



# Minutes

## Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held  
July 27, 2004

---

**MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:03 p.m. by Mayor Rogers in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

**ROLL CALL: PRESENT:** Mayor Todd Rogers  
Vice Mayor Wayne Piercy  
Council Member Joseph Esquivel  
Council Member Larry Van Nostran  
Council Member Robert Wagner

### **M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW**

Deputy City Manager Sandi Ruyle advised that the purpose for this session was to provide an opportunity to hear from the School Consultant, re-evaluate the goals previously established by the City Council, examine the budget item reserved for Educational Liaison services, and review status of Ad Hoc School District Formation Committee.

Gerald Hayward, Management, Analysis and Planning (MAP), presented a map demonstrating possible configurations for a deannexation effort from the Paramount Unified School District (PUSD.) He drew attention to the declining enrollment numbers for Lakewood students in the Lakewood Elementary School area of the PUSD over the past decade. He briefly reviewed the de-annexation process, noting that if all of the proposed areas were to be deannexed, the PUSD would experience a significant revenue loss from the decreased student population, and that if only the Lakewood portion were to be considered, it would result in facility problems. He noted that the major hurdle in any deannexation proceeding was to obtain the acquiescence of the district that would receive the students or operate the area vacated by the PUSD, in this case either Long Beach or Bellflower Unified School Districts. He advised that construction of a comparable school elsewhere in the PUSD was estimated at a cost of \$10.3 million, half of which would be provided by the State. He reported that having met with the Superintendent of Long Beach Unified School District, Chris Steinhauser, not only was there was no support among the members of the LBUSD Board for any deannexation effort, there were no foreseeable conditions which would change that position. Superintendent Steinhauser had indicated, however, that LBUSD would continue to welcome any inter-district transfer students from PUSD that wished to attend a LBUSD school. Mr. Hayward noted that he had received a similar negative response from Bellflower.

Responding to a question from Council Member Wagner, Mr. Hayward stated that it would appear that as far as the Bellflower Unified Board Members were concerned, the issue of a Bellflower/Lakewood combined district was a dead issue.

**M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW – Cont.**

Mr. Hayward concluded by stating that with the opposition from the Districts, he could see no way that a deannexation effort could be successful. He noted that the most positive outcome of the process had been the establishment of a process with LBUSD to receive transfer students from PUSD and that a similar process, with a district contract, should be established with BUSD.

Vice Mayor Piercy stated that since the goal of the City Council was to improve the educational delivery system, that perhaps something could be done to help improve Lakewood Elementary School.

Council Member Wagner determined from Mr. Hayward that there were currently only 63 out of the more than 500 students attending Lakewood Elementary School that were Lakewood residents.

Mayor Rogers thanked Mr. Hayward for his comprehensive report and stated that while he understood the political realities of the situation, he did not want to have to tell the Lakewood residents in that area that there would never be an opportunity for a neighborhood school and would instead be stuck with a school whose poor performance spoke for itself. He stated the transfer process was a positive note, but that parents should not have to go to such great lengths to secure a good education for their children. He noted that having received an anonymous tip that the PUSD was considering the closure of Lakewood Elementary due to declining enrollment, he questioned their opposition to the deannexation.

Council Member Wagner stated that while he also was frustrated by the process, there had been several unsuccessful deannexation attempts from PUSD in the past and that without the cooperation of the districts, there was no point in proceeding. He suggested the Council focus more effort on the inter-district transfer process, noting that it had been the practice of the County Office of Education to approve student transfer to a willing district, even if the home district opposed the transfer.

Council Member Van Nostran questioned Mr. Hayward about the petition process. Mr. Hayward stated that even with a successful petition process and if, following hearings, a favorable recommendation were given by the L.A. County Office of Education, he would almost guarantee that such a petition would not be approved by the State Board of Education. Council Member Van Nostran stated that having given the process their best effort, perhaps a better approach at this point would be to work on improving relationships with the districts and that the Educational Liaison position budgeted could make an impact.

Mr. Hayward noted that although it was less than what they had hoped for, the City Council could take a substantial amount of the credit for the new transfer process.

Council Member Van Nostran determined from the City Manager that letters had been sent to all Lakewood residents in the PUSD about the transfer program.

Council Member Wagner suggested that such a letter be sent annually.

**M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW – Cont.**

Vice Mayor Piercy stated it was important to continue to move forward and perhaps a partnership with the district to improve the school situation should be considered.

Council Member Wagner expressed concern about committing too many resources since the number of Lakewood students in the PUSD was too small to have any impact on the district.

Mayor Rogers stated that there could still be legislative options that would help the Lakewood residents within the PUSD. There were legislative proposals that would allow students greater choice about the school district they must attend which would relieve the burden of the transfer process.

Mayor Rogers suggested the MAP report be considered received and filed and that the City Council consider their educational goals.

**ACTIVE GOALS**

A. Increase Lakewood residents' membership on school boards. City Council approved this option. They recommend supporting the creation of district regions among all the school boards serving Lakewood. This option would provide Lakewood representation on each board.

There was consensus among the Council Members that the intent of the goal had not been for the Council as a body or the City as an organization to take any official position either supporting or opposing candidates for other jurisdictions and that the goal be deleted.

Vice Mayor Piercy noted, however, that there had been times when a Lakewood candidate had made a run for one of the local school boards and he challenged his colleagues, as individuals, to support good, local people when they decide to run.

B. Persuade either Long Beach Unified School District or Bellflower Unified School District to annex and administer the school attendance area in Lakewood served by Paramount Unified School District. *City Council approved this option, noting it was a top priority.*

Council Member Wagner concluded that following the MAP update, this matter was a dead issue. Mayor Rogers wanted to go on record as strongly objecting to abandoning this effort.

C. Work with Long Beach Unified School District to convert Lakewood High School and its "feeder" middle schools into high-performance, high-quality schools through a charter high school and/or a charter complex. *City Council approved this option.*

Council Member Wagner noted that there was no support for a charter school at Lakewood High School.

Mayor Rogers proposed re-phrasing the goal to state, "to support charter schools, magnet schools and school-within-a-school programs in general," and delete the reference to Lakewood High School.

**M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW – Cont.**

C. Work to support charter schools, magnet schools and school-within-a-school programs. **(Revised Goal)**

D. Work with Long Beach Unified School District for new development and bond funds to build new schools in Long Beach and reduce bussing into Lakewood. *City Council approved this option and noted that the City of Bellflower and Bellflower Unified School District should be included in this option.*

Mayor Rogers suggested re-phrasing the goal to read, “Work with Districts to promote neighborhood schools and reduce the need for bussing.”

D. Work with Districts to promote neighborhood schools and reduce the need for bussing. **(Revised Goal)**

E. ABC Unified School District does not appear to have equal educational opportunities in Lakewood schools. It is recommended that we seek support from the ABC Board to provide trustee areas and have a representative from south of Del Amo on the Board; and get Lakewood students better instructional programs so they have a realistic chance of attending Whitney Middle/High School. *City Council approved this option.*

Council Member Wagner stated this goal did not appear to be a realistic goal.

Mayor Rogers requested that this goal be retained for the time being and that the City Council continue to advocate trustee areas in District without supporting any particular candidates.

F. Meetings with school districts on MAP Report to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the schools in each district and ask each district what they can provide to improve education in Lakewood schools. *City Council approved this option. Council directed that a copy of the consultant's report be taken to each school district superintendent on Friday, October 24, 2003 with a cover letter from the City Manager containing a request to open a dialogue on their ideas on what they can provide to improve education in Lakewood schools. In this respect, the City Council affirms that its standard for educational opportunities is higher than what is being received from the four districts. Council is not satisfied with the status quo. Council also directed that our MAP consultants, along with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, meet with each superintendent to review the MAP report and plan for further discussion.*

The consensus of the Council was that this goal had been completed and could be removed from the list.

G. Define and Recruit an Educational Liaison position to work *(within the community and)* with the school districts serving Lakewood.

**M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW – Cont.**

Council Member Wagner stated that without significant goals left to achieve, there was no need for such a position.

Mayor Rogers observed that it would be beneficial to have a ‘go to’ staff person to handle parent complaints, grant applications or other goals, since current City staffing levels provided no capacity for such additional assignments.

Council Member Van Nostran stated it might be wise to look at retaining a consultant instead of adding a staff person, since there would be no long term guarantee of continued employment.

Mayor Rogers advocated directing the City Manager to develop a job description based upon the goals as revised by this discussion and current programs. Upon completion, the City Council would review and determine if a position was warranted.

Vice Mayor Piercy requested the wording be changed to make it clear that the position would be about more than just monitoring district activity, that it would involve efforts to expand the vision within the community.

**DEFERRED GOALS**

- A. Start an Excellence in Education Civic Organization with specific initiatives. *City Council deferred this option at this time.*
- B. Form a permanent Commission-type committee, like the Education Liaison Committee, to work with the districts. *City Council approved this option. They recommend a six-to-nine-person commission, with two representatives from each school district, to improve the education opportunities of Lakewood students and to enhance communication between Lakewood parents and the existing school districts. Details of the commission will be developed by the City Council Members in the upcoming months.*
- C. MAP is not recommending a Lakewood Unified School District at this time. *City Council determined to retain this option but not to pursue it at this time, considering the financial crisis at the State level.*
- D. MAP does not recommend a Lakewood/Bellflower District at this time. *City Council agreed not to pursue a Lakewood/Bellflower District at this time.*

Mayor Rogers stated he could see no point in keeping items A, B or D on even a deferred list, however, he would like to keep item C as a deferred goal.

COUNCIL MEMBER WAGNER MOVED AND MAYOR ROGERS SECONDED TO KEEP ITEM “C” AS A DEFERRED GOAL AND TO ADD AN ACTIVE GOAL TO STATE THAT THE CITY WOULD PROVIDE SUPPORT TO A COMMUNITY INITIATED EFFORT TOWARD SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT. THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

**M.A.P. SCHOOL CONSULTANT UPDATE/AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEW** – Cont.  
MAYOR ROGERS MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER WAGNER SECONDED TO  
ABOLISH THE AD HOC SCHOOL DISTRICT FORMATION COMMITTEE. THERE  
BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

Vice Mayor Piercy stated the Council should be open to future study sessions as new programs, materials or concepts for educational systems became known.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Rogers adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC  
City Clerk