



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
December 8, 2020

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

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Todd Rogers
Vice Mayor Jeff Wood (via teleconference)
Council Member Steve Croft (via teleconference)
Council Member Ariel Pe (via teleconference)
Council Member Vicki Stuckey (via teleconference)

CLOSED SESSION:

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

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL--PENDING LITIGATION

California Government Code, Section 54956.9(d)(2) and (e)(3)

Letter from attorney representing Southwest Voter Registration Project threatening Voting Rights Act legal action against City, dated November 21, 2020, and received November 30, 2020.

At 6:42 p.m., the City Council reconvened and Steve Skolnik, for the City Attorney, advised that there was no action to announce.

PRESENTATION ON DESIGN PROGRESS FOR LAKEWOOD BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PROJECT AND INTRODUCTION TO PROPOSED UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING DISTRICT

Lisa Rapp, the Director of Public Works, introduced Bill Pagett of Willdan who displayed slides and made a presentation on the design progress for the Lakewood Boulevard Corridor project and on the introduction of a proposed Utility Undergrounding District. Mr. Pagett stated that the project consisted of widening or narrowing Lakewood Boulevard for a regional bicycle path, constructing missing segments of sidewalk to allow pedestrian access to various establishments including the Lakewood Center Mall, landscape improvements utilizing water conservation features, upgrading traffic signals to improve safety, undergrounding overhead power lines, and street resurfacing. He noted the importance of the project being the first segment of a Regional Complete Streets Capacity Enhancement Project since there were typically more funds available for such street projects as opposed to a project that would only construct a bicycle path. Additionally, the project was identified in the Gateway Cities Council of Governments Active Transportation Plan (ATP) as regionally significant which could help the City secure outside funding.

DESIGN PROGRESS FOR LAKEWOOD BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PROJECT AND PROPOSED UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING DISTRICT – Continued

Mr. Pagett reviewed the concepts of various areas of Lakewood Boulevard showing the road changes, bicycle path, sidewalks, and trees. He reported that the total cost estimate for the project was \$34,544,621.95 including the power line undergrounding which was estimated to cost \$19,070,000. The City would be able to pursue construction funding for the project from I-605 Hot Spots Measure R, Measure M, SB-1, and Federal Highway Funds. Mr. Pagett explained that the establishment of an Underground Utility District would be necessary since this would be the authority to allow the City to direct a utility company to remove their poles, overhead wires and associated overhead structures within a described area of the City. In order to establish the district, the City must conduct a Public Hearing to declare its intentions and approve a Resolution stating those intentions. A notice of the Public Hearing and a copy of the Resolution declaring the City's intentions would be sent to all affected property owners and utility companies. There would be no cost to affected property owners and after the district was established by the passage of the Resolution, notice would be sent to all persons owning real property within the district boundaries including affected utilities. Mr. Pagett suggested setting the Underground Utility District and utilizing Rule 20A funds from Southern California Edison to partially cover the costs for the power line undergrounding.

Ms. Rapp noted that when seeking grant funds, it was preferable for a city to be invested in the project and that using Rule 20A monies would be a significant contribution from the City and a good use of funds. City Manager Thaddeus McCormack stated that great work had gone into this project that was getting close to fruition and he was optimistic that grant funds could be obtained for its completion.

Responding to Mayor Rogers' concern about using all of the City's transportation funds for one project, Ms. Rapp noted that it would be ideal to obtain significant outside funding sources and that the completion of the power line undergrounding design by Edison would put the City in a better position to do so.

In response to a funding inquiry from Council Member Pe, Mr. McCormack stated the utility undergrounding would be completed with outside funding and that City transportation funds could be used if the corridor project went to construction. Mr. Pagett added that if the City was able to secure a portion of the \$34.5 million needed for the project from outside sources such as State and Federal funding, there was a possibility that Metro would be willing to fund the remainder of the project costs. Responding to another inquiry from Council Member Pe, Mr. Pagett assured that the work being done currently at the Del Amo and Lakewood Boulevard intersection conformed to the Lakewood Boulevard Corridor Project.

Responding to inquiries from Council Member Stuckey regarding electrical and traffic impacts, Mr. Pagett stated that one lane of traffic would be open at all times on Lakewood Boulevard during construction and that the contractor would be encouraged to keep two lanes open a majority of the time. Ms. Rapp added that staff would do everything possible to mitigate any traffic impacts and she explained that Edison would set up the entire underground power system before taking down any power poles and wires so there would be no electrical impacts to residents within the district boundaries.

**DESIGN PROGRESS FOR LAKEWOOD BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PROJECT
AND PROPOSED UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING DISTRICT – Continued**

Council Member Croft noted this was a great project and that the utility undergrounding would be beneficial to the City whether or not the entire corridor project was completed. He also inquired if the Council approved moving forward with the Underground Utility District would that be a commitment to the entire project. Mr. Pagett explained that allowing Edison to move forward with the undergrounding design so that funding could be applied for was not a commitment to the entire project. Ms. Rapp added that the presentation was meant to bring the Council up to date on the progress of the project and review the process to establish an Underground Utility District, which would be forthcoming after staff met with Edison.

Every member of the City Council expressed their support to continue moving forward with the project and Vice Mayor Wood recommended that staff be prepared to address requests from residents wanting their power lines undergrounded as well. Mr. McCormack noted that there were not enough funds to underground power lines throughout the City and that the proposed section of Lakewood Boulevard would be vastly improved if the power lines were taken down and sidewalks were added. Mayor Rogers shared that the presentation increased his enthusiasm about the concept of the project and its potential to truly enhance the City and Lakewood Mall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Rogers adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Isabelle Diaz
Management Aide