CALL TO ORDER
Mayor Kathy Keolker-Wheeler led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and called the meeting of the Renton City Council to order.

ROLL CALL OF COUNCILMEMBERS
DON PERSSON, Council President; RANDY CORMAN; TONI NELSON; DAN CLAWSON; DENIS LAW; TERRI BRIERE; MARCIE PALMER.

CITY STAFF IN ATTENDANCE
KATHY KEOLKER-WHEELER, Mayor; JAY COVINGTON, Chief Administrative Officer; RUSSELL WILSON, Assistant City Attorney; BONNIE WALTON, City Clerk; GREGG ZIMMERMAN, Planning/Building/Public Works Administrator; SANDRA MEYER, Transportation Systems Director; ALEX PIETSCH, Economic Development Administrator; GIL CERISE, Senior Planner; DEREK TODD, Assistant to the CAO; COMMANDER TIM TROXEL, Police Department.

PUBLIC HEARING
Planning: Auto Mall Area Sign Height Amendment
This being the date set and proper notices having been posted and published in accordance with local and State laws, Mayor Keolker-Wheeler opened the public hearing to consider the Auto Mall area sign code amendment to permit a maximum freestanding sign height of 50 feet for motor vehicle dealerships with more than one acre of property.

Gil Cerise, Senior Planner, reported that the current sign code states that freestanding signs must be either the height of the zone or 40 feet, whichever is less. In the Auto Mall area, the maximum height of a building in the Commercial Arterial Zone is 50 feet; therefore, freestanding signs are limited to 40 feet. Mr. Cerise reviewed the boundaries of the Auto Mall area, and explained that motor vehicle dealerships find the existing height limitations too restrictive, as some are located a considerable distance from I-405. Additionally, some existing signs in the area are taller than the height of the zone.

Continuing, Mr. Cerise stated that increasing the visibility of the signs would attract new customers to the Auto Mall area and benefit existing area businesses, thereby promoting the City's economic development policies. Mr. Cerise concluded with the staff recommendation to amend City Code to allow a new maximum freestanding sign height of 50 feet for those motor vehicle dealerships with over one acre of contiguous ownership or control within the Auto Mall area.

Public comment was invited.

Robert Bridge, 150 SW 7th Ave., Renton, 98055, stated that his motor vehicle dealership, which employs 100 people, has been in business in Renton since 1981. He described the nature of the retail automobile business and his customer base, noting that he sells 2,800 to 3,000 vehicles annually. He commented that the utilization of an Auto Mall area keeps the automotive community healthy and the standards high. Mr. Bridge emphasized that the new sign height will increase the visibility of his dealership for those travelers exiting I-405 onto Rainier Ave. S. Additionally, he commented on the look achieved in a community when using the manufacturer's customized auto dealership signs.

There being no further public comment, it was MOVED BY BRIERE,
Planning & Development Committee
Planning: Auto Mall Area Sign Height Amendment

Planning and Development Committee Chair Briere presented a report regarding the Auto Mall area sign height amendment. The Committee met on March 4, 2004, to review an issue raised by auto dealers within the Auto Mall area about their limited visibility from nearby freeways and arterials. Existing sign code governing signs within the Auto Mall area limit the maximum height to 40 feet. Zoning in the area allows buildings 50 feet in height. Area dealers feel that 50-foot sign heights would allow signage to better stand out from nearby buildings and improve visibility from surrounding freeways and arterials.

Permitting an additional ten feet of sign height within the Auto Mall area would further distinguish the auto dealerships within this area, and increase visibility of the large auto dealers for automobile traffic passing on I-405 and SR-167. Limiting the taller signs to auto dealerships over one acre in size would prevent proliferation of a large number of 50-foot signs in this area, and retain the larger auto dealerships which contribute to the economic viability of the City.

The Committee recommended amending the portion of the sign code applicable to motor vehicle dealerships with over one acre of contiguous ownership or control located within the Auto Mall area to permit maximum sign heights of 50 feet. The Committee further recommended that the ordinance regarding this matter be presented for first reading. MOVED BY BRIERE, SECONDED BY CLAWSON, COUNCIL CONCUR IN THE COMMITTEE REPORT. CARRIED. (See page 92 for ordinance.)

AUDIENCE COMMENT
Citizen Comment: DeMastus - Highlands Community Association, Highlands

Sandel DeMastus, Highlands Community Association (HCA) President, 1137 Harrington Ave. NE, Renton, 98056, announced that the developers of Harrington Square project in the Renton Highlands will speak at the HCA meeting on March 25. Additionally, Ms. DeMastus displayed photographs of
Neighborhood Sign

Cub scouts and boy scouts working on the landscaping that surrounds the Highlands Neighborhood entry sign.

Citizen Comment: Troxel - Ron Dee Voo Tavern Disturbances (NE Sunset Blvd)

Jon E. Troxel, PO Box 1864, Friday Harbor, 98250, 25-year owner of Sunset Vista Apartments (922 Glennwood Ave. NE), submitted a letter addressing several areas of concern regarding the Ron Dee Voo Tavern located next door to his apartment building at 2621 NE Sunset Blvd. The concerns include: excessive late night noise, the build-up of junk behind the tavern, the placement of trash by the tavern in the apartment building's dumpster, and tavern patrons who litter (beer bottles), sleep behind the tavern, engage in fist fights, and consume alcohol outside of the tavern. Claiming that four apartments are now empty as a direct result of the activities at the tavern, Mr. Troxel stated that this situation has become a financial burden. He urged the City to find a permanent solution to these ongoing problems.

Mayor Keolker-Wheeler reported that the Police Department is working on organizing a meeting with tavern and apartment building representatives. She stressed that those who disobey the law will be cited accordingly.

Acknowledging that the City has been working on this issue, it was MOVED BY LAW, SECONDED BY CORMAN, COUNCIL REFER THIS ITEM TO THE ADMINISTRATION, WITH A BRIEFING TO FOLLOW TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE. CARRIED.

Noting the difficulty of the situation, Councilman Clawson commented that the enforcement of criminal law punishes past behavior, whereas the challenge in this situation is to try to stop the future behavior.

CONSENT AGENDA

Items on the consent agenda are adopted by one motion which follows the listing.

Council Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2004


Appeal: 1800 Jones Ave Short Plat, Kinzer & Lunsford, SHP-03-095

City Clerk submitted appeal of Hearing Examiner's decision on the 1800 Jones Avenue Short Plat (SHP-03-095); two appeals filed - one by Darrell and Susan Kinzer, 1733 NE 20th St., Renton, 98056; and the other by Larry and Sue Lunsford, 1716 Jones Ave. NE, Renton, 98056, both accompanied by required fee. Refer to Planning and Development Committee. (See page 90 for related discussion.)

Budget: 2003 Carry Forward Ordinance

Finance and Information Services Department requested approval of the 2003 carry forward ordinance in the amount of $12,432,700, which increases the 2004 Budget for various funds for the purpose of meeting 2003 obligations in 2004. Refer to Finance Committee.

CAG: 03-037, Airport Runway/Taxiway Lighting Signage & Paving, Gary Merlino Const Co

Transportation Systems Division submitted CAG-03-037, 2003 Airport Runway/Taxiway Lighting, Signage and Paving Improvements; and requested approval of the project, authorization for final pay estimate in the amount of $3,214.41, commencement of 60-day lien period, and release of retained amount of $124,873.36 to Gary Merlino Construction Co., Inc., contractor, if all required releases are obtained. Council concur.

Utility: Maplewood Water Treatment Facility SCADA System, Reid Instruments

Water Utility Division recommended approval of a consultant contract with Reid Instruments in the amount of $76,570.11 to program and test the SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system for the Maplewood Water Treatment Facility. Council concur.

MOVED BY PERRSON, SECONDED BY NELSON, COUNCIL APPROVE
THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. CARRIED.

CORRESPONDENCE
Citizen Comment: DeMastus - Fireworks Ban

A letter was read from Sandel DeMastus, Highlands Community Association Board President, PO Box 2041, Renton, 98059, encouraging the City to enforce the fireworks ordinance and to educate citizens on the types of allowed fireworks. She stated that the six-member board is split on the issue of a fireworks ban, and each member is willing to dedicate time to conduct an informal survey to determine the preference of citizens on this issue. MOVED BY CORMAN, SECONDED BY LAW, COUNCIL REFER THIS CORRESPONDENCE TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE. CARRIED.

Appeal: 1800 Jones Ave Short Plat, Kinzer & Lunsford, SHP-03-095

Councilwoman Briere inquired as to whether the three letters received in reference to the appeals currently before the City Council concerning the Hearing Examiner's decision on the 1800 Jones Avenue Short Plat (SHP-03-095) are considered new testimony and should not be read by Council.

Assistant City Attorney Russell Wilson explained that according to City Code 4-8-110F.3, letters in support of someone's position are allowed if they are strictly construed as to refer to the appeal issues; either the Hearing Examiner is right or he is wrong. However, these three letters do not meet that criteria and should not be allowed, as they are considered new or additional testimony (City Code 4-8-110F.5).

In response to Councilman Corman's comment that the subject letters were included in the Councilmembers' folders, Mr. Wilson stated that Mr. Corman's confession that he read the letters is sufficient to purge any sort of taint. The letters were then collected from the Councilmembers.

OLD BUSINESS

Council President Persson reported that the topics discussed during the Council's annual planning workshop held on March 2 and 3, included: City Code enforcement and nuisance abatement program and positions; enhanced Police Department operations program and positions; Airport operations positions; position reclassification funding; additional firefighter position; Information Systems Division project manager position; probation officer assistant position; Edlund/Korum property acquisition and maintenance funding; 200 Mill Building chiller purchase; Parks Maintenance Facility reserve funding; restoration of transportation, parks, and fire mitigation funds; Heather Downs park development reserve funding; fire engine purchase and equipment rental fund; neighborhood fireworks discussions; appropriation for Renton Historical Museum and Roxy sign restoration; retaining of zoning related to gambling; design guidelines (related to development); retaining of public ownership of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way; work on annexation issues; preparation of Initiative 864 options; improving communication and outreach within the community; and modifications to Renton's Business Plan.

Finance Committee
Finance: Bad Debt Write Off

Finance Committee Chair Corman presented a report regarding bad debt write off. The Finance and Information Services Department (FIS) submitted to the Finance Committee a list of bad debts totaling $95,100.55. FIS, as well as the City's collection agency, attempted to collect these debts for over 24 months without success. Of the total amount of bad debts, $4,281.47 is the total of 17 Non-Sufficient Funds checks that were written either to the Community Center, Maplewood Golf Course, Police Department, or Planning/Building/Public Works Department. The remaining uncollectible debts total $90,819.08. This total consists of uncollectible utility accounts that have been closed for various reasons, including bankruptcy and business closures.
The Committee recommended granting FIS the authority to write off the total bad debt of $95,100.55, and authorizing FIS to make the necessary accounting adjustments to remove these debts as owing on the City's financial records. MOVED BY CORMAN, SECONDED BY LAW, COUNCIL CONCUR IN THE COMMITTEE REPORT.*

Councilman Corman thanked the Administration for its one last effort to collect some more debt at Council's request on February 9, which resulted in the collection of approximately $1,000. He added that the Committee supports the Administration pursuing means to prevent the accrual of bad debt.

*MOTION CARRIED.

Finance: Vouchers
Finance Committee Chair Corman presented a report recommending approval of Claim Vouchers 224814 - 225248 and one wire transfer totaling $2,452,011.51; and approval of Payroll Vouchers 49621 - 49854, one wire transfer and 572 direct deposits totaling $1,836,021.13. MOVED BY CORMAN, SECONDED BY NELSON, COUNCIL CONCUR IN THE COMMITTEE REPORT. CARRIED.

Community Services: May Creek Trail, Boy Scout Project
Councilman Corman thanked City staff for their prompt response to a request from a Boy Scout troop leader regarding the continuance of the scout's May Creek Trail restoration project.

Finance: Business Licenses, Apartment Owners
In response to Councilman Clawson's inquiry, Mayor Keolker-Wheeler stated that the Administration is investigating the legal requirements pertaining to the City's business license requirement for multi-unit dwellings, and will bring forth a recommendation to Council. In the meantime, compliance to this requirement is not being pursued.

Transportation (Aviation) Committee
Transportation: Renton Ave S Traffic Safety
Transportation (Aviation) Committee Chair Palmer presented a report regarding Renton Ave S. traffic operations. The Committee recommended that Council authorize the following traffic revisions on Renton Ave S.:

1. Prohibit parking for approximately 120 feet initially in the vicinity of the crest vertical curve at 532, 530, and 526 Renton Ave S. After evaluation of the effect on the safety of two-way traffic, additional parking prohibition and/or striping may be installed.

2. Investigate warrants for additional stop signs and install stop signs as required at: S. 3rd St. and Cedar Ave S., S. 3rd St. and Renton Ave S., and Renton Ave S. and Beacon Way S.

3. Investigate warrants for crosswalks and install crosswalks as required at Renton Ave S. and S. 7th St., and Renton Ave S. and S. 3rd St.

4. Install an additional "yield to uphill traffic" sign.

The Committee further recommended that staff revisit this issue to make sure traffic safety issues are resolved. MOVED BY PALMER, SECONDED BY LAW, COUNCIL CONCUR IN THE COMMITTEE REPORT. CARRIED.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS
Planning: Auto Mall Area Sign Height Amendment
An ordinance was read amending Section 4-4-100 of Chapter 4, Citywide Property Development Standards, of Title IV (Development Regulations) of City Code to allow freestanding sign height of 50 feet for motor vehicle dealerships with over one acre of contiguous ownership or control located within the Auto Mall area. MOVED BY BRIERE, SECONDED BY NELSON,
COUNCIL REFER THE ORDINANCE FOR SECOND AND FINAL READING ON 4/05/2004. CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS
Citizen Comment: DeMastus - Gas Powered Motor Scooters
Councilman Persson reported receipt of e-mail from Sandel DeMastus, Highlands Community Association President, PO Box 2041, Renton, 98059, regarding gas powered motor scooter safety issues. MOVED BY PERSSON, SECONDED BY NELSON, COUNCIL REFER THIS CORRESPONDENCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION. CARRIED.

Citizen Comment: Paholke - Airport Trees, Safety Hazard
Councilman Persson reported receipt of a letter from Diane O. Paholke, Pro-Flight Aviation, Inc. President, 243 W. Perimeter Rd. Renton, 98055, requesting the removal or thinning of trees located between Perimeter Rd. W. and Rainier Ave. S. at the Airport. She stated that the tree debris pose a safety hazard to aircraft, as do the birds that the trees attract. MOVED BY PERSSON, SECONDED BY CORMAN, COUNCIL REFER THIS CORRESPONDENCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION. CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT
MOVED BY NELSON, SECONDED BY CORMAN, COUNCIL ADJOURN. CARRIED. Time: 8:39 p.m.

Bonnie I. Walton, City Clerk
March 22, 2004

Recorder: Michele Neumann
March 22, 2004