

Minutes – February 11, 2009
34th Legislative District Democrats
Business Meeting

7:02 PM Meeting called to order. Max Vekich leads the membership in the flag salute. Adoption of and April meeting agenda and March meeting minutes pass unanimously.

Chair and First Vice Chair Reports

Announcements:

- West Seattle Food Bank is having a fundraising dinner on May 1st. There are seats available.
- Norman Kunkel passed. He was a dedicated member of the 34th District and Democrat.

Upcoming Committee Meetings:

- Communications: 7:00pm on Tuesday, April 14, at Uptown Espresso in West Seattle.
- Outreach: 7:00pm on Tuesday, April 14, at Uptown Espresso in West Seattle.
- Bylaws: 7:00pm on Monday, April 13, at Brian Earl's house.

7:11 King County Council Member Larry Phillips

Phillips speaks to the membership about his candidacy for King County Executive, replacing Ron Sims. He acknowledges the districts recent endorsement of Council Member Dow Constantine. He is a lifetime Puget Sound resident, and a Husky. He tells a story about his parents taking on the tough issue of being able to swim in Lake Washington and how that influenced his life. During his career, he has taken on the BIAW, oil companies and the highway lobby, all to successfully protect the Puget Sound, working on light rail and more. He was upset about the 2004 WA gubernatorial election. He spent that election working in Ohio on the Kerry Campaign. He filed an absentee ballot, only to find out when he returned that his vote had not been counted. He researched it, and he fought like crazy to get his and other absentee ballot votes counted. In his closing remark, he announced that Susan Hutchison will be running in the race as a moderate, even though she has been a Republican and is funded by rightwing organizations. He ends his talk asking all Democrats to fight hard!

Questions

1. What are your views regarding unincorporated King County?

Phillips states that there are areas of high urban growth regions, those areas need to be incorporated, because King County does not have the resources to continue to service them. Much of these areas have already been annexed. For the seven or eight pockets left which are adjacent cities, King County needs to work with them and provide information so that they can make informed decisions and find new homes.

2. How could we possibly [stay unincorporated], with the given tax structure, with the justice services taking so much of the general fund?

The Laws of Safety are mandates from the state level. Justice used to be 60% of general fund, now it is 71% of fund. This is a consequence of the reduction in revenues. King County only has property and limited sales tax as revenue sources; this is limited to 1% growth per year. The county cannot keep up with inflation at this pace of growth. The county has been working to reduce the strain on the budge. Parks were moved onto a levy for the next 12 years. Council Member Gossett put together an adult and juvenile

master plan to remove those people that do not deserve or need to be jailed. This is better for those individuals as the justice system deals with them in terms of their individual lives: mental health, drugs. etc. So, far it has been a success. It is not enough, as the county is still looking for additional cost saving measures.

3. As transportation gets tougher, metro has been forced to increase fares and cut services: what do you propose to ensure that we have a vibrant transit system?

In the last 3 years the county has had a 20% increase in rider participation. The county is supportive of light rail and heavier transit systems and expanding these systems to the UW, Federal Way and Bellevue. These systems will free up thousands of hours of buses, allowing the Metro to expand those passenger services. However, the economy has caused problems because the county relies on sales taxes for revenue. Phillips stated that he looked at the administration departments of Metro and audited them, at a cost of \$600,000. Less overhead and less bureaucracy could free up funds that could then be redirected to these projects.

4. What is the county going to do to change veteran preferences? It is only listed for Vietnam or older.

Phillips invites the member to speak to him afterwards to exchange information so that he can address this issue.

7:29

Port of Seattle – How Does It Affect the 34th District?

Commissioners Lloyd Hara and John Creighton

Commissioner Hara speaks first. He discusses the history of the Port of Seattle and the SeaTac airport. Detailed information can be found on their web site, (www.portseattle.org).

Hara then discusses money. The Port receives \$25 for every \$1,000 of tax revenue, but has the authority to tax up to \$45/1000. Second only to Boeing, the Port brings in \$7 billion in revenue annually, and roughly \$900 million is generated in taxes from the Port's activities.

The Port's current project list is extensive and includes: light rail (2010), widening highway 518, The Marginal Way Project to separate train traffic from cars and trucks, and a self-sustaining car rental facility at SeaTac airport.

Commissioner Creighton discusses the Viaduct. Of the two Viaduct replacement options, surface or elevated, the Port initially supported the surface option. After discussion with waterfront business owners, The Port is now supporting the third, tunnel, option at a cost of \$2.4 billion. The state government agreed, but the Governor wants the Port to pay for part of the construction, \$300 million towards the project.

Questions

1. Will the Port be employing in the near future?

The Port of Seattle has a job freeze, like most organizations. However, there are a number of outstanding construction projects that need to be completed. Stimulus and conservation money has been requested via grants.

2. What is the POS doing to clean up pollutants and preserve the Sound?

The POS has taken on the mantra of being the cleanest in the nation. The Port was the first airport to do a clean air study. This has resulted in moving to a hydro system, changing all lighting to florescent, a new airvac system for the airplanes, waste recycling,

composting 22 tons of coffee grounds, building a \$250 million treatment plant, an award winning avian radar system, and dealing with runway and car run off. The seaports are currently undergoing a study in Vancouver, BC and Tacoma on air and water standards.

3. Clean Air Strategy, what is the Ports position regarding this? Why are the truckers being forced to pay for the costs associated with upgrading their trucks rather than the employers?

Dennis McLaren has put forward a buy back program. Right now, there are too many truckers chasing too few goods. Hara surmises that this is a little like what the Fed is doing with banks, and that some tough decisions have to be made and this will not be pleasant for everyone.

4. Is there a plan for a forth runway?

No. Horizon has announced they are going to move to Boeing on a limited basis to see how it works.

5. Where is the Port of Seattle in the process of putting security together for screening containers?

There is a national standard that is out there. The Coast Guard has authority over this. In coming ships, 48 hours prior to port, must transmit there manifest. Then 24 hour prior. they have to send another manifest to the Coast Guard. There is now a special ID card, complete with background checks, that anyone that goes on the dock must have. In two years, they will be looking for positive ID systems, like retina scanners. Those are the elements at this point dealing with security. All containers are scanned for radiation.

6. [Not a question] Member makes a statement about these security policies and the inconsistencies with their answer to the previous question. This member is a longshoreman that works at the Port.

Creighton acknowledges his points, states that this is a bipartisan issue. Both parties have put forward solutions that are not very realistic. In order to thoroughly inspect all containers and maintain higher security levels at this point would bring the ports to a halt.

8:12

New Business

Appointment of a fundraising chair – Chris Porter has been appointed by the District Chair to the position of Fundraising Committee Chair. His appointment is so moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

Seattle City Attorney, Tom Carr comes to speak to the membership – Carr is running for re-election as the Seattle City Attorney. He moved here after being a lawyer for the government in New York. He works hard to get car thieves in jail. He created a program to help people get help and stay out of jail, when they do not deserve to be there. He talks about prostitution in Seattle. Seattle charges the johns and gives the money to help the women move out of prostitution into new, productive lives. He ends by asking for the membership's endorsement.

Questions

1. Since the Mercer area project is tied up in court, how is it shovel ready?

Carr states that he is an attorney. The Mayor and Council make the policy decisions.

2. Has there been any idea to fund domestic violence organization using the same method being used to fund prostitution rehabilitation? (Member expands on this.)

Carr states that his office has been working with domestic violence's organizations. He talks about the work that his office has done, but emphasizes that he thinks it a fair proposal.

8:23 Rusty Williams a candidate for Seattle City Council – Rusty Williams is running for position 8 on the Seattle City Council. Williams thanks everyone for trying to change the name of the West Seattle bridge. He believes it is our job to be stewards. He wants to be accessible to everyone. He loves Seattle. He is a progressive democrat and union friend, but supports businesses as well.

8:28 Seattle City Council President, Richard Conlin – Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin running for reelection. The 34th is the first audience to which he is speaking. He is running because he wants to keep the work moving. The council has created an action plan which has gotten most of the work done. While in office he has helped protect the Sound View Green Belt. He helped get the property for the Lincoln Park Annex and the High Point Community development and more recently pedestrian safety, and other works. He has a strong environmental commitment, working very closely on the Duwamish cleanup. The Sierra Club has already endorsement him. With regards to the High Point Jail, over the last several months the jail population has been reduced. The council will send a letter to relook at the current need for another jail. He is a member of the Sound Transit Board. He is committed to transferring Fauntleroy Ferry traffic to downtown Seattle. The issue of hunger is starting to become more and more acute in this city. City Council will be working with United Way to solve the issue of hunger in a coordinated fashion. He is also one of the founders of Sustainable Seattle.

8:36 Rob Holland a candidate for the Port of Seattle – Holland, former chair of the 37th District Democrats, is running for Port of Seattle Commissioner. He has worked for the Port in trade commission in developing projects and attracting cargo to the region and for a shipping and trucking company. He believes that the Port is an institution in our community that can act and expand on job creation. He has the endorsement of mayors all over the sound. He invites the membership to visit his web site www.robforport.com, because he has created a section dedicated to “green collar” jobs.

8:45 **Resolutions**

Fair Elections Now Act. Resolution is moved and seconded. Marcee Stone speaks for the resolution. \$5 billion was contributed into campaign coffers from the financial industries last election cycle. Public campaign financing has been around since the 1950s. In the 1980s Pres. Bush vetoed it. We have a bipartisan bill that is modeled on the clean elections programs in Maine and NJ. We have a real opportunity here. Contact Marcee for more information. No one speaks against this. Resolution passes unanimously.

Employee Free Choice Act Motion and seconded – Demand from the body to move to a vote. Resolutions pass unanimously.

Seattle Housing Levy. Motion and seconded. Greg Doss comes to speak for the resolution. This is coming from King County LAC. It petitions to make sure that the housing levy is on the

ballot. This has put 1000 units for people and a homeless shelter. No against. Unanimous vote to pass.

8:51 **Appointment of PCOs**

Dave Coffman is going to be acting PCO for a district next door to his because Russ Brubaker is his PCO. Unanimous vote for.

8:52 **Good of the Order**

Ann Martin: Note about Norm Kunkel, might have noted that one of the groups that memorials might be given is the Sightline Group. 1400 hours of volunteer time to that group. Wanted to share her impression with that. If you have not checked out Sightline, please check it out.

David Bloom candidate for position number 4 at Seattle Council. He gives a story about how he was part of the first levy regarding housing for the homeless.

Les Treall: We are going to be sending out an e-mail for an Earth Day Clean up. Duwamish Alive is the group. The e-mail will have information. Chair adds to this! People for Puget Sound is championing this. Is a great time to get out and clean up the river. We will be participating with other Democrats around the city.

8:56 Adjourn