



Commission Work Session Minutes Monday, May 18, 2026

Call to Order

Commission President Jasmine Vasavada called the Commission Work Session of May 18, 2026, to order and open to the public at 4:01 p.m., at the Percival Plaza at 626 Columbia Street NW, Suite 1B, Olympics Room, in Olympia, Washington 98501.

Present

Commissioners: Jasmine Vasavada – President, Sarah Montano – Vice President, Joel Hansen – Secretary, Jerry Toompas and Krag Unsoeld.

Guests: Paul Brewster, Project Lead, Interim Planning Manager, Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC); Chelsea Embree, Associate Planner, Engagement Specialist, TRPC; William Ward, Chief Administrative Officer, The Evergreen State College; Henry Valz, Community Organizer; Paul Simmons, City Manager, City of Tumwater; Heather Antanaitis, CEO, Thurston County PARC Foundation; Jim McCain, Thurston County PARC Foundation.

Guests Attending Remotely: Madalina Calen, Project Manager and Lead Economist, BERK; Dr. Spencer Cohen, Strategic Advisor and Economic Impact Analysis Support, High Peak Strategy (HPS); Elizabeth Yen, Owner King Aquatic Club.

Staff: Alex Smith, Executive Director; Warren Hendrickson, Director of Operations; Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development; Taber Lee, Communications and Marketing Senior Manager; and Missy Goodell, Commission Coordinator.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Montano moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Unsoeld seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Economic Benefit Study – BERK Proposal

The Commission was presented the results of Port of Olympia Commission interviews performed by BERK Consulting and briefed on the scope of the work.

Madalina Calen, Project Manager and Lead Economist, BERK Consulting, and Dr. Spencer Cohen, Strategic Advisor and Economic Impact Analysis Support, High Peak Strategy, presented economic impact study goals that included educational information about the role and functions of the Port; and clear definitions, a robust methodology, and transparent analysis. Economic and fiscal benefits were communicated that included direct, indirect, and induced impacts. Ongoing and anticipated costs analysis, and community impacts and deliverables were also shared. The proposed project timeline and budget was given.

Port Peninsula Master Plan Policy Foundations

Paul Brewster, Project Lead, Interim Planning Manager, and Chelsea Embree, Associate Planner – Engagement Specialist, both with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), presented information that clarified how the Port's existing long-range policy direction, including "Vision 2050 Port of Olympia" and "Destination Waterfront" should inform the development of a future Port Peninsula Master Plan scope of work. The discussion provided a high-level guidance to TRPC and Port staff regarding the policy assumptions, areas for further evaluation, and topics that should be addressed through the master planning process.

Evergreen Pool Discussion

It was announced that the Port Commission was interested in creating a forum for a public community conversation, to include stakeholders from The Evergreen State College, community advocates and a swim club looking to keep the pool open in partnership with the college.

It was acknowledged that this pool exists as a facility at Evergreen State College and that the Port of Olympia Commission has no jurisdiction over this pool. The Port of Olympia Commission is interested in facilitating a transparent conversation about a piece of infrastructure that has regional significance as the Port is an economic development entity. A sustainable way to move the pool forward is being sought.

Guest Introductions:

Henry Valz, Community Advocate
Joellen Wilhelmn, Community Advocate
Elizabeth Yen, King Aquatic Club
Heather Antanaitis, CEO, Thurston County PARC Foundation
Jim McCain, Thurston County PARC Foundation
William Ward, Chief Administrative Officer, The Evergreen State College
Paul Simmons, Tumwater City Manager

Paul Simmons, City Manager with the City of Tumwater, gave a presentation on efforts to date related to developing a second public facilities district as a long-term funding solution for a regional public pool. Steps to move forward were shared. The City of Tumwater is supportive of the Evergreen pool remaining open and having a public pool that meets the recreational and competitive needs of the community.

William Ward, Chief Administrative Officer with The Evergreen State College, presented information related to annual pool operating and capital expenses for maintenance and cleaning, and some of the repairs currently in need of attention (the pool exterior, electrical room ceiling, stream supply line, pool supply water pipe and deteriorated ceiling). The school is looking for partners to help with a financial solution to assist with operating and capital expenditures.

Henry Valz, Community Organizer, then offered more information on the efforts made to support the continuation of The Evergreen State College pool. His group has a plan to work with community groups and stakeholders, to apply for grants, and facilitate needed repairs.

Heather Antanaitis, CEO, Thurston County PARC Foundation, added that they believe they have a sustainable plan that not only takes care of improvements to the facility, but they have a path forward to becoming a nonprofit entity so they can work with government agencies and the community to start collecting money, and they can partner and enter into contracts.

Elizabeth Yen, owner of King Aquatic Club, a state-wide swim club, indicated the swim club is looking to collaborate with Evergreen by introducing youth competitive teams, children's swim lessons, and a senior masters program.

Other factors include revenue-generating models, including a fee structure tied to lane usage and active swimmer volume, alongside rental fees from local schools, independent teams and community classes.

Olympia High School head swim coach Henry Valz said he recently presented a pro formal financial model to partners demonstrating that operating the public pool could be done sustainably. He said a grant proposal is being readied for the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners, the Monday, May 18, 2026, Commission Work Session was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION

Jasmine Vasavada, President

Joel Hansen, Secretary