Minutes 2/3/22

Kara called the meeting to order at 6:34

Pledge of Allegiance/Land Acknowledgement

Guest Speakers Heather Pauley, Kitsap PUD Commissioner and Angela Bennink, Kitsap PUD General Manager

Heather Pauley and Angela Bennink:

Polls show that internet access is a huge concern. Heather shared a video showing the history of the Kitsap PUD, including success in a growing wastewater re-use program. Main issue is internet, Angela has a background in telecom. They are beginning open access network by using “anchor institutions”, i.e. schools and libraries. Broadband definition by State is changing from 25DL/3UL to 100/20.

This will create many more underserved in rural areas and make more groups eligible for grants.

Covid has created a greater need for access, 90 miles of fiber has been laid in the last two years, and there is a 2.8 million bond to provide 1200 more residents, and 3000 more by the end of the year.

All fiber laid need to be “future proof”. Expensive, but Starlink can be hampered by trees and rain, and is not as powerful.

They’ve received 3 grants so far this year, in Seabeck, Gold Mountain Emergency Communications Infrastructure. Adding staff too.

2018 Legislation passed limited retail authority to designate quality bar, and all complied.

2021 – New Legislation lifted restrictions that would have hampered federal funding.

Representative Drew Hansen spoke:

Public Utilities can’t offer broadband because of telecom power. Finally won last year that they can be, thanks to help from tribal community. Emily Randall also supported. In the War against the Telecoms (Comcast) vs. the Tribes, schools to make sure the money goes to the public and not to Telecoms.

QUESTIONS:

Mike Cobey asked how can we get similar action in Pierce County?

Heather – it’s tricky, but they’ve been in discussion with Pierce County Council. New leadership on the council is open to working with Kitsap, and the hope is they will use the model. Kitsap can assist Pierce but must make Kitsap a priority.

There is news that WAVE may be expanding.

Larry Seaquist asked if they could come to another meeting to discuss their work with the Aquafers, as they have done great work with data collection in that area.

Mike Colby followed up saying there’s an election in May, we should check it out. (

Ron Robinson wanted to know if reimbursement was possible for expenses for lines. They said they are working with the County to help with private utility bills.

Chuck Sval said re: rural Kitsap, he had to pay for power and phone to his house. They are focuses on more rural areas; owners must pay for conduit themselves.

Nora Eckstein asked about private roads, and owners also must pay for conduit themselves.

Emily Randall talked about the “last mile” being the toughest part of Federal Grant funding as they must keep the spending public – “no gifts with public funds”

Heather added that COVID has underlined the issue, and thanked Drew, Emily, and Derek Kilmer for acknowledging how important this is. They hope to soon cover all of Kitsap County.

Senator Emily Randall gave a Legislative update:

They are almost at the policy cut-off date for moving money bills to the floor. She encouraged us to advocate for bills you care about – let her know about what’s important to you. Post about issues more broadly and get wider community support. She will be having a Town Hall 2/19.

Adison Richards campaign for State Rep update:

Derek Kilmer has endorsed him; he has knocked on 700 doors. He will be starting phone banks soon and needs volunteers and donations. He’s raised $25,000, but his opponent has more, and he will need a lot more. He is looking forward to hiring quality staff.

Kara Aley announced that Matthew Macklin is switching to run for State Rep, position 2 to run against Michelle Caldier. Macklin could not attend the meeting due to family emergency.

BUSINESS:

Alex moved to suspend the rules to add a resolution to discuss the housing resolution SB5670 and HB1782. Nora Eckstein seconded. Passed 17-4

Treasurers Report: Carl says all bills are paid and we have a total of $4650.14

Kara shared some data from the Pierce County poll we paid for: A very important result – 89% of voters get their info from the Voter Information Pamphlet!

Voter priorities: Homelessness, crime, infrastructure.

Specific issues: Transit expansion by taxes, 75% support for PUD, no support for budget, some expansion of affordable housing, capital gains tax support, support for Covid safety, a split on CRT. Support for Police Reform, support for BBB (by party)

Medicare for all 50% support 44% oppose

Make unionization easier – 62% over 28%

Frank Dacca asked if we could see the report – it can’t be shared but free to ask any questions.

Paul Andrews, Kitsap County Auditor said they are trying to reform the voter pamphlet guides to eliminate any slander.

Jeni Woock stated she is worried about fact checking voter pamphlets.

Paul answered that we need to be careful, because who is in control of the pamphlet could it against others.

Emily remarked that Governor Inslee has an “election lies” bill, which is very controversial, because it could cross free speech, if it passes it could end up in the Supreme Court. (Bill did not pass)

Kara announced the next meeting will be March 3. We will discuss endorsements including Derek Kilmer and Patty Murray.

GOO:

Joy reported on the State Committee meeting and announced we will have a Caucus and convention. Ray added that they cleaned up 50 old resolutions and have 15 to go.

Frank Dacca suggested we discuss meeting in person, perhaps in April.

E-Board will discuss.

Larry Seaquist shared that at the Gig Harbor Forum, Dammeier was asked about 100000 fraudulent votes and right wingers complained that Pierce County was the worst. Paul Andrews said they are trying to deal with it – going door to door trying to take notes. They are challenging voter rolls, disenfranchising military. They are organized, about 30-40 people making trouble. One of the leaders is Randy Boss. Most “fraud” is a spouse signing for each other. Also, Boss is running again.

electionfraud20.org

Diane Eversole asked if we could publicize this info –

Paul replied there is a press release, and the Seattle Times is on it.

**Middle Housing bill discussion**:

Alex read a proposed resolution of our support:

Jeni Woock, who has been actively opposed to the bill expressed her view that is doesn’t do much for affordable housing. She supports section 1 of the bill which would create housing near transit. She opposes the 2nd section because in Gig Harbor they have already topped growth target. She says the bill also doesn’t support infrastructure. Other places should be encouraged to meet their numbers for growth under the Growth Management Act. AWC/GH opposed due to lack of infrastructure.

Brenda questioned what signifies “affordable”.

Alex Davidson encouraged support for the bill because it doesn’t require middle housing but only provides the option to have duplexes not just single-family housing. Other cities that have done this did not experience huge increases in duplexes.

Dense housing calls for more compact infrastructure. Cities that haven’t met growth requirements needs a push. There is bi-partisan support.

Frank Dacca expressed agreement with Woock. He’s most worried about sending the wrong signal to senior voters and felt it would be a gift to republicans who would use it as a weapon. Dianna asked about eminent domain. Emily Randall emphatically assured her that that was not even remotely a part of the plan.She said we all agree we need more housing. The bill is still going through the process.

She discussed how disparaging language is often a problem for renters, and how that duplexes can be a life-changer. She passionately spoke of her own life experience and the effect affordable housing and duplex living had in her own family.

Kara underlined that we need to be careful with our language and not be disrespectful to those living in apartments or duplexes.

Jeni said her only issue with the bill was the lack of infrastructure.

Angela Sisney stated she opposes growth of any kind in Gig Harbor.

Frank Dacca said we need to be very cautious regarding zoning laws, but he trusts Emily Randall and the Legislature.

Emily Randall thanked everyone for the robust discussion and asked that members with concerns limit their emails to one on any given issue, as her office wants to respond, but get overwhelmed with multiple emails from a single source. Trust that she got it.

Adison Richards added that everyone cares about housing, but King County’s solution to housing is Pierce and Kitsap Counties. The legislature needs to accommodate smaller cities. We all share the same values. As the bill is still being worked on -- we should table the vote.

Alex Davidson moved to table the vote. Ray 2nd. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.