

EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, January 21, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Meeting Location
El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

Janet Abelson – Mayor

Mayor Pro Tem Rebecca Benassini
Councilmember Jan Bridges

Councilmember Mark Friedman
Councilmember Greg Lyman

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Bridges, Friedman, Lyman and Mayor Abelson all present.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Benassini

7:00 p.m.

CONVENE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Abelson convened the City Council meeting at 7:01 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OR OBSERVATION OF MOMENT OF SILENCE was led by Councilmember Bridges.

2. COUNCIL / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Bridges announced that Mayor Pro Tem Benassini and her husband Scott, recently welcomed twin boys into their family. The family is doing well. Councilmember Bridges also noted that Cheryl Morse, City Clerk, was acknowledged recently by the California City Clerks Association for her work mentoring new City Clerks, and for her work on the Athenian Dialogue Committee and noted that she will be installed as an Athenian Leadership Society Fellow by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks this year.

Councilmember Lyman thanked the Human Relations Commission for hosting the annual Martin Luther King Jr. parade on January 20 and noted that it was the 25th anniversary of the event in El Cerrito. Mayor Abelson provided great remarks.

On February 1, 2014 there will be a grand re-opening of the Ohlone Greenway from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. BART has completed its retrofit of the superstructure that supports the BART tracks.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MYC) 2012 Pavement Management Award Recognizing the City of El Cerrito for having the most improved roads, with the greatest increase in pavement condition index (PCI) over a three-year period.

Yvetteh Ortiz, Interim Public Works Director and City Engineer, presented the MTC award to the City Council and explained that the award recognizes El Cerrito for having the greatest improvement in road conditions of any city in the jurisdiction of the Bay Area for a three year period. The award is significant because it recognizes the accomplishment of El Cerrito going from having one of the worst road conditions in the Bay Area in 2006 to one of the top three who have the best road conditions in 2012.

Mayor Abelson thanked staff for their hard work and thanked El Cerrito voters in particular for their support of Measure A in 2008.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, expressed concerns with the Police Department. He said he was stopped near Schmidt Lane and accused of injustice.

Tom Panas, El Cerrito, thanked the City and Community Outreach Specialist, Suzanne Iarla in particular, for supporting the Chung Mei Heritage Day at City Hall on December 18, 2013. The celebration was a great success. Mr. Panas provided the City Council with packets of selected pages from the Chung Mei Chronicles and written comments addressed to the Planning Commission about hardscape in the City. Mr. Panas also noted that the Planning Commission approved the Eden Senior Housing Project on December 18. Mitigation for the project includes historical interpretation about the Japanese nursery community. Mr. Panas also presented written comments to the Planning Commission regarding the City's hard-scape.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation in Recognition and Memory of Angela Saridis

Approve a proclamation commending and recognizing the many contributions and positive impact on the community made by Angela Saridis to the El Cerrito Community and offering its condolences to Ms. Saridis' family on behalf of the grateful residents and patrons of the City of El Cerrito.

Chris Jones, Recreation Director, expressed his appreciation for Ms. Saridis and her work. He spoke about the positive effects Ms. Saridis had on staff, students, friends and the community and about her warm and caring personality. She was the heart and soul of the El Cerrito Swim Center who touched the lives of everyone she came into contact with. She will be greatly missed. Mr. Jones informed everyone that donations are being collected by her family, friends and staff from the Community Center for a memorial bench dedicated to Ms. Saridis' memory.

Mayor Abelson stated that Ms. Saridis was a very, very special and caring person. Ms. Saridis had a positive impact on many, many lives. Mayor Abelson thanked her family and friends for attending this evening and noted that her husband Harry is an integral part of the community.

Bridget Cooney, Aquatics Supervisor, presented certificates of recognition to Lifeguards Stephen Dunkle and Maximille Gonzales for displaying the qualities of level headedness and quick thinking during the emergency.

Action: Proclamation presented to Mr. Saridis.

B. Doctors Medical Center Fiscal Update and Declaration of Fiscal Emergency – Presentation requested by Supervisor Gioia, Board of Directors, West Contra Costa Healthcare District.

John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor, stated that he was appearing before the City Council as a Director of the West Contra Costa Healthcare District. Director Gioia provided a history of the financial challenges facing Doctors Hospital and noted that seventy-five

percent of patients are on medi-cal and medi-care. Twelve percent are commercial pay by companies such as Health Net or Blue Cross. Eleven percent of the patients who receive services from Doctors Hospital are uninsured. Director Gioia stated that closure of Doctors Hospital Emergency Room would have a dramatic impact on county emergency medical services due to longer ambulance transport and waiting room times. The hospital operates a full service emergency heart attack and stroke facility that is very valuable to the area. The Hospital Board has declared a fiscal emergency and is exploring options. The hospital is exploring whether to give voters a choice as to whether they want to continue to fund the hospital or fund it in a way that makes it more attractive for affiliation with another hospital. The County has provided loans. Current projections are that the hospital will run out of funds by June 2014. Implementation of Obamacare could have a long term positive effect but will result in a short term loss of approximately \$2,500,000 per year.

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, expressed concerns over the possible loss of Doctors Hospital.

Action: Received presentation.

5. ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT CALENDAR – Item Nos. 5A and 5B

Moved, seconded (Friedman/Bridges; Ayes – Councilmember Bridges, Friedman, Lyman and Mayor Abelson; Noes – None; Absent – Mayor Pro Tem Benassini) and carried to approve Consent Calendar Item Nos. 5A and 5B as indicated below.

A. Minutes for Approval

Approve the: 1) December 17, 2013 Regular City Council; and 2) January 7, 2014 Special City Council meeting minutes.

Action: Approved minutes.

B. West Contra Costa Youth Services Bureau Proclamation

Approve a proclamation commending the West Contra Costa Youth Services Bureau (WCCYSB) for improving the wellness of the community and providing services to the children, youth and families of West Contra Costa County and joining in the celebration of May 15, 2014 as the official 30th Anniversary date of the West Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau.

Action: Approved proclamation.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS – None

7. POLICY MATTERS

A. Approve a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application to Unite the Hillside Natural Area and Restrict the Use of Specified Hillside Natural Area to Public Recreation and Open Space Only

Adopt a resolution approving the City's application for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for the acquisition of the Madera Hillside Natural Area Property (APN 505-142-014, -012 and 013) to unite the Hillside Natural Area and approving the grant requirement to restrict the conversion of the Hillside Natural Area properties, specified by the City in the grant application, from Open Space/Parks and Recreation to Public Recreation and Open Space in perpetuity. *Exempt from CEQA.*

Presenter: Melanie Mintz, Interim Community Development Director.

Speakers: Dave Weinstein, El Cerrito, Trail Trekkers and Open Space Campaign, stated his support for holding open space in perpetuity and reported that the Trail Trekkers (Trekkers) are doing fairly well with fundraising. The Campaign has raised \$28,000. The Trekkers are looking for additional donors and are about to begin a business outreach campaign. The Trekkers are also planning outreach efforts for neighborhoods, hikes, crowd funding and a Hillside Festival in the spring that will be educational and build excitement. Mr. Weinstein said that he believes the Trekkers will meet their fundraising goal.

Pamela Austin, El Cerrito, Treasurer of the Trail Trekkers and Open Space Campaign, stated

that fundraisers hope to meet and even exceed their fundraising goals so very little Measure WW funds are used. The majority of donations are small - \$100 or below. Ms. Austin, asked the Council to support the Trust for Public Land grant that is being written so the purchase can be completed.

Action: Moved, seconded (Friedman/Lyman; Ayes – Councilmember Bridges, Friedman, Lyman and Mayor Abelson; Noes – None; Absent – Mayor Pro Tem Benassini) and carried to adopt Resolution No. 2014-01 and directed staff to work with the Trust for Public Land to submit an application and map on behalf of the City that reflects a desire to include potential future recreational enhancements, particularly for the property known as the East Bay Municipal Utility District pad, located at the end of Snowdon Avenue.

B. Annual Council Liaison Reorganization and Appointments

Discuss City Council appointments to regional bodies and liaison appointments to local boards, commissions and committees and approve appointments for 2014.

Action: Moved, seconded (Friedman/Lyman; Ayes – Councilmember Bridges, Friedman, Lyman and Mayor Abelson; Noes – None; Absent – Mayor Pro Tem Benassini) and carried to approve appointments for 2014.

8. COUNCIL LOCAL AND REGIONAL LIAISON ASSIGNMENT REPORTS

Mayoral and City Council communications regarding local and regional liaison assignments and committee reports.

Councilmember Lyman reported on his attendance at the January 16, 2014 Integrated Waste Management Authority Board meeting. The Board continues to consider what it will look like in the future. Richmond, which has been threatening to withdraw from the Authority for a year, is now thinking of remaining in the Authority. Councilmember Lyman has fought to preserve El Cerrito's stake in the dissolution of funds when the Authority disbands. El Cerrito residents have been paying for the integrated recycling facility for thirty years. The El Cerrito Recycling Center has been processing twice of what other communities have been contributing for the past twelve years. Half of the revenue resulting from recycling sales is a result of El Cerrito's contribution to construction of the building. Another change under consideration is whether the County will become a voting member. Councilmember Lyman hopes to have more information to share with the Council and public after attending the Authority's February meeting. Councilmember Lyman also noted that he and Mayor Abelson attended the Contra Costa Mayors Conference in Hercules.

Mayor Abelson announced that the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) has hired a new executive director, John Nemeth. Mayor Abelson said that she and WCCTAC are looking forward to a successful relationship with Mr. Nemeth.

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS

Item No. 7(A): Approve a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application to Unite the Hillside Natural Area and Restrict the Use of Specified Hillside Natural Area to Public Recreation and Open Space Only

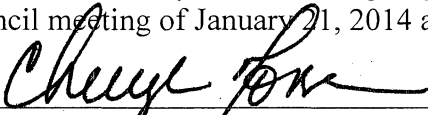
1. Maps delineating the Hillside Natural Area – *Submitted by Melanie Mintz, Interim Community Development Director.*

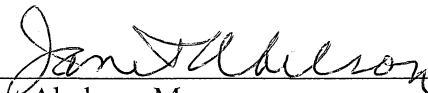
Other:

2. Chung Mei Heritage Day Materials and Comments for Planning Commissioners regarding hardscape – *Submitted by Tom Panas, El Cerrito Historical Society.*

9. ADJOURN REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING in memory of Ron Egherman and Angela Saridis at 8:53 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the City Council meeting of January 21, 2014 as approved by the El Cerrito City Council.


Cheryl Morse, City Clerk


Janet Abelson, Mayor