

Andrea - Deputy Clerk

From: Scott Thomas <administrator@townoflaconner.org>
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2022 10:28 AM
To: Andrea Moore
Subject: FW: The council special meeting today - 10/28

Post this one as well.

*Scott Thomas
Administrator/ Town Attorney*

Town of La Conner
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NOTICE: Incoming and outgoing emails are subject to public disclosure requirements.



La Conner – it leaves you speechless, and then turns you into a storyteller.

From: Linda Talman <linda.talman@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 29, 2022 11:53 AM
To: Scott Thomas <administrator@townoflaconner.org>
Cc: Marna Hanneman <yogamarna@gmail.com>; MaryLee Chamberlain <council_4@townoflaconner.org>; Mary Wohleb <council_5@townoflaconner.org>; Ivan Carlson <council_2@townoflaconner.org>; Bill Stokes <council_3@townoflaconner.org>; Jacques Brunisholz <council_1@townoflaconner.org>; Ramon Hayes

Subject: Re: The council special meeting today - 10/28

Thanks for fessing up about the key but you don't even usually attend pc meeting who why is it your responsibility?

The rest of what you wrote does not address the rest of the problems.

1. The meeting was illegal and all motions made there therefore invalid.
2. People showed disrespect and lack of information.
3. Nothing was a solution in what you wrote.
4. I agree about the constituencies - but given that the planner has dedicated this past cycle to the port and to developers, I would say that it is time to dedicate the next cycle to affordable housing and the other suggestions at the top of the list. Input for this next cycle ends on January 31, 2023 and modification goes on for the whole next year.
5. Input for the comp plan goes on till 2025 (and usually can be extended).
6. Most of the stuff I pointed out that needs fixing are areas where it is already in the comp plan but there is not the code. eg, affordable housing. Did you know that?

I started with an examination of the comp plan to see what is there that is unsupported in code.

Did you know that I did that?

Did you know that I talked about that with the PC? I can tell you the exact context of when that happened.

On Sat, Oct 29, 2022 at 11:10 AM Scott Thomas <administrator@townoflaconner.org> wrote:

First, about the lack of Zoom equipment at the PC meeting. That was my fault. I had another obligation, and was unable to attend the meeting. The Town has a key box that contains all of the keys to all of Town facilities. Each key is marked so that we know which locks the key will open. I carry several keys on my keychain to different facilities, as do other employees. Michael asked me for a key to Maple Hall, and one which would open the closet where the equipment is kept. I gave him a key that was marked identically to the one I use for that purpose. What I did not know is that the key I carry is a master to Maple Hall, and even though it is marked the same as other keys to the facility, it is in fact different. So again, that was my fault.

Second, with regard to the community discussion, several of the comments made at the council meeting seem right to me. That includes the need for community discussion on the comp plan update. But for that discussion to take place and be meaningful, I think the means and the opportunities to have that discussion must be well thought out in advance. Enclosed is a copy of the community engagement draft that you and others worked on in 2017 for the comp plan update. That seems like a good place to start, although it needs to be updated. As you know, our comp plan and development code update is due in 2025. Commerce recommends that communities start the process early, and adopt a work plan that includes a community engagement element (community engagement is mandated by the GMA). That will be my recommendation.

The last time the comp plan was updated, the Town held a series of open houses to discuss the various elements and invited representatives from organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Port of Skagit County and La Conner School District to participate. Those constituencies remain as relevant as ever. Moreover, we need to work closely with the other local governments including the county. We are now obligated to include an inventory and analysis of the projected housing needs for moderate, low, very low and extremely low-income population groups in the housing element of the comp plan, as well as projected needs for permanent supportive housing, emergency housing and emergency shelters. This is a big task and must be coordinated. What I think this tells us is that planning for residential populations is probably the most important thing we are going to do in the next year or so.

As of April of this year, La Conner saw the highest median price increase for homes in all of Skagit County over the previous 12 months (according to NW MLS). That means that your property taxes are going up as the tax burden shifts to La Conner properties, although none of that additional tax revenue collected from La Conner property owners will come to the Town. A failure to properly plan for and accommodate growth will compound that problem, making it much more likely that La Conner will cease to be a place for families. Earlier this month, Anacortes conducted an analysis and determined that in order to afford a \$706k house with a 30-year fixed mortgage at 7.32% interest with \$141k down (20%), a family would have to bring home \$155,191/year not to be housing-cost burdened. We know that the school population is declining, and that trend will accelerate as families are incapable of affording to live here. So yes, the community has a lot to talk about.

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La Conner – it leaves you speechless, and then turns you into a storyteller.

From: Linda Talman <linda.talman@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 28, 2022 10:48 PM

To: Town Admin, Scott Thomas <administrator@townoflaconner.org>; Marna Hanneman <yogamarna@gmail.com>; MaryLee Chamberlain <council_4@townoflaconner.org>; Mary Wohleb <council_5@townoflaconner.org>; Ivan Carlson <council_2@townoflaconner.org>; Bill Stokes <council_3@townoflaconner.org>; Jacques Brunisholz <council_1@townoflaconner.org>

Subject: The council special meeting today - 10/28

Scott and others.

The special meeting today(October 28) was not legal. We used to have a Covid emergency but that was officially ended. From Municipal Research of Washington:

Does ESHB 1329 allow an agency to hold fully remote meetings absent an emergency?

No. [Section 5 of ESHB 1329](#) clearly says an agency can hold a fully remote meeting only “after the declaration of an emergency by a local or state government or agency.” In order to do so, the agency must determine “that it cannot hold a meeting of the governing body with members or public attendance in person with reasonable safety because of the emergency.”

Aside from being illegal, this meeting was illogical. The issue was the request of a group of ever hopeful residents to have a special meeting to look for common ground for the next year. The PC would have set the agendas. Pretty evil, huh?

But a council person who wasn't at the PC meeting spoke as if he actually knew what had happened there (he didn't) and persuaded other members to vote his way. Their bad.

The information quoted by this council person was misleading; He used preliminary information and not the prioritized final list - which was also sent. He did not read it.

At the actual meeting the planner didn't bring a key for equipment needed to make the meeting a hybrid and therefore it is not recorded. Also as a result, people couldn't attend remotely - not even the newspaper. (Zoom links don't work without the equipment. And no one knows what took place.

What a perfectly orchestrated disaster.

The special meeting was supposed to have been advertised by the town but it was not. The council person said that the special meeting would have excluded the public. Is that why they had a special meeting today? Delicious irony, huh?

The regular chair would have set the agenda for the procedure. I believed we made that clear.

And what are the things bothering this council? Is it the Affordable Housing? Is it the parking ideas? Expanded community notices? I don't get what brought on this vitriol. I thought we were all on the same side.

It made me sad to have Chair pro tem marginalized since she is the Chair pro tem and the vote was legally taken. It made me mad to be insulted by the regular (but absent from that meeting) Chair - who had told us all at the meeting before the last that she didn't want to have two meetings a month because she could always hold a special meeting. And that she wanted us to stay involved. The group actually applauded you, Madame Chair, for that speech. And THAT meeting was recorded.

At the meeting today, Madame Chair stated that I should know better. Yes, I should have known better... to believe that we would be on a better path forward - where the pc would actually have a conversation about the future of the town-- a hope inspired by the community meeting of the last month. It would have been the first time code ideas could have come from the community and been accepted or not. But discussed..

How deeply disappointing.

Linda Talman

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The only real job of a public official is to make their grandchildren proud. That's called vision.....

Linda

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