



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
November 27, 2018

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:00 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 Ron Piazza
Council Member Jeff Wood

CLOSED SESSION:

At 6:00 p.m., Mayor Croft announced that the City Council would recess to a closed session.

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION

Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9

Tina Fofoa v. City of Lakewood; and Does 1-10, Case No. CV 18-9023-JFW (RAOx),
CV 18-06238

City Representatives who Attended Closed Session: City Manager, Legal Counsel, Assistant to the City Manager, Director of Finance and Administrative Services, Finance Manager, Director of Public Works, City Architect, Director of Recreation and Community Services, and Assistant Director of Recreation and Community Services

At 6:55 p.m., the City Council reconvened and Steve Skolnik, for the City Attorney, advised that there was no action to announce.

MISCELLANEOUS CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. Block Party Consideration

City Manager Thaddeus McCormack reported that the annual block party was a successful event, but due to the City's structural deficit, staff had presented various options to cut costs for the 2019 block party to the Community Promotions Committee. They included leaving Clark Avenue open for vehicular traffic, eliminating over-time staff, and moving the event to Lakewood Center Mall. Mr. McCormack confirmed for Mayor Croft that these changes would bring the event costs to approximately \$100,000.00, which was less than years past but still higher than what was budgeted for a 2019 event. It was the recommendation of the Community Promotions Committee to forgo a block party for 2019 and restructure the event so that it was downscaled and brought back in 2020.

a. Block Party Consideration - Continued

Mr. McCormack noted that a challenge of forgoing the event was that the Friends of the Lakewood Libraries (FOLL) organization would lose their fundraising through the Taste of Lakewood component of the block party. Responding to Mayor Croft's inquiry regarding lessening the impact to FOLL, Mr. McCormack stated that a standalone Taste of Lakewood event at the mall was considered but it was figured that it would not be as lucrative for FOLL without the other block party components. He noted that the City could consider donating to FOLL to help with the loss of the fundraiser. Vice Mayor Rogers suggested having a municipal fireworks show at Lakewood High School or Veterans Memorial Stadium and Council Member Wood noted that there might be an opportunity to collaborate with Long Beach City College for a fireworks show there. Mr. McCormack noted that a potential challenge of a collaboration could be that it would not be seen as a Lakewood event.

Mayor Croft felt that time was needed to develop a replacement block party event and was in favor of supplementing FOLL's fundraising for 2019, giving them ample notice to plan other fundraising opportunities, or offering them a fireworks booth during the Fourth of July season for fundraising. Council Member Wood shared his experience of healthy financial balances while being on the FOLL board and questioned the impact FOLL would face without the block party fundraiser. He noted that donating money to FOLL could set a bad precedent and did not seem appropriate since the City was in a structural deficit. Mayor Croft was hopeful that the City would give notice of cancelled events to involved organizations as soon as possible and noted the donation to FOLL could be modest.

Council Member Piazza stated that the Community Promotions Committee felt that an altered block party could be as disappointing to residents as not having the event at all, which was why the consensus was to forgo a 2019 event and educate the public of the City's budget issues since it was a big factor in the decision. He also noted that FOLL would not benefit from an altered block party. Mayor Croft stated that a fireworks booth could be beneficial to FOLL and he questioned if the offer could be considered a transfer of one fundraiser to another. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Council was able to designate FOLL as an ongoing booth if they voted to do so and that it could be justified as a fundraiser transfer.

Mr. McCormack was confident that FOLL would be able to raise an amount of money through a fireworks booth that was comparable to their earnings at past block parties. He questioned if it was the intention of the City Council to forgo a 2019 block party, offer FOLL a fireworks booth, and explore the option of a municipal fireworks show in the City. Vice Mayor Rogers reluctantly agreed to the options, knowing many Lakewood residents would be disappointed about the block party cancellation. He felt it was important to inform the public that the event would not be abandoned but reimaged and brought back. Council Member Piazza noted that he was involved in past municipal fireworks shows at Mayfair Park that were very popular with residents and that such an event had the potential for organizations to raise funds through concessions. Council Member Wood felt this was an opportunity to brainstorm with FOLL to find other fundraising options and thought that donating money to the organization would be counterproductive since the event would be cancelled due to budget constraints. Mr. McCormack noted that the consensus of the Council was to offer a fireworks booth to FOLL for fundraising and to explore various alternatives.

a. Block Party Consideration - Continued

In response to an inquiry from Council Member DuBois, Mr. McCormack noted that the City's website and e-magazine would be utilized to inform the public of the changes to the block party and the reasoning for forgoing a 2019 event. Responding to an inquiry from Council Member Wood regarding comments received after a down-scaled Patriot Day event, Valarie Frost, Director of Recreation and Community Services, stated that the City had received positive comments and praise for the smaller event. She noted that the attendance for the Patriot Day event had been decreasing over the years whereas block party attendance was steady at 25,000 for the past four years.

b. Centre Pillars and other Decorative Fixtures

Mr. McCormack reported that the Pillars of Community art piece and urban stream had fallen into states of disrepair and were no longer aesthetically pleasing. Staff had presented the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee ideas for relocating the pillars into The Centre lobby and demolishing the urban stream to restore it to a flat surface for better use of public space. The Committee felt the pillars would disturb the lobby area and recommended creating a replacement art piece similar to the tree artwork in the council offices lobby, which could consist of the original group of the Legends of Lakewood honorees and a potential video screen to display other honorees for flexibility into the future. Mr. McCormack added that a concept was developed to commemorate the City's historical Council Members with photographs in City Hall. He stated that staff recommendations were to remove, demolish, and fill the pillars and urban stream through a Public Works contract since there were funds available in The Centre's CIP budget. He noted that staff would refine concepts for the replacement Legends of Lakewood art piece and the City Council could consider moving forward once costs were known or postpone the project until the City's 70th anniversary.

Mayor Croft stated that hanging photographs in City Hall of every past Council Member was a way to commemorate everyone equally and Vice Mayor Rogers agreed that this was important since every Council Member was elected to serve by Lakewood residents.

Mr. McCormack assured the City Council that removing, demolishing, and filling the pillars and urban stream would be essentially cost neutral with the funds available in The Centre's capital improvements account. He clarified for Council Member Wood that the funds in The Centre's capital improvements account had been set aside specifically for The Centre.

Council Member DuBois encouraged a swift approach to the project due to the poor condition of the pillars. Mr. McCormack shared that the pillars were meant to honor the Legends of Lakewood and that their condition made the display seem dishonorable.

The City Council agreed to give staff the authorization to move forward with the demolition and to present concepts for the replacement Legends of Lakewood art piece at a later meeting. Council Member Wood noted the fiscal responsibility that the City Council held and felt it was important to assess fixtures for potential hazards. Mr. McCormack stated that the urban stream was a great fixture when it was fully functional and he noted that staff would continue to assess fixtures for potential hazards. Council Member DuBois agreed that the City Council had a fiscal responsibility and felt that maintaining city facilities was an integral part of that.

At 7:23p.m., the Adjourned Regular Meeting of the City Council was recessed for the Regular Meeting of the City Council. At 7:54 p.m., the Adjourned Regular Meeting of the City Council was reconvened.

MISCELLANEOUS CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEMS – Continued

c. Rynerson Park Picnic Shelters

Lisa Rapp, Director of Public Works, reported that the new sewer line project was close to completion and the Rynerson Park improvements would begin soon, which included installation of the new bathroom, ADA improvements to parking and a pedestrian bridge, restroom walkway improvements, and demolition of the two picnic shelter slabs and columns. She noted that the shelters to be demolished were built in the late 1980's and that staff had analyzed various options to keep the shelter columns in place to add a roof material or structure but the column diameters were too small to support any addition.

In response to an inquiry from Mayor Croft, Ms. Rapp stated that staff had considered demolishing the shelter columns and leaving the concrete slab beneath them but it was determined that the removal of the columns and tables would cause significant damage. She added that the original roofs of both shelters were damaged beyond repair from the weather over the years and that the third park shelter that was built in 2005 had large columns and a metal roof that was easily maintained. The Park Development Committee recommended against replacing the shelters at this time and the City Architect had designed a concrete picnic slab with sections blocked out for future shelter columns.

Responding to an inquiry from Council Member Piazza regarding the roofs of the two shelters, Ms. Rapp explained that they were made of wood, had been severely damaged by termites and dry rot, and were no longer on the shelter columns. Ms. Rapp and Mayor Croft responded to Council Member Piazza's inquiry stating that leaving the current slab and tables was not ideal because removing the columns would cause damage to the slab and leaving the columns in place looked odd with no roofing above them. Council Member Piazza felt that it might be best to consider improvements to the shelters and, due to the structural deficit, not spend money until a concrete plan had been made. Mayor Croft agreed to an extent but did not want the City to begin allowing broken items to remain unfixed. He felt that it was important to consider each situation individually and that ignoring the damaged shelters could impact the use of the park. He did not recommend replacing the shelters because it was costly but he felt it was important to accommodate the public and offer various seating options at the park for their use. He suggested putting the current tables back into a decomposed granite area if the costs were modest. Ms. Rapp and Ms. Frost explained that all of the shelter tables were made of wood and had been damaged beyond repair. They added that decomposed granite might not be considered ADA accessible and that a concrete slab would require less maintenance. Mr. McCormack stated that staff would come back with prices for decomposed granite and concrete slab areas and he reminded the City Council that there was an opportunity to do a change order for the improvements with the current contractor working at Rynerson Park.

c. Rynerson Park Picnic Shelters - Continued

Council Member Wood shared his appreciation for everyone's comments and felt that it was important to look at different options and prioritize needs. He added that the Capital Improvement Plan should be utilized.

Mayor Croft stated it would be more economical to have the shelter areas improvements done by the current contractor. Vice Mayor Rogers felt that the work should be done with an eye to the future since the shelters would be replaced eventually. Mr. McCormack noted that the concept created by the City Architect of a slab with sections blocked out for future shelter columns could be utilized. Vice Mayor Rogers stated that parks were one of the crown jewels of the City and felt it was wise to put the slabs in for future shelters while it was less expensive to do so instead of waiting and having to pay higher prices later on.

In response to an inquiry from Council Member DuBois regarding whether the expenditure would be from part of the structural deficit, Mr. McCormack stated that these costs were related to the deficit but noted that it was necessary to maintain City facilities and provide services to the community.

Mayor Croft felt that it was important to understand what the City's capital needs were and to cut back on spending while exploring revenue-producing options. Mr. McCormack noted that it would cost approximately \$440,000.00 to replace both shelters, which was a significant cost, and that restoring the areas with decomposed granite or concrete slabs with weather resistant tables could be a more modest expense that would allow the park to remain usable for the community. He stated that staff would report costs for both options to the City Council soon.

Council Member Piazza questioned if staff could complete City facility improvement and/or maintenance projects versus hiring contractors. Ms. Rapp explained that staff would need to research what the law would allow since general law cities were obligated to put certain projects out to bid. Responding to an inquiry from Mayor Croft, Ms. Rapp stated that it was cost effective to batch similar projects together, such as bathroom improvements, versus completing multiple small projects at the same time. Mr. McCormack noted it would be cost effective if staff were able to complete City facility improvement and/or maintenance projects while handling their current workload and that they would be asked to do so.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Croft adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Isabelle Diaz, Management Aide
City Clerk's Office