



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
April 28, 2009

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:07 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 Joseph Esquivel
Council Member Steve Croft
Council Member Diane DuBois
Council Member Larry Van Nostran

BUDGET STUDY SESSION

City Manager Howard Chambers displayed slides and made a brief presentation on the proposed baseline budget for the coming year. He discussed the slide of the economy and the poor outlook for the California State budget. He stated that although the economic news was not great, the City of Lakewood was in pretty good shape thanks to the very good job done by the City staff on keeping the budget lean.

Administrative Services Director Diane Perkin stated that the proposed budget could be considered a “bare bones” offering and that the City would definitely feel the impact of negative changes in the economic outlook. She noted that Lakewood had been hit hard by the drop in sales tax revenue and to a lesser degree by property tax revenues from falling housing values, both of which could erode further.

Responding to a question from Council Member DuBois, the City Manager stated that Costco had indicated that the new Lakewood store was performing up to expectations.

Public Works Director Lisa Rapp made a presentation on the Hardscape Program noting that in addition to budgeted funding, the Program had previously utilized capital funds for targeted blocks, but no capital funding was proposed for next year. She also noted that a substantial amount of hardscape work had been completed in conjunction with the residential street paving work.

In response to a question from Council Member Croft, Mrs. Rapp stated that although there had been some movement on streets completed over the past ten years, it was not so severe that it could not be addressed through the grinding process.

Council Member Dubois stressed the importance of this activity as an ongoing process and that the City Council did not want to see street and hardscape maintenance fall behind resulting in the poor conditions found in many other cities.

BUDGET STUDY SESSION - Continued

The Director of Public Works also provided an update on the Park Repair Program stating that they were moving away from automatically updating and falling back to a position of repairing where possible and only replacing equipment and fixtures when they were broken or became unsafe. She also reported that progress had been made on the Tree Planting Program with less backlog and fewer new requests for trees.

Community Development Director Jack Gonsalves reported that based on trends, there would be less demand for building inspection services and that current building permit fees were not sufficient to completely cover the cost of inspection services provided by the County of Los Angeles.

Mayor Rogers inquired if it was feasible to reduce contracting with the County and increase the use of a part-time inspector. Mr. Gonsalves stated the City was currently contracting for two County inspectors, which was about the minimum for a City of Lakewood's size.

The Director of Public Works reported that we were nearing the end of a multi-year contract with SEAACA and looking at a possible increase for services of 22 percent. She noted that an increase in license fees would be the only way to reduce the deficit in this budget area and that fees had not increased in a long time.

She responded to questions from the City Council by stating that of the local providers for animal control services, SEACCA provided the lowest cost option for the desired service level.

Assistant City Manager Sandi Ruyle reported on a proposal for a dedicated sergeant that would cover the early morning shift for Team Lakewood. She noted that although cities were not eligible for Federal funding being made available for additional law enforcement personnel, the Sheriff's Department had indicated they would apply on behalf of interested cities.

The Director of Public Works reported on the proposed replacement of mobile radios, noting that changes in FCC requirements meant the City would have to change frequencies, necessitating new radios at a cost of \$100,000. She noted that the deadline for the change-over was January of 2011, and that an additional benefit of the new radios was a built-in GPS device for vehicle tracking.

Council Member DuBois suggested splitting the project over two budget years.

The City Manager stated there were currently two full-time staff positions that although budgeted, were currently vacant.

The Director of Public Works reported on the feasibility of establishing a dog park site within the City. She noted that a possible site had been identified, but due to their easement for overhead power lines, permission would be needed from Southern California Edison. She stated that the facilities that were looked at in other cities were fairly simple, without a lot of

BUDGET STUDY SESSION - Continued

infrastructure needed beyond fencing. She also noted that in many areas, citizen groups volunteered to help maintain the site. She stated that there was additional investigation to be done, such as checking on liability coverage.

Council Member Croft inquired if there were grant monies available for the set up of such a facility. Ms. Rapp responded by stating that staff would look into the possibility.

Mayor Rogers determined that there was a consensus among the City Council for staff to proceed with discussions with Southern California Edison on the feasibility of a dog park within a right-of-way area.

Council Member Van Nostran stated he would like to see more information and publicity on the license plate recognition vehicle being used by the Sheriff's Department.

In response to a comment from Mayor Rogers, Ms. Ruyle stated that the Lakewood Station Captain had provided assurances that since the station would still provide regional sergeants to Lakewood, the primary mission of the new Lakewood sergeant for the early morning shift would in the field with Lakewood deputies, acting as a trainer and working supervisor.

Responding to questions from Council Member DuBois, Mr. Gonsalves stated that staff received a monthly report on foreclosure properties within the City and that the Code Enforcement staff was closely monitoring the properties and trying to identify the owners or parties responsible for maintenance of each property.

Mayor Rogers and Council Member Croft both requested further information on the building permit fee issue and expressed the desire for adequate funding to continue the hardscape program. Mayor Rogers also noted that the parks repair program needed to be funded at a level that would keep our facilities in shape and not looking raggedy.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Rogers adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk