



Police Department

Staff Liaison

Sergeant Aaron Leone
(510) 215-4418
aleone@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE Community Safety Committee

March 2nd, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Hana Gardens
10860 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, Ca 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

6:00 PM CONVENE REGULAR MEETING Chair Cobb called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair William Cobb, Vice-Chair James Dolgonas, Members; George Gager, Rosa Esquivel, Howard Hickman were all present, and Richard Ehara was absent (unexcused).
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Battalion Chief Jose Castrajon from the El Cerrito Fire Department spoke to the CSC about CERT.

- New group of community members involved since November.
- Program shifting to a **community-based approach**.
- Currently 5 active members; goal to expand participation.
- Plans to:
 - Implement “train-the-trainer” model.
 - Increase instructor capacity.
 - Offer additional trainings (e.g., Stop the Bleed, CPR).
- Exploring transition to a **nonprofit (501(c)(3)) structure** for fundraising and organization.
- Collaboration with neighboring programs (Albany, Richmond) underway.
- Discussion included:
 - Benefits and challenges of nonprofit status.
 - Importance of community involvement and shared resources.
 - Website updates and outreach improvements in progress.

3. **COUNCIL AND STAFF LIAISON REPORTS**

City Council Member William Ktsanes provided a council report.

- **Upcoming Community Meeting:**

- March 10 at 4:00 PM.

- Topic includes **Flock camera system** and related concerns.

- **Flock Camera Discussion:**

- Ongoing public debate regarding privacy and data access.
- Clarification that prior unauthorized access was due to a system error (since corrected).
- Issue expected to return to City Council for renewal discussion.

- **Library Ballot Initiative:**

- Election scheduled for June 2.
- Ballot language finalized; cannot be changed by Council.
- Multiple potential locations discussed (BART site, existing site, alternative parcels).
- Significant community debate expected.

- **City Infrastructure Concerns:**

- Aging public safety facilities noted.
- Concerns about funding multiple large projects (library, public safety building, etc.).
- Emphasis on building community support for future funding.

Sergeant Aaron Leone provided a staff liaison report.

- **Residential Burglary Case Update:**

- Incident: Suspect entered occupied apartment at night.
- Extensive surveillance review conducted.
- Suspect apprehended ~2 weeks later after being spotted nearby.
- Suspect had extensive prior criminal history.
- Case resulted in charges and expected state prison sentence.

- **Crime Trends & Enforcement:**

- Increase in DUI enforcement.
- Continued proactive patrols leading to additional arrests.

- **Staffing Update:**

- Four new officers recently graduated academy.
- Three in final “shadow phase” of training.
- Anticipated increase in available patrol officers.

4. INTERVIEW PERSPECTIVE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Perspective member Wayne Coburn did not show up to the meeting to be interviewed.

5. MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRESENTATION

Sergeant Leone provided the following information;

- Overview provided in compliance with state transparency law.

Key Points:

- No equipment acquired from the military; all purchased commercially.
- Equipment includes:
 - **Drones (UAVs):**
 - Currently 5 in use; additional units on order.
 - Used for search, surveillance, and safety (no weapons).
 - **Command Vehicle:**
 - Used for major incidents and events.
 - **Less-Lethal Weapons:**
 - Bean bag rounds and 40mm sponge rounds.
 - Used for de-escalation; no deployments resulting in injury this year.
 - **Specialized Firearms:**
 - Two MP5s for SWAT team use (currently not in use).
 - **Gas-based munitions:**
 - Not used during reporting period.
- Mutual aid discussion:
 - Other agencies may bring equipment (e.g., armored vehicles) into the city if needed for an operation they are conducting.

6. DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF EXISTING AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Discussion of **ad hoc committees:**
 - Some topics (e.g., red flag day parking) may no longer require committee attention.
 - Others (e.g., e-bikes) to remain pending further input.
- **Vegetation Management:**
 - Remains an active and necessary topic.
- **Underground Utilities:**
 - Discussion of feasibility and cost challenges.
 - Ad Hoc committee members will give presentation of their findings at an upcoming meeting.
- **Recommendation Strategy:**
 - Councilmember advised:
 - Committees should make **specific, actionable recommendations** to Council.
 - Avoid vague proposals that result in “receive and file” with no action.

7. UPDATE FROM AD HOC COMMITTEES

Members of the Ad Hoc committees will update their progress on their projects. These may include;

- Cobb and Dolgonas – Vegetation Management
- Cobb and Dolgonas – Red Flag Day parking program
- Cobb, Esquivel, and Ehara – E-bicycles
- Gager and Hickman – PG&E Rule 20A
- Esquivel and Ehara – Crime Blotter

8. DISCUSS CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR POSITIONS FOR THE UPCOMING TERM

- Upcoming vote in April for:
 - **Chair**
 - **Vice Chair**
- Members encouraged to consider serving.
 - Terms are typically one year.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Vice Chair Jim Dolgonas made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2nd meeting and Vice Chair Cedrick Cobb seconded it.
Ayes: Cobb, Dolgonas, Gager, Hickman, and Esquivel
Noes: None
Abstentions: None

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM

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Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at El Cerrito Police Department – 10900 San Pablo Avenue El Cerrito, Ca 94530 during normal business hours.