



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
November 14, 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 (arrived 6:17 p.m.)
Council Member Joseph Esquivel
Council Member Todd Rogers

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OPERATIONS UPDATE

Director of Recreation and Community Services Joan Biegel introduced Community Services Manager John Buck, charged with responsibility for the City's Emergency Preparedness Program.

John Buck displayed slides and gave a brief presentation on NIMS, the National Incident Management System. He reported that the program was based on California's Statewide Emergency Management System (SEMS) in which the City staff had previously been trained. He defined the responsibilities of the various sections of NIMS, including Management, Planning and Intelligence, Operations, Logistics and Finance/Administration, as well as the role of the City Council during a disaster response.

Council Member Croft arrives and takes his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Buck described some of the measures taken to improve the City's readiness in the event of a disaster, such as the storage unit located at City Hall with emergency supplies; emergency generators; the new command vehicle; radio station 1620 AM; and the link with the County of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Center.

He highlighted the information available through the City website such as the Survive for 7 campaign.

Responding to a question from Mayor Van Nostran, Mr. Buck stated that the Recreation and Community Services staff would stand ready to assist employees who had to bring dependents to work during an emergency and that there was an animal rescue organization that would help to care for pets.

There being no further questions, the session was recessed at 6:30 p.m.

JOINT STUDY SESSION WITH THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION REGARDING OFF-STREET PARKING

At 6:33 p.m., the City Council reconvened with all members present. Members of the Planning and Environment Commission present included Chairman Ron Wade, Commissioner Andrea Hutchinson and Commissioner Vicki Stuckey.

Community Development Director Chuck Ebner displayed slides and reported on off-street/on-site parking. He advised that the Lakewood Municipal Code contained specific provisions and a structure for parking on private properties. He reviewed different property configurations and existing regulations. He remarked on some of the challenges such as differentiating between vehicle parking and vehicle storage, garage access when that structure is utilized for general storage rather than vehicle parking or storage and designating how much of the front yard area may be utilized for parking purposes. Mr. Ebner introduced Jack Wong with JWA Urban Consultants, Inc. who would be conducting research for this project.

Mayor Van Nostran suggested staff compile a list of storage facilities in the area.

Vice Mayor DuBois expressed concern about a proliferation of concrete in the front yard area. Mr. Ebner responded by stating that another southern California city had designated that not more than 35 percent of the front of the property could be paved.

Council Member Rogers proposed a re-evaluation of garage requirements. He noted that while he understood the rationale for identifying the garage as on-site parking, it would be wise to review how residents were actually utilizing their garage space and possibly adjust regulations accordingly. He emphasized that regulations should be constructed so that residents' vehicle parking does not unduly infringe on their neighbors.

Vice Mayor DuBois also requested that consideration be given to impacts on light and ventilation when allowing driveway parking or storage.

Mayor Van Nostran stressed the need for balance. He noted that it was obvious that many people were using their garages for general storage and that while it was important to consider the impacts on air space, it was equally important not to detract from the sporting lifestyle of many Lakewood residents, by having such stringent regulations that they are forced out of town. He suggested that a size or height restriction might be appropriate for vehicles parking on driveways between houses.

Council Member Rogers questioned including a provision that would allow certain parking situations, providing the neighbors are in agreement.

JOINT STUDY SESSION REGARDING OFF-STREET PARKING - Continued

Council Member Croft agreed that the Planning and Environment Commission needed to take a close look at defining the front yard area and location of garages. He expressed concern about vehicles parking between houses and potentially blocking windows which may need to be accessed in an emergency. He suggested a version of the visibility triangle used for sign placement might be utilized.

The City Attorney pointed out that with all of the different property configurations that existed in the City, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to solve the parking issues for everyone. Since, based on configuration, some property owners would receive much more benefit from changed regulations, while others situations may not be helped.

Mayor Van Nostran suggested the Conditional Use Permit process could be utilized to address unusual circumstances.

Council Member Rogers stated that the reality of the situation was that based on configuration, some properties would have room for recreational vehicle parking, while others would not and that a reasonableness standard must apply. He noted that the City Council was aware that even the best regulations could not be applied in every scenario.

Mayor Van Nostran stressed that regulating this issue was a work in progress and that it could be expected that minor adjustments may be needed as new situations were brought to light.

Vice Mayor DuBois, acknowledging that the company had previously expressed no interest, requested that staff make additional efforts to set up a meeting with representatives of the Southern California Edison Company about the possible use of their right-of-way property in Lakewood for recreational vehicle parking.

Council Member Rogers suggested offering incentives for storage facility businesses to locate within the City.

Council Member Croft noted that at some point, the cost of recreational vehicle storage had to become part of the cost of acquisition and ownership, in the same manner as fuel and insurance.

Chairman Wade suggested considering the inclusion of a grandfather or amortization period after which such vehicles would not be allowed on private property or the streets.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Van Nostran adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC

City Clerk