

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the La Mesa City Council
Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.
Maryland Avenue Elementary School Auditorium
5400 Maryland Avenue, La Mesa, California

From 6:00 to 6:30 p.m., members of the public were encouraged to visit informational displays regarding Emergency Preparedness, Neighborhood Watch, La Mesa e-gov, various Community Services programs such as La Mesa Urban Trails, Safe Routes to School, Walk-n-Roll Intergenerational program, and volunteer opportunities on City boards and commissions.

Mayor Arapostathis called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mayor Arapostathis; Vice Mayor Baber; Councilmembers Alessio, McWhirter and Sterling.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: City Manager Witt; City Attorney Sabine; Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett; City Clerk Kennedy.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

TOWN HALL MEETING

A MEETING WITH THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY TO DISCUSS LA MESA
AND ITS FUTURE

Mayor Arapostathis welcomed everyone to the meeting and made opening comments. Mayor Arapostathis requested City Attorney Sabine to provide an overview and update on group homes in the City.

City Attorney Sabine explained the definition of a group home, the state laws regulating them and the City's efforts to address the concerns of the neighborhoods. Mr. Sabine also discussed recent litigation regarding these facilities.

Vice Mayor Baber announced he had a prior commitment and would be leaving the meeting early.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Eileen Schmitz, La Mesa, complimented the paramedics for their recent response to a family emergency. Ms. Schmitz complained about a bump in the road near the intersection of Samuel and Pat Streets and a crater at the bottom of the intersection of Pat and Bob Streets that was washing out. She said code enforcement needed to be strengthened and the sign ordinance enforced regarding the temporary banners and signs along Lake Murray Boulevard.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Continued

Ms. Schmitz also complained that noticing the public on certain issues was inadequate and suggested using social media; asked the Council to reconsider the number of dogs allowed; complained about the problem of barking dogs; said a larger library was needed; and suggested the City needs a vision for the Civic Center complex.

Ms. Mercy Graef, La Mesa, spoke about the issue of group and transitional homes in her neighborhood. Ms. Graef said the problems with the people living in them had escalated and something needed to be done.

Mr. Tom Brady, La Mesa, also spoke about the problem of group homes. Mr. Brady complained about: the increased number of dogs allowed and about the problem of barking dogs; traffic light cycles at the intersections of Jackson Drive and Fletcher Parkway, Jackson Drive and Parkway Drive, and Aztec Drive and Lake Murray Boulevard; San Diego Gas & Electric's pipeline project; and sewer rates and how they are calculated.

A male resident spoke about his concerns with safety issues and lack of supervision of the students at Maryland Avenue Elementary School and said he was frustrated because there was no cooperation from the Superintendent of the School District.

Vice Mayor Baber left the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Ms. Kathleen Brand, La Mesa, asked about the status of the Little Flower Haven assisted living facility and the zoning of the property. Ms. Brand said she would like the historic façade of the building preserved. Ms. Brand also asked about the status of the Civic Center and said she would like to provide input for the development of a greenbelt along the trolley tracks.

Mr. Patrick Ellis, La Mesa, complained about an open storm drain channel in back of his property and said during the last rain, he experienced flash flood conditions. Mr. Ellis said the open channel was a problem for the neighborhood.

A male resident complained about being required to install a sprinkler system in his home when the code section stated that he may install a system.

Ms. Joyce Purcell, La Mesa, complained the current library did not have a meeting room and requested one be added to the existing library, or if a new library was built, to be sure to include an adequate meeting room.

Mr. Rick Liening, La Mesa, complained about the backed up traffic in the mornings at the intersection of Lake Murray Boulevard and Parkway Drive. Mr. Liening suggested extending the two traffic lanes on Parkway Drive near the I8 west off ramp near the Alvarado Parkway Institute to help with the flow of traffic. Mr. Liening also complained about homeless people panhandling at intersections.

Mr. Pete Ceccherini, La Mesa, spoke about the aging housing stock in the city and complained about the building fees. Mr. Ceccherini said the process needed to be streamlined and lower fees would encourage private investment to upgrade the current housing stock.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Continued

Mr. Adrian Michaels, San Diego, said a title loan company was located on Parkway Drive and said such businesses attracted the homeless and criminal activity. He requested the business not be allowed to operate in the city.

Mr. Doug Bania, La Mesa, complained about the installation of traffic delineators on Lemon Avenue in front of his neighbor's house and said the delineators took up parking space and created parking problems. Mr. Bania asked to have the delineators removed.

Ms. Lois Knowlton, La Mesa, spoke of her concern about the lack of affordable housing in La Mesa. Ms. Knowlton asked about the status of the Roadway Inn property.

Mr. John Schmitz, La Mesa, invited everyone to attend the Friends of the La Mesa Library's Food for Thought event on March 12 at the library with guest Master Chef Claudia Sandoval.

Senior staff members responded to each question and concern from the speakers.

The Mayor and Members of the City Council made closing comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Arapostathis adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Mary J. Kennedy, CMC
City Clerk