CALL TO ORDER
Council President Corman called the special meeting to order.

COUNCILMEMBERS
RANDY CORMAN, Council President; MARCIE PALMER; ED PRINCE; TERRI BRIERE; RICH ZWICKER; GREG TAYLOR. DON PERSSON ABSENT.

CITY STAFF IN ATTENDANCE
CHIP VINCENT, Community and Economic Development Administrator; TERRY HIGASHIYAMA, Community Services Administrator. ERIKA CONKLING (Former employee.)

SPECIAL PRESENTATION
Community and Economic Development Administrator Chip Vincent introduced Erika Conkling, former Senior Planner for the City of Renton. He remarked that she was instrumental in developing the Benson Hill Community Plan.

Ms. Conkling reported that over two years of community engagement, visioning, and refinement was put into the Benson Hill Community Plan. She remarked that the plan guides the direction of future changes and investments the City will make in that area. She also noted that it is an important tool for strengthening ties between area residents and the City.

Ms. Conkling reported that there are three aspects to the Benson Hill Community Plan vision: 1) creating focus, 2) improving connections, and 3) building communities by improving amenities and the feeling of safety, and creating social outlets and activities to build social connections. She stated that a short-term solution to creating social connections is to improve the park space at the Cascade Shopping Center. She remarked that long-term solutions include encouraging a healthy business environment, supporting businesses, and creating design guidelines that meet the standards of the community plan.

Ms. Conkling remarked that people in the Benson Hill area are concerned about safety. She stated that residents would like the active problem solving policing to continue. She also noted that principles of crime prevention through environmental design should be applied to any new development or redevelopment in the area. Additionally, she stated that creating a strong and vibrant community through social connections will help improve safety in the area.

Concluding, Ms. Conkling reported that the plan recommends creating a Benson Hill Community Plan Advisory Board. She explained that this board should include members of the community who are interested in improving their neighborhood. She noted that they would provide recommendations to Council regarding design guidelines, neighborhood aesthetics, gateway projects, and clean-up programs. She also stated that the board would be responsible for keeping the Benson Hill Community Plan updated.

Councilmember Prince stated that the King County legacy of hit-and-miss sidewalk standards makes it hard for residents to walk or bicycle around the community without fear of being struck by a vehicle. He also remarked that more people would use Cascade Park if it was not hidden from the street.
Councilmember Taylor agreed with Mr. Prince’s assessments of the street and sidewalk standards, and thanked area residents for their patience regarding the amount of time it takes to make these needed improvements.

Councilmember Palmer also expressed appreciation for the community’s patience. She remarked that the plan establishes a road map for future improvements and investments in the area.

Councilmember Briere expressed appreciation for the community’s involvement in the process. She stated that staying involved will help move the process along more quickly and smoothly.

Councilmember Zwicker remarked that this plan is very important and will serve as a guide for future improvements for many decades. He thanked Ms. Conkling for her involvement with the plan.

Council President Corman remarked that he agrees with his colleagues, and pointed out that there are other community plans being prepared. He added that residents wishing to get involved with their communities should contact the City.

Public comment was invited.

Joe Avolio (Renton) remarked that the City will have a difficult time creating baseball fields and sports complexes in the Benson Hill area because of wetland issues. He remarked that sport facilities would give local youth something to do besides causing trouble. He also remarked that he was disappointed in the deterioration of the shopping center.

Council President Corman remarked that residents will have many opportunities to provide input and suggested that Mr. Avolio join the community plan advisory board. Mr. Taylor added that he agreed that local youth need an outlet to become positive members of the community.

Council President Corman adjourned the meeting. Time: 6:36 p.m.

Jason Seth, Recorder
October 14, 2013