

**EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, September 17, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.  
Hillside Conference Room**

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, September 17, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Councilmembers Abelson, Fadelli, Lyman, Pardue-Okimoto, and Mayor Quinto

**CONVENE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Quinto convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no speakers.

**COMMISSION INTERVIEWS, STATUS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Conduct interviews of candidates for the City Boards and Commissions. Interviews may result in an announcement of appointment at the meeting.

**Action:** One interview completed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Councilmembers Abelson, Fadelli, Lyman, Pardue-Okimoto, and Mayor Quinto

**CONVENE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Quinto convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

- 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OR OBSERVATION OF MOMENT OF SILENCE**

## 2. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Fadelli announced that he attended a conference sponsored by the Bay Area Quality Management District – *United Against GHGs: Diesel Free by '33*, at which he heard about promoting alternative energy fleets and efforts to be diesel free by 2033.

He also reported that he attended a swearing in ceremony of new police officers, explorers and volunteers at City Hall.

Councilmember Abelson reported she attended the League of California Cities Conference. Topics that she found of particular interest included dense high-rise factory-built housing and unconscious bias.

Councilmember Lyman announced upcoming events being held in the City during the month of October.

Mayor Pro-Tem Okimoto reported that she attended the League Conference and that her favorite session was on Disaster Recovery and hearing stories on the recent fires and what was done and what was learned

Mayor Quinto announced that he attended the League Conference and accepted three Beacon Spotlight Awards, which recognize an agency's holistic approach to addressing climate change, on behalf of the City. He reported that El Cerrito received a Gold Level Award for 14% Community Greenhouse Gas Reductions, a Platinum Level Award for 26% Energy Savings and a Platinum Level Award for 52% Natural Gas Savings.

The Mayor also reported that he represents the City on the League's Policy Committee and Resolution Committee. He stated that he serves as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President on the API Caucus and will be Chair in January and that he also serves on the LGBT Caucus at-large and the East Bay Division at-large.

## 3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Howdy Goudy, El Cerrito, asked the Council to enact an immediate moratorium on rent increases until a decision is made on what policies will be put in place. He also said that he isn't convinced that non-binding mediation works.

Ryk Tanalski, El Cerrito, stated that the City is not doing enough to remove excess vegetation, which could result in fires. He said that trees that overhang into the roadway could hamper fire vehicles from getting access to areas in an emergency.

April Tanalski, El Cerrito, echoed the same concerns about overhanging trees as well as problems with vegetation debris clogging storm drains.

Robin Mitchell, El Cerrito, stated support for a rent stabilization ordinance and a moratorium against rent increases until the City has a program in place.

Katherine Cesa, El Cerrito, expressed concern that cigarettes thrown from cars

and on to walkways and trails may cause fires.

David Enday, El Cerrito, said that he represents neighbors that border the Berkeley Country Club and that they are concerned that the large eucalyptus trees on the Club's property will fall on their houses, but more importantly they are concerned that they pose a real fire threat. He asked when neighbors are negligent in taking care of their land, when does it become a City concern.

Al Miller, El Cerrito, announced the Library's "One City, One Book" program has been launched, with 150 copies of the book, *The 57 Bus*, being distributed in various locations throughout the City. He also announced that the Friends of the Library will hold their Fall book sale on September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

Michael Fischer, El Cerrito, Library Commissioner, said that on September 4<sup>th</sup> the Library celebrated the debut of the County's first LGBT collection.

Susan Duncan, El Cerrito, stated that the overgrowth of vegetation in the Hillside Natural Area is a fire hazard and that there needs to be action, not more studies.

Marlene George, El Cerrito, agreed that overgrown trees and the Hillside Natural Area are high risk fire hazards. She said she would like this to be on a Council agenda for discussion and would like the City to work with the community to develop an action plan.

Nick Zamorano, El Cerrito, stated his support for prior statements concerning fire hazards. He asked the Council to consider this an urgent matter, and that the City prepare an action plan to address this, rather than be reactive after a disaster.

Scott Tipping, El Cerrito, agreed that the natural open spaces, especially areas with eucalyptus trees, present a fire danger. He felt the City already has done plenty of studies, but now needs to proceed with a long-term action plan.

Gary Prost, El Cerrito, distributed material recommending grading over the fire pit in the Hillside Natural Area. He stated that the pit presents a serious fire hazard.

Robert Howe, El Cerrito, agreed that eucalyptus and pine trees that are dead and dying are adding to the fire hazard. He recommended that trees be thinned or removed as needed to avoid a catastrophe.

Libby Tipping, El Cerrito, said that she lives by open space and that her family has done a lot of work around their home to limit the fire risk. However, she felt, that it is not "if," but "when" there will be a fire in this area.

Diane Straus, El Cerrito, referred to the Hillside Natural Area Fire Reduction Plan from 1994. She asked if any of its recommendations were ever acted on. She also expressed concern that there are talks to expand the Hillside Area and that this would increase the fire risk. Ms. Straus also suggested that the City attempt to get emergency funds to address fire mitigation measures.

Paul Duncan, El Cerrito, agreed with points raised by others regarding fire hazards including: 1) the need for more fire mitigation; 2) implementing prior plans rather than spending money on preparing a master plan; and 3) obtaining grant funding for fire mitigation. He stated the community wants a commitment from the City to make fire safety a priority.

Sherry Drobner, El Cerrito, told a story of a tenant whose rent was raised to the point that she became homeless and had to leave California. She asked that the City put a freeze on rent increases until the Council implements other rent control programs.

Kathleen Wong, El Cerrito, said that every year she worries about the fire risks as she lives near the Hillside Natural Area. She stated that there is only so much a homeowner can do to protect his/her home. Ms. Wong asked that the City thin or take out the eucalyptus and other fuel in this area to help mitigate the fire hazard.

Miguel Espino, El Cerrito, expressed concern for the housing crisis and increasing rents, which leads to homelessness and people being forced out of the area. He said that he believes any new housing that is built should be affordable for people who have low and moderate incomes. He stated his support for a rent increase moratorium.

Makalia Aga, El Cerrito, informed the Council that her rent has increased 20% each year for the past three years. She expressed her belief that no one should have to choose between putting food on the table or paying rent. She urged the Council to put a rent freeze and renter protections in place.

Angelina Tyner, El Cerrito, stated that as a student and young professional, she is barely making it, and won't be able to as rents increase. She asked the Council to put a rent increase moratorium in place until the City comes up with rent control policies.

Michel Maharbiz, El Cerrito, said that all of his neighbors are concerned that there will be fires in El Cerrito and that the Hillside Natural Area is a catastrophe waiting to happen.

Eleanor Rosch, El Cerrito, said that everyone has already pointed out that the Hillside Natural Area is a natural disaster waiting to happen. She stated that it should be the first priority, because if this area catches fire, there goes El Cerrito, and nothing else will matter. She suggested that if the Charter measure passes, the first funding priority should be for public safety and fire prevention.

Ronnie Polonsky, El Cerrito, reported that the El Cerrito Progressive Alliance has requested the City implement a temporary rent freeze.

Tomi Nagai-Rothe, El Cerrito, from the El Cerrito Progressive Alliance, read a statement from an El Cerrito renter, whose rent has been raised \$200 a month every year for the past three years and is getting close to being priced out of the City. She spoke in support of a rent freeze until the Council adopts options for

controlling rents.

Nicholas Galloro, El Cerrito, said he supports a rent freeze and a just cause for eviction program. He expressed his opinion that non-binding mediation does not work. Mr. Galloro referred to the report, *The Housing Crisis Hits Home In Concord*, which was published by the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, the Central County Regional Group and First 5 Contra Costa. He stated that report provides useful information on the problems and offers proposals to improve Concord's program.

Kathy Compagno, El Cerrito, stated her support for fire mitigation action plans as raised by others.

Joe Christen, El Cerrito, said he is in support of rent control and just cause for eviction ordinances.

Jeff Levin, El Cerrito, Policy Director of East Bay Housing Organizations, stated support of a freeze on rents and no-fault evictions. He said the only real solution is to build more affordable housing; but in the meantime, measures need to be put in place to protect tenants. He reported that there are 4,000 renters in El Cerrito, 40% make less than \$50,000 a year. Using the standard of 30% for rent, he assessed that they can afford \$1,200 a month for rent, but 80% of these renters are paying more than 30%, and over 50% are paying over 50% of their income for rent. He felt that these households are in risk of displacement and asked the Council to take action now to prevent this.

George Gager, El Cerrito, an affordable housing consultant for HUD, provided statistical information regarding job growth in the Bay Area, which will have an enormous impact on the real estate market in El Cerrito. He reported, that according to HUD data, the Bay Area has higher rents than any area in the U.S.

#### **4. ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Action:** Moved, seconded (Lyman/Pardue-Okimoto) and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar as indicated below.

##### **A. Approval of Minutes**

Approve the Minutes for meeting of August 21, 2018.

**Action:** Approved minutes.

##### **B. Proclamation recognizing Janet Bilbas**

Approve a Proclamation recognizing Janet Bilbas, Recreation Supervisor, for her years of service.

**Action:** Approved proclamation.

##### **C. Proclamation – Hispanic Heritage Month**

Approve a Proclamation designating September 15 through October 15, 2018 as Hispanic Heritage Month.

**Action:** Approved proclamation.

**D. Proclamation - National Arts and Humanities Month**

Approve a Proclamation recognizing October as National Arts and Humanities Month.

**Action:** Approved proclamation.

**E. Proclamation - Clean Air Day**

Approve a Proclamation designating October 3, 2018 as Clean Air Day.

**Action:** Approved proclamation.

**F. Appointment of Matean Everson to the Committee on Aging**

Approve the Committee on Aging's recommendation to appoint Matean Everson to the Committee on Aging.

**Action:** Approved appointment of Matean Everson to the Committee on Aging.

**G. Appointment of Santiago Cilley to the Economic Development Committee**

Approve the Economic Development Committee's recommendation to appoint Santiago Cilley to the Economic Development Committee.

**Action:** Approved the appointment of Santiago Cilley to the Economic Development Committee.

**H. Final Subdivision Map for El Dorado Townhomes**

Adopt a Resolution approving the Final Subdivision Map for a six-lot subdivision for condominium purpose, as part of development of a 29-unit multi-family residential project located at 5800, 5802, 5828 El Dorado Street.

**Action:** Adopted Resolution No. 2018-50.

**I. Speed Limits for Eight Speed Zones**

Adopt a Resolution establishing speed limits for eight Speed Zones to allow for enforcement using radar, lidar and other electronic devices in conformance with State of California requirements.

**Action:** Adopted Resolution No. 2018-51.

**J. Amendment to Classification Plan**

Adopt a Resolution amending the City's Classification Plan revising class specifications for: 1) Human Resources Technician; 2) Senior Human Resources Analyst; and 3) Human Resources Manager.

**Action:** Adopted Resolution No. 2018-52.

**5. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. Presentation on the 2018 E.C. S.T.A.R.S. Internship Program**

Receive a presentation on the 2018 El Cerrito Students Training and Ready for Success ("EC STARS") Internship Program.

**Action:** Human Resources Manager Kristen Cunningham gave an overview of the Internship Program and presented the five interns, Madelyn Arechiga Smith, Jordan Tecson, Vincent Nguyen, Sam Mann, and Prasidh Thapa.

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Fire Hazard Abatement**

Conduct a Public Hearing and upon conclusion, adopt a Resolution confirming the report of costs of abatement of public nuisance conditions resulting from the presence of weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material on designated private property pursuant to El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 16.26.

**Presentation:** Joseph Gagne, Fire Prevention Officer, presented the staff report. Lance Maples, Fire Chief, answered Council questions related to the public concerns raised under "public comment".

**Public Hearing:** Mayor Quinto opened the public hearing. There being no one wishing to speak to this matter, it was moved, seconded (Lyman/Pardue-Okimoto) and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

**Action:** Moved, seconded (Lyman/Pardue-Okimoto) and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 2018-53.

**7. POLICY MATTERS - None**

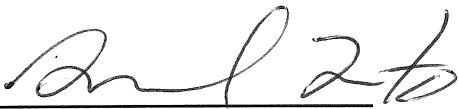
**8. CITY COUNCIL LOCAL & REGIONAL LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS**

Mayor Pro-Tem Pardue-Okimoto announced that the Environmental Quality Committee will be hosting an El Cerrito Volunteer Recognition and EQC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party on October 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Recycling Center. She also reported that the Committee will be hosting "EC Sun Shares Workshop" to help houses get ready for electric vehicles on October 15<sup>th</sup> at City Hall. from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Councilmember Fadelli announced that the Human Relations Committee has been working on a proposed ordinance related to a rent increase moratorium.

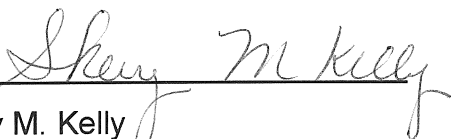
**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.



Gabriel Quinto, Mayor

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the special City Council meetings of September 17, 2018 as approved by the El Cerrito City Council.



Sherry M. Kelly  
Acting City Clerk