



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
March 9, 2010

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:00 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

REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR LAKEWOOD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Acting Director of Community Development Sonia Southwell gave a presentation based on the report in the agenda and stated the Lakewood Housing Authority had been formed in 1984 to receive Federal funding for the Section 8 housing assistance program, to provide low-income individuals and families rental assistance. Since that time, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) had administered the program. Notice had been received from HACoLA that they would no longer be able to administer individual city programs separately. She reported that the options available were to merge the existing Section 8 program with the county-wide program administered by HACoLA; administer the program in-house; or contract with another housing agency. She stated that staff had researched and found that 62 cities contracted with HACoLA and that there was only one city locally with an individually administered program that might be willing to contract with us. She advised that in-house administration of the program would require additional staffing, as current staff did not possess the experience or expertise required for program administration. If the program were to merge with HACoLA, the Lakewood waiting list would be merged with the HACoLA list, providing Lakewood applicants with possibly reduced waiting times, due to the County's much higher turnover rate, and since HACoLA currently administered Lakewood's program, there would be minimal impact on current participants. It was the recommendation of staff that the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program be transferred from the Lakewood Housing Authority to the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles.

Mona Vega and Diana Savala, representing the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, advised that should Lakewood decide to merge with the County, the changeover would be seamless and transparent to current and prospective program participants.

Council Member DuBois stated that a seamless transition that would not disrupt participants was important. She determined from staff that the City did not currently provide a great deal of input in the voucher process, but would still have the ability to request regular reports from HACoLA.

REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR LAKEWOOD HOUSING AUTHORITY - Continued

Ms. Vega clarified for Council Member Croft that customized reporting could be prepared by geographic location at the City's request and that there were many duplications between the Lakewood waiting list and the County waiting list, as some participants requested to be placed on all lists.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Esquivel, Ms. Southwell stated that in-house administration of the program would require additional staff to provide clerical, accounting and inspection services.

Mayor Rogers inquired about alternatives if there were HACoLA policies that the City was not in agreement with. Ms. Vega stated that although all policy changes were subject to public hearing prior to adoption and the City could submit comments, there were not many other options for input.

City Attorney Steve Skolnik advised that even though some official action would be required to restructure the current Lakewood Housing Authority, action to re-form could be taken if the City were ever to be unhappy enough with the County's performance.

Responding to a question from Council Member Van Nostran, Mr. Skolnik stated that the dissolution of the Lakewood Housing Authority as an entity would end any liability on the part of the City.

City Manager Howard Chambers stated that there had been compelling reasons to establish the Housing Authority back in 1985, but that those reasons no longer appeared to be valid.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER DUBOIS SECONDED TO TRANSFER THE SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Van Nostran, DuBois, Croft, and Esquivel

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Rogers

Council Member DuBois inquired if there would be an opportunity for Lakewood's Tenant Commissioners to serve at the County level. Ms. Savala stated that the County's Tenant Commissioners were selected and screened by a panel and that Lakewood's Commissioners would be welcome to submit an application.

COST OF SERVICES STUDY

Administrative Services Director Diane Perkin displayed slides and made a presentation based on the memo in the agenda. She stated a cost of services study had been conducted by Revenue & Cost Specialists to find out the full, true cost to provide personal choice services for which fees were collected. She advised that personal choice services were defined as

COST OF SERVICES STUDY - Continued

those services that while available to all residents, were to the benefit of specific individuals, such as building permits or recreation classes. Cost of services studies provided a standard method for ensuring that rates and fees were defensible and determining the actual cost of services would also assist in the budgetary process.

Responding to a question from Council Member Van Nostran, Ms. Perkin stated that the City's fleet management system captured all vehicle-related costs, including depreciation and replacement costs.

The Director of Administrative Services continued by reporting that the majority of fees proposed for adjustment were for Community Development services, such as the City's fee structure for building permits which was currently an average of 20 percent below the fees set by the County of Los Angeles and well below those fees in surrounding communities.

The Acting Director of Community Development stated that since many of the fees were based on the valuation for the project, the proposed increases were minor.

In response to a question from Council Member Croft, Ms. Perkin stated that although there were fee increases proposed for certain water services, this study did not address water rates.

The City Manager advised that consideration of the proposed fees changes would be part of the budget process and would be presented to the City Council at a budget study session tentatively set for April 27th.

Council Member Van Nostran stated that he would like to see comparison data from other cities on development and building permit fees. He expressed concern that fees not be set so high that development was discouraged. Ms. Perkin responded by stating that while the purpose of the study was to reveal the true cost, it was at the discretion of the City Council to establish fees at a level appropriate to the community.

Mayor Rogers stated that timing would be a critical issue in this matter and that an incremental implementation should be considered. He also expressed concern about having a chilling effect on development in the City or to be nickel and diming our residents at a time when many were struggling.

Council Member Croft stated that he shared the concern for the impact on residents.

Council Member DuBois stated that any new fees should be implemented with a phased-in approach.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Rogers adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC

City Clerk