



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Special Meeting held
July 11, 2006

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Van Nostran in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Larry Van Nostran
Vice Mayor Diane DuBois
Council Member Steve Croft
Council Member Joseph Esquivel
Council Member Todd Rogers

ON- AND OFF-STREET PARKING STUDY SESSION

Council Member Rogers reported that he and Council Member Croft worked as an ad hoc committee with the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to address the parking of detached trailers on city streets. The ordinance would establish a permit process that would allow Lakewood residents to receive up to 16 permits per year, each separated by a minimum of three days. The proposed permit process would be a paperless system either telephone- or internet-based. He stated that the committee viewed the ordinance as a good first step to control the storage of trailers on city streets. He stated that the committee had also discussed a permit process to restrict on-street vehicle parking to Lakewood residents only. He stated he believed that a sizable number of the recreational vehicles and trailers parked on city streets were registered to owners outside the City.

Council Member Croft provided some further background for the ordinance provisions stating that the length and number of the permits had been based on the experiences of other cities with similar programs. He stated that the ordinance contained a provision for extraordinary circumstances. He noted that the program could easily be expanded to vehicles other than detached trailers, if such was ever needed. He further noted that in a recent community survey, residents had favored a permit process over an outright parking ban.

Council Member Rogers clarified for Vice Mayor DuBois that additional parking control staff would only be necessary if the City Council decided to proactively enforce the ordinance. He advised that the committee recommendation was that enforcement be complaint driven, that the ordinance be selectively enforced.

City Manager Howard Chambers advised that it was unknown at this point how many complaints could be generated by such a change in procedure. He noted that in general, a spike in complaints could be expected at the onset of any new procedure, a natural response to an educational campaign.

ON- AND OFF-STREET PARKING STUDY SESSION - Continued

Council Member Esquivel determined from the City Manager that most current enforcement was accomplished by the City's Parking Control Officers. He stated he would like to continue with the newly established program for enforcement of the 72-hour parking regulation and see how effective it was, over time, at deterring on-street vehicle storage.

The City Manager stated that the Parking Control Officers assigned to enforce the 72-hour parking regulations were seeing some results from the increased enforcement. And, although some residents responded with minimum compliance, such as moving their vehicle only a few feet, others had relocated their vehicles either onto their private property or out of the area.

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor DuBois, the City Manager stated that the enforcement effort was currently targeted in two specific areas on a proactive basis, not complaint-driven.

Council Member Croft stated that the proposed ordinance would force those currently complying minimally to stop using the City streets as vehicle storage areas. He stated it would be an additional tool with which to address parking issues.

Council Member Esquivel stated that he would still like to see the results after a full year of 72-hour parking enforcement before adding more restrictions.

City Attorney Steve Skolnik advised that the proposed ordinance had been crafted with an effective date of January 1, since the number of permits allowed would be regulated on a calendar year basis and to provide enough lead time to establish a system for issuing the permits and conduct an educational campaign.

Responding to a question from Council Member Rogers, Community Development Director Chuck Ebner stated that the increase in complaints could be attributed to the trend staff had observed that whenever an owner received a citation, that owner was inclined to report the locations of other vehicle owners in violation.

Council Member Croft stated that the City Council had already received a lot of information on this topic and that waiting longer to make changes could just increase the problem. He pointed out that survey results had shown that when asked about a permit process, a significantly larger number of residents had responded favorably.

Vice Mayor DuBois observed that complaints were received only from people who were experiencing problems which was not necessarily an accurate indicator of whether Lakewood residents, as a whole, felt it was a significant problem. She stated that the timing and execution of such a significant change would be crucial and that she would prefer to wait and see how the enhanced enforcement program impacted the parking situation.

ON- AND OFF-STREET PARKING STUDY SESSION - Continued

Council Member Rogers stated that the parking situation was a nagging issue that was not important to those without a problem in their neighborhood, but was a quality of life issue for those who had been victimized by discourteous recreational vehicle owners in their neighborhood. He noted that the two issues residents talk to him about the most were schools and recreational vehicle parking.

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor DuBois, Council Member Rogers stated that the Committee would recommend complaint-driven enforcement, rather than a pro-active approach.

The City Attorney advised that the City Council could consider an automated system to be adapted for the registration of recreational vehicles and trailers owned by Lakewood residents, which might remove a significant number of large vehicles from the streets.

Mayor Van Nostran inquired about requiring owners to park their vehicles in front of their own homes, in much the same manner the Lakewood Municipal Code currently required owners to park vehicles for sale only in front of their own homes.

Deputy City Manager Sandi Ruyle noted that per instructions from Los Angeles County Counsel, the Sheriff's Department personnel would not be able to enforce such an ordinance.

Responding to a question from Council Member Rogers, Finance Director Larry Schroeder stated the Code currently allowed the parking of any type of trailer for private use and only banned the parking of commercial trailers.

Council Member Rogers stated that he felt the next step in the process would be to place this issue on the agenda for a regular City Council meeting and call for a formal vote.

Mayor Van Nostran stated that an issue of this magnitude should be placed before the voters. He noted that he was not convinced that residents polled during the survey had fully understood that a permit process would only allow parking for a few days. He concluded by stating that he would favor placing the issue on the November ballot.

Council Member Croft stated he disagreed with placing the issue on the ballot, as that would make any adopted policy less flexible. He also stated he felt residents were aware of many of the issues involved as it had been covered in the press and that an educational process would be necessary before implementation. He concluded by stating he felt it was time to move forward on this matter.

Council Member Rogers stated that he felt this issue should be resolved at the City Council level, not by the voters. He stated that whether the determination was that there was a significant citywide problem and regulations were required, or that there was not a significant citywide problem and no further action would be taken, the issue should be aired at a regular meeting to advise Lakewood's residents where the City Council was headed on this matter.

ON- AND OFF-STREET PARKING STUDY SESSION - Continued

Council Member Esquivel noted that having served on the City Council for sixteen years, he had only ever received one recreational vehicle-related complaint. He stated he felt the current enhanced enforcement was going in the right direction.

Council Member Rogers concluded by requesting that consideration of this matter be placed on the next regular City Council agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Van Nostran adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk