek basic and fundamental input from the Commissioners, then develop a timeline, working back from the needed end-date. Based on her review of

the current Plan, she recommended public input be increased in diversity and attendance: potentially five full public meetings, possibly oriented by topic. Based on her general unfamiliarity with the Port and Plan progress to date, she said she would expect a day-long retreat with the Commissioners, probably recorded and co-facilitated.

Q #4: She said she would listen carefully and communicate regularly.

Q #5: She said this would be addressed at the retreat, and noted that vision was very important, commenting that the '94 Plan addressed big vision issues more thoroughly than the '01 Plan. She also recommended a public survey based on questions developed during the retreat.

Q #6: She said she viewed her role as primarily a coordinator, and while she would present some general recommendations at the outset, she would be looking for input primarily from the Commissioners and the public.

Q #7: She said she was generally available in coming months with no conflicts for the regular Port meetings. She said she would submit a schedule and stick to it, although she does somewhat expect that the process including five public meetings may run long.

With respect to questions from the candidate, Ms. Crowell indicated that she was looking for input from the Commissioners on the status of the current Plan preparation process, and she was not familiar with recent events. She noted that she sees the Committee as providing input on economic and environmental needs and desires.

Completed 8:29 am

- B. 8:15 am – Dennis Gregoire:** Mr. Gregoire started by distributing and reviewing handouts which included an overview of his capabilities, fee and approach as well as a flowchart which diagrammed the challenges facing Port programs and projects (all included in **EXHIBIT C**).

Question #1: Referring to page 3 in his handout, Gregoire noted that his facilitation skills were probably stronger, citing the North Marina and Mukilteo Tank Farm projects as examples, and said that a key to those projects was getting public comment early in the port process.

Q #2: Referring to page 5 in his handout, Gregoire also mentioned both comprehensive and strategic planning. He agreed that Port planning is required by RCW, but noted that those requirements are not heavily detailed, which allows ports with much latitude to match local needs. He recommended bringing the needs of other local public agencies into consideration for the Port Plan and process. He commented that the current Plan is generally good, but can be tightened up and also made easier to change.

Q #3: He reiterated that the existing Plan can be readily updated, with the already-formed citizen's committee also a good start. He referred to page 6 in his handout regarding Commissioner involvement, and said that he would be working both Commissioner and Committee issues in parallel for time efficiency, with feedback transmitted between the two efforts. He also said that he would work to establish an operating understanding between Commissioners and Committee at the outset.

Q #4: He said he first needed to understand the Commissioners vision regarding how this process was initially set up, and then would look forward to informing them on options and possibilities AND Committee needs. He said working rules will be established as a framework for proceeding.

Q #5: Gregoire stated that this was a big challenge, since ports are seen as builders with a focus, but need to acknowledge the influence of "outside" interests such as environmental concerns. Referring to his flowchart handout, he said that ports must have project-level planning which reflects their mission and goals.

Q #6: Gregoire said that he has a lot of typical "boilerplate" and documentation which he would make available for use in the Plan as per direction from the Commissioners. He said

that he would ask the Commissioners if they wanted to include strategic planning as part of the Comp Plan process.

Q #7: He said that he was retired and thus readily available except for prescheduled family vacations, and would still be available after May 2007.

Completed 8:55 am

- C. 9:00 am – Elizabeth Guss:** Ms. Guss introduced herself by noting that she had been an Island resident for 1 ½ years after working on moving here for about 11 years. She said that she has served as an independent consultant for organizational planning for the future, and for this effort, would endeavor to balance economic development with concern for the Island's natural beauty.

Question #1: Guss said that her facilitation skills are probably stronger, as regularly demonstrated by many projects. She said she had a good record of bringing diverse opinions together. She noted that she has been writing and editing for many years, ranging from academic texts to articles. She is currently director of the Whidbey Island Writers Assoc. conference.

Q #2: Guss said she is familiar with the strategic planning process for all sorts of organizations, although she acknowledged no experience with port planning. She added that she was involved with the Langley Comprehensive Plan Arts & Education Committee.

Q #3: Guss said that she had familiarized herself via research and recent newspaper stories. She said that her approach would start with meetings to address mission/vision/values issues to assist the Commissioners in understanding themselves and their own goals for accomplishment.

Q #4: She said that the resolution depends on the nature of the disagreement, but that the elected officials are ultimately responsible, which needs to serve as the foundation for proceeding. She stated that the citizenry must be included in the process to determine what "we" want for our community.

Q #5: She said that the mission/vision/values have to be the touchstones for decisions to be made, and must be done first, and everything to be examined for the Plan must be considered in the context of what we are trying to do as expressed by the mission/vision/values.

Q #6: She said she saw her role primarily as a coordinator of ideas and the participants. She noted that as a citizen, she does have her own opinions, but her role as facilitator is to clarify the vision for the participants. She said that she would provide a steadying influence - with maybe 5 or 10% input.

Q #7: She said she was generally available with a fairly flexible schedule in coming months. She noted that her role as conference coordinator would possibly require 10-15 hours per week initially, increasing to 20 in coming months. She also noted her commitment to a conference in November. She said she would still be available later in 2007.

With respect to questions from the candidate, Ms. Gus asked the Commissioners to consider whether they were looking for substantial input from the facilitator/editor, with the process framework as determined by the Commissioners but substantially filled out by the Committee.

Completed 9:19 am

- D. 9:20 am – Rich Parker and Helen Price Johnson:** Mr. Parker opened by stating that BigMind has done a lot of community involvement using on-line means, along with face to face meetings. He said that they would use a team approach with overlapping complementary skills. He said there will be clear roles, responsibilities and check-ins for

client service. Ms. Johnson said that it will be important to understand the goals with such a short timeline.

Question #1: Johnson said that she had a strong history in this community, including terms on the School Board and League of Women Voters, as well as various small group and legislative efforts. Parker noted the team's strengths in facilitation and bringing groups together, noting that they have produced programs for public and corporate clients.

Q #2: Parker noted that he and Johnson are regularly involved with comprehensive planning in their positions on the School Board, including the visioning process. He noted that they have researched port planning via WPPA resources and the Port's current Plan. Johnson added that the facilitator/editor needs to know what the Commissioners want to gain from the process, especially with respect to professional and interagency relationships and infrastructure.

Q #3: Parker and Johnson said that they have met with Laura Blankenship to review the Plan process history to date, but that it is now critical ascertain what the Commissioners want to do. They noted that they could really see long-term benefit in development of relationships for the future, and they would look to facilitate such conversations. Johnson added that the Port's Comp Plan timing is excellent with respect to similar processes at other local agencies, from the County on down.

Q #4: Noting their School Board positions, they stated that they have a strong understanding of the role of elected officials, who need to set the tone and parameters. They said that the role of the facilitator/editor is to get any misunderstandings on the table to address, but that the Commissioners are ultimately responsible by law.

Q #5: Parker said they would take direction from the Commissioners with= in the RCW constraints for Port Comprehensive Schemes. Johnson said that they need to be confirmed and addressed for perspective.

Q #6: They emphasized that they would definitely be in the coordination role.

Q #7: They acknowledged that the 2nd Wednesday of each month is a conflict for Parker and Johnson, as the School Board has Workshops scheduled, although not in November, December or January. They noted that their third team member Craig Fleck would expect to be available. They said they were otherwise completely available, including after May '07.

With respect to questions from the candidates, Parker asked the Commissioners what they envisioned as a successful outcome, and stated that with the mission/vision/values from the elected officials and citizens' committee input, the catalyst would be at hand c/o the BigMind team.

Completed 9:40 am

- E. Commissioner Deliberations:** The Commissioners briefly reviewed the preliminary cost information from the candidates, as well as the available budget. The Commissioners' scoring was reviewed, with three candidates being all scored well above Crowell. The Commissioners reviewed the salient characteristics of three stronger candidates, including the technical capabilities of Gregoire and the facilitator capabilities of Guss and BigMind, and also noted the overall value of bringing in a "catalyst" for such efforts. Slinden suggested that each of three stronger candidates be assigned a role, with BigMind as facilitator, Gregoire as technical advisor, and Guss and editor, but the concept of a committee leading a committee was not appealing.

ACTION: A Motion was made by Commissioner Tapert and seconded by Commissioner Slinden to conditionally accept a facilitator/editor team comprised of BigMind as lead facilitator/editor and Gregoire as technical consultant, pending Gregoire's agreement to participate. The Motion passed unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Hazard Mitigation Planning:** Ed noted that he was preparing documentation on the Port to submit for the Port’s inclusion in the Island County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which will enable the Port to qualify for certain funding, and distributed draft copies for discussion. He asked for Commissioner input on the draft documentation regarding the Port, natural hazards and possible mitigation strategies. He noted that his mitigation recommendations were centered around use of the boat ramps during disaster events, and Commissioner Slinden concurred, adding that there should be pre-disaster effort undertaken to address the need for communication, coordination and logistic support for managing and distributing emergency supplies delivered at the ramps.

- B. CTED Cluster Grant Assistance Request from Port of Skagit County:** Ed stated that Executive Director Jerry Heller of the Port of Skagit County had contacted him to find out if the Port of S. Whidbey would be willing to participate and support a grant application under the CTED Cluster-based Industry program to address maritime industries. He distributed the limited information available to date (**EXHIBIT D**), noting that Skagit is hoping to have all Ports contribute financially for research into strengthening the marine-related industries in our Districts. There was some discussion about having Commissioner Seitle attend the organizational meeting in Mt Vernon shortly after this meeting, but general Commissioner discussion centered around the overall value of such an effort – at a relatively low cost.

ACTION: A Motion was made by Commissioner Slinden and seconded by Commissioner Tapert to approve Port participation and financial support in the amount of \$2,000 for the proposed grant application. The Motion passed unanimously

4. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.

Approved:

Minutes prepared by:

Commissioner Lynae Slinden, Clinton

Edwin S. Field, Port Manager

Commissioner Rolf Seitle, Langley

Commissioner Geoff Tapert, Freeland

- Exhibits:
- A – Interview Questions, 9/21/06
 - B – Preliminary Proposal for Workflow Support, Crowell
 - C - GT Environmental Planning Services handout
 - C – CTED Grant Application Information