



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Regular Adjourned Meeting held
January 27, 2009

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:05 p.m. by Mayor Croft in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

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

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Mayor Croft stated that the purpose of the meeting was to provide the City Council Members with an opportunity to bring forth their individual issues, policy concerns, and focus areas, as well as likes and dislikes, in order to identify common themes or areas where attention should be focused.

Mayor Croft continued by stating that his items included: prior to budget presentations; a more comprehensive look at the use of traffic calming devices, including a broader look at traffic signalization plans; the health and safety impacts on children when there are smokers at park locations during family events like the Halloween carnivals; re-visit the curbside recycling program raised by Edco and let residents know about current recycling opportunities; actively seek opportunities to utilize new environmentally-friendly technologies, like the solar power generation at the water reservoir; and recreation-related issues that had been raised by residents such as a skate park or dog park. He noted that while there did not seem to be much interest in a skate park, he would like to look into whether a dog park facility could be located under an Edison right-of-way.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated that some cities that installed skate parks had found them to be a source of problems, especially in regard to enforcement of park rules.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated that his concerns included: providing more discussion or question time during adjourned meeting presentations; increase marketing to residents to stress the positive things going on in the community; work with Assemblyman Furutani on the issue of joint attendance legislation, especially as it relates to the proposed closure of Lakewood Elementary; traffic mitigation in residential neighborhoods; neighborhood preservation, especially in connection with properties acquired through the scattered lot acquisition program; the long-term goal of a new community building, with an area in the physical city-center where residents could come together; and focused law enforcement efforts or camera surveillance to deter criminal street predators.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION - Continued

Council Member DuBois stated her areas of interest included: concern for public safety in our residential neighborhoods; status of reported crimes; and what can be done to keep foreclosed properties from looking run down in both residential neighborhoods and commercial properties. She urged caution when considering issues involving personal rights, like smoking in parks.

Council Member Van Nostran stated his areas of interest included: status or resolution of reported crime incidents; effectiveness of augmented law enforcement programs, like the license plate recognition technology; relocating City Hall to the corner lot and re-use current City Hall property for a central park; encourage the Chamber of Commerce to help local property owners attract new tenants to fill vacant storefronts; encourage WalMart management to consider expanding the Lakewood location into a superstore.

Mayor Croft stated that the City should be looking at anything that could be done to successfully compete with other cities for new businesses to fill vacant spaces, and that it would help for the City Council to have a better understanding of how criminal cases are processed through the Sheriff's Department system.

Council Member Esquivel stated that he too was disturbed by the street robbery trend. He also stated that he would like to look into the parking situation at Lakewood Regional Medical Center. He noted that the staff had always been responsive when he had brought up a concern or requested information.

Responding to questions from the Council, Community Development Director Jack Gonsalves stated that staff received a monthly update on foreclosed properties in the City and that bank-owned properties were difficult to manage, as most banks tended to be slow to respond to reported maintenance issues.

Council Member Van Nostran suggested staff contact local churches to see if they would be interested in participating with the City on property clean-up events.

Mayor Croft noted that with the Federal stimulus package pending, the City should position itself to be ready to take advantage of any special funding for which it could qualify.

City Manager Howard Chambers proposed a pre-budget development session to provide the City Council Members with an early opportunity to change areas of emphasis.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated it would be important to maintain awareness of pending legislation and of legislative opportunities at both the State and Federal levels for legislation that could impact the City or that should be reviewed for implementation in the City.

CLOSED SESSION:

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Mayor Croft announced that the City Council would recess to a closed session pursuant to Government Code §54956.9(b) regarding significant exposure to litigation in two cases.

At 7:29 p.m., the City Council reconvened with all members present.

Mayor Croft announced that the City Council would continue the closed session to the end of the agenda for the regular meeting at 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Croft adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk