



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
June 18, 2005

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 9:00 a.m. by Mayor Esquivel in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

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

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES:

City Manager Howard Chambers stated this session was the last step in the budget development process prior to the formal budget presentation and public hearing to be held on June 28, 2005. He stated he would provide an overview of the budget, including revenues and expenditures and the top ten focus areas, which would be followed by presentations from the Department Heads on fourteen areas where the City Council may wish to initiate further discussion or provide direction.

He displayed slides and discussed the impacts of the Governor's May-revised budget on City operations, noting that while the early Vehicle License Fee repayment that had been discussed had not made it into the State budget, libraries were to be fully funded.

Responding to a question from Mayor Esquivel, Mr. Chambers confirmed that the VLF repayment was approximately \$740,000.

He briefly reviewed the focus areas of the budget: Intergovernmental Relations; Public Safety; Infrastructure Improvements; Information Technology; Water Quality Protection; Economic Development; Community Facility Maintenance; Education; and Neighborhood Preservation. He also briefly reviewed revenues and appropriations, noting that the top ten sales tax producing businesses were responsible for 42 percent of the sales tax revenue.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Van Nostran, Finance Director Larry Schroeder stated that sales tax figures related to the new Mazda auto dealership would not be available for another six months.

Capital Improvements were set out by funding category to include: Local Street and Alley Resurfacing; Major Street Resurfacing; Hardscape Improvements; Weingart Senior Center Improvements; Transit Improvements; Utility Undergrounding; Centre Waterproofing; Centre Refurbishment; Median Renovation; Sports Lighting; ADA Improvements; Traffic Signals; HVAC Improvements; McCormick Pool; Cherry Avenue Bridge; Rynerson Park Roof Improvements; Emergency Operations Mobile Command Center; Vehicle and Equipment Replacement; DASH Vehicle Replacement; Mae Boyar Park Renovation; and Water Utility Improvements.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

He covered areas of significant detail, where large changes were evident and concluded by stating that the budget, as prepared, was balanced; realistic; emphasized public safety, neighborhoods, and new technology; made a \$4.3 million investment in streets; and was sensitive to decisions made in Sacramento and Washington DC.

The Director of Finance displayed slides and reviewed the Redevelopment Agency budget, including the dates for last project activities, incurring new debt and expiration of eminent domain rights for each of the three redevelopment areas.

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor Van Nostran, Community Development Director Chuck Ebner stated there was a process to reinstate eminent domain rights which would require new fact findings and a public hearing process.

Mr. Schroeder also clarified that the expiration date patterns were not uniform for the three areas since redevelopment law continued to change. He briefly reviewed revenues and expenditures in the Agency budget, noting that the older the project area, the higher the rate of return.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran questioned whether the amount allocated for land acquisition would be sufficient considering land values. Mr. Schroeder responded by stating that there may be a need for increased funding for the scattered lot program, although the program was partially reimbursed when the property was sold for future development.

Assistant City Manager Michael Stover displayed slides and reviewed the budget proposal for a Key Employee Retirement Transition Program. He covered the program objectives and features which included authorizing the City Manager to negotiate an MOU, with participating retirees, for up to two years for a defined scope of work, including at-home, telecommuting aspects.

Responding to questions from the City Council, he noted that under the program compensation was capped at the employee's prior hourly rates and was not designed to be subject to negotiation. Nor was the program intended for those wishing to move into consulting work, but designed to provide for staff backfill during the recruitment and selection processes and to sustain or enhance organizational capacity.

VICE MAYOR VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER DUBOIS SECONDED TO APPROVE THE PROGRAM IN CONCEPT. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

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

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

At 10:00 a.m., the Mayor called for a recess. At 10:07 a.m., the City Council Meeting was reconvened with all members present.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Director of Public Works Lisa Rapp reviewed the budget program for Street Paving and the Hardscape Repair Program. She reported that the City had been pursuing an aggressive approach to paving both major and residential streets and that 57 percent of residential streets had been completed. She noted that the street paving projects were linked to the water main replacements projects so that we were not going back and tearing up streets that were recently repaved.

Council Member Croft questioned the drop in the spending rate after 2007. Ms. Rapp stated that some locations were waiting for the installation of water mains and other locations for funding.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran inquired how much more paving could be completed before it outpaced the water main replacement schedule. Ms. Rapp stated that since the paving was scheduled to be completed by FY 2010, it meant that disturbing some streets for water main replacement was inevitable although they would not target any streets paved less than five years prior.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran stated a study session was necessary to take an in depth look at future plans for street repaving and coordination with water main replacement.

Ms. Rapp also made a presentation on Hardscape Repairs which included sidewalks, curb and gutter, handicapped ramps and limited driveway approaches, if necessary to meet grade.

Responding to a question from Mayor Esquivel, Ms. Rapp stated that the decision to replace driveway approaches was made by the Assistant Director of Public Works.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran, observed that since the single largest cause of resident complaints came from sidewalks, this activity may be more important than street repaving,

The City Manager noted that due to past budgetary constraints, there were years where very little work was done in this area.

Ms. Rapp stated that staff was using creative solutions such as bridging or meandering the sidewalks to deal with areas where residents resisted tree removal and replacement.

Responding to a question from Council Member Croft, Ms. Rapp stated that while staff was aware of new technologies like rubber sidewalks, they were still experimental, without good data on life span or comparisons of related costs.

Council Member Rogers stated that he agreed with Vice Mayor Van Nostran that sidewalk repair was a source of great satisfaction to residents. He proposed granting more discretion to repair/replace isolated locations and asked how much more funding would be required. Ms. Rapp stated that there were many variables involved depending on the extent of damage at a location.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Council Member Croft stated that if most isolated locations could be addressed for \$2,000 or less, he would support an additional allocation of \$200,000 for the repair of isolated hardscape locations.

Ms. Rapp showed slides of several target blocks and stated necessary repairs which could amount to about \$140,000. She responded to an additional question from Council Member Croft by stating that there were no target block repairs contained in the proposed budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROGERS MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER DUBOIS SECONDED TO ADD THE REPAIR OF THE TARGET BLOCK OF CASTANA AVENUE AND TO APPROPRIATE AN ADDITIONAL \$200,000 FOR THE REPAIR OF ISOLATED LOCATIONS. THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

Ms. Rapp continued with coverage of the Tree Planting Program, including the changes made last year with the addition of 400 trees. She reported that each year of the 2-year budget included funding for 500 trees and discussed the refusal rate for replants. She also noted that the pricing for replants was set by contract and would remain at the current rate for 2 years.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran inquired how many trees would need to be planted to fill all vacant locations. Ms. Rapp stated they would have to plant 3,000 trees in each of the next two years to complete all locations.

Responding to a question from Council Member DuBois, Ms. Rapp stated that after the two-year contract expired, the cost of replanting would increase by at least 15 percent.

The City Manager advised that tree planting could be accelerated to 1,000 trees per year and that staff could bring a report back to the City Council after the first year with data on the refusal rate for replanting.

VICE MAYOR VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER CROFT SECONDED TO INCREASE TREE PLANTING TO 1,500 TREES IN YEAR ONE OF THE BUDGET. THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

Ms. Rapp presented slides on Median and Panel Renovation noting the completed locations and the proposed locations that would be included with the Legacy Capital Improvement Program.

Ms. Rapp displayed slides showing the condition of the Del Valle Park Memorial stating that staff would propose continuing maintenance by City crews while professional restoration advice was sought. She noted that although there had been a proposal from the Boeing Corporation to partner in the restoration, the project had faced so many obstacles that it had been abandoned.

Ms. Rapp responded to a question from Vice Mayor Van Nostran by stating that Assistant Public Works Director was working with contacts at Mira Mar Naval Air Station to locate a professional with expertise in aircraft restoration.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Council Member Croft stated that it was important to establish that the objective of this project was preservation, not restoration to either museum quality or flight-readiness.

Ms. Rapp concluded her presentation with a map depicting all the Lakewood streets that were posted for No Parking on street sweeping days. She noted that currently 37 percent of the City was so posted.

The Director of Finance presented information about the Parking Control Program, stating that the City currently employed 2 full-time and 2 part-time Parking Control Officers. He noted that there was staffing on Saturdays, but supervision only via cell phone. He also noted that the Sheriff's units performed parking control functions on Sundays.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran stated he would like to see more focus on getting the vehicles for sale off of the major streets. He suggested that perhaps a fine adjustment might be a deterrent.

Council Member Rogers inquired if staff was able to keep up with service requests for parking violations. Mr. Schroeder responded that response to service requests were generally good, but residents were not always satisfied with what staff was able to do about certain situations. He noted that even when following the street sweepers, the PCOs were looking for other problems in the neighborhoods.

Council Member Rogers suggested budgeting for overtime for specified enforcement periods. Mr. Schroeder responded by stating that the part-time PCOs offered quite a bit of flexibility for staffing.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran stated he would like to see the PCOs on duty later in the evening when people have arrived home from work, possibly until 6 p.m.

Council Member Rogers noted that it could be a safety concern to have the officers out after dark and requested that Mr. Schroeder draft a plan to address the concerns raised.

The Director of Community Development presented slides on Code Enforcement noting the areas of high activity. He outlined the types of violations occurring most often on weekends and a comparison of weekend coverage in neighboring cities.

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor Van Nostran, Mr. Ebner stated that regulations pertaining to yard sales do not allow for the sale of new items.

Mr. Ebner stated that in order to provide for more flex time for Code Enforcement Officers to address weekend violations, an additional \$5,000 in funding would be required to provide up to 1,000 more hours of service.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROFT MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER DUBOIS SECONDED TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT BY \$5,000. THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Water Resources Director Jim Glancy displayed slides illustrating the Water Enterprise portion of the budget, including a 3-year projection of capital needs and costs. He displayed a map showing future water main replacement projects.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran suggested looking at a bond re-issue to fund accelerated water main replacement and that he would like to see a numbers comparison of bond service debt and the water rates necessary to support such debt.

Mr. Glancy stated the water industry was highly regulated with both State and Federal testing and element level requirements constantly being changed.

Mr. Glancy responded to a question from Vice Mayor Van Nostran by stating that any new wells could be re-located on the same sites.

Council Member Rogers determined from Mr. Glancy that the new water mains being installed had life expectancy of approximately 75 years.

Ms. Rapp responded to a question from Council Member Croft by advising that the average street overlay had a life span of about 20 years.

Noting that the City had previously done its own water testing on site, Vice Mayor Van Nostran inquired if that facility was still operational. Mr. Glancy reported that although the equipment was still in place and could be utilized for the less complex tests required, it was less expensive to contract out for the service, especially since the number of competent labs locally meant competitive pricing for laboratory testing services.

Deputy City Manager Sandi Ruyle presented slides detailing the Sky Knight Program for airborne law enforcement. She advised that the helicopter was airborne for 5 or more hours each day and on call for an additional 10 hours, with an average response time of 2.5 minutes. She outlined the types of calls to which Sky Knight most frequently responded. She stated that the program utilized three Schweitzer 300 helicopters on a rotating program, the oldest of which would need to be replaced in 2006. She reported that the program utilized two full-time and three relief pilots and detailed some of their distinguished service.

Council Member Croft inquired if there was any concern about any of the other participating cities leaving the program. Ms. Ruyle replied that there was no indication that any of the participants was considering leaving the program.

The Director of Community Development presented a brief history of Building and Planning Fees, with revenues and projected cost increases to the City from the County for building inspection services. He suggested structuring the permit fees so that they would automatically adjust each year at the same rate as the consumer price index, thus ensuring that the fees would continue to pay for the service. He also reviewed fees for different types of planning cases, noting that fees had not been adjusted since 1993, with several of the fees being in place more than 20 years.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Council Member DuBois inquired if previous fee increases had resulted in customer complaints. Mr. Ebner responded by stating they had not.

Mr. Ebner continued with a presentation on the Civic Center Master Plan. He briefly reviewed plan development including site improvements at the Post Office and the proposed improvements for the Sheriff's Station. He noted that the current Post Office lease ran until 2014. He stated that preliminary planning had indicated that it would cost about as much to modify the existing building as to construct a whole new building and with less satisfactory results. Based on Council direction, staff had focused on new construction and determined a 40,000 square foot building would meet the City's needs. The next step would be the retention of an architect to provide a building layout and staff would propose retaining Randy Meyer to produce concept drawings. He advised that one impediment to the reuse or demolition of the existing building would be that although it was an old building with handicapped accessibility challenges and technology barriers, it had been well maintained and was attractive.

Ms. Rapp clarified for Council Member Croft that any architectural contract entered into at this point would only be for conceptual drawings.

Commenting on the inclusion of a town center or village green into the Civic Center Master Plan, Council Member DuBois stated that it would be more practical to locate such an area on Clark Avenue, rather than on the corner of Clark and Del Amo Boulevard.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran also expressed concern about using the corner property for a park or open space area because of traffic concerns and proximity to other usable open areas for large events, like the July Block Party.

Council Member Rogers determined from Mr. Ebner that a conceptual drawing would include the entire site, not just a city hall building. Mr. Ebner stated that upon inquiry last year, staff had been quoted a price of \$237 per square foot for new construction.

The City Manager advised that an item authorizing the retention of an architect for conceptual drawings and an accompanying appropriation would be included in the material presented at the June 28th meeting.

Mr. Ebner concluded with a slide presentation pertaining to Recreational Vehicles, including a map showing areas with a concentration of RV parking on the streets. He reviewed options for what could be done including enhancing enforcement of the 72-hour parking restriction; city-wide posting for street sweeping; increasing cost of citations or establishing a progressive violation fee schedule; and banning any street parking for detached trailers.

Mayor Esquivel stated there was an obvious need for an in depth study of this issue.

Council Member Rogers stated that he would like to see such a study session scheduled before the end of the summer.

CONSIDERATION OF 2005-06/2006-07 BUDGET ISSUES: Continued

Mr. Ebner confirmed that existing data would be adequate for such a study since the situation had not experienced significant changes since the data was collected.

Mayor Esquivel raised the issue of vehicle allowances for City Council Members, noting that the rate had not increased in at least 15 years and that in a recent survey he had seen, Lakewood was among the lowest in compensation.

Council Member Rogers stated that although it is important to fairly compensate Council Members for their expenses, he preferred that Lakewood remain at the lower end of the scale.

VICE MAYOR VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND MAYOR ESQUIVEL SECONDED TO INCREASE THE VEHICLE ALLOWANCE FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS TO \$375 PER MONTH. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

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

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Rogers

Council Member DuBois stated that an issue had been brought to her attention regarding Lakewood businesses. She reported that there was a perception in the business community that the City was not listening to business people. She suggested the formation of a business round table which would be open to all Lakewood businesses, but expressed concern about infringing upon the activities of the Community Promotion Committee.

Responding to a question from Council Member Croft, Council Member DuBois gave the illustration that a complaint had been made about a City process that upon investigation, had proven to be based on misinformation.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran suggested a one-time event to determine if there were enough issues to necessitate an ongoing forum.

Council Member Rogers stated he agreed with the proposal for an informal event, noting that if it was determined that formal structure was necessary, a City Council committee could be formed.

Council Member DuBois stated that her main concern was that the lines of communication be open between the City and the business community.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Esquivel adjourned the meeting at 12:14 p.m. to Tuesday, June 28, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Executive Board Room

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk