

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the La Mesa City Council
Thursday, March 24, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.
Emergency Operations Center, Fire Administration Building
8054 Allison Avenue, La Mesa, California

Mayor Arapostathis called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.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

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

THE CITY COUNCIL WILL MEET WITH STAFF AND ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS REGARDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS, GOALS, POLICIES, AND BUDGET DIRECTIONS

I. WELCOME – 8:00 a.m.

Mayor Arapostathis welcomed everyone and made opening comments.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments.

III. REVIEW CITY STRATEGIC VISION AND DIRECTIONS

City Manager Witt provided a brief overview of the purpose of the workshop.

A. City's Strategic Planning Process and Targets for Action Review

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett reviewed the City's strategic planning process and highlighted key accomplishments in the Targets for Action in the areas of safe community, maintain a financially sound and affordable city government, continue to improve high quality municipal services, revitalize neighborhoods and corridors, enhanced recreation and quality of life opportunities and effective and efficient traffic circulation and transportation.

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett said the Targets for Action would be updated based on community input from the Town Hall meetings and Council's input from the workshop and would become part of the Budget document effective July 1.

No action was taken.

IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A. Role of Boards and Commissions

City Manager Witt gave a brief overview of the City's various boards and commissions, and posed a policy question of should the Council consider changes to the existing mix of boards and commissions.

ACTION: Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to request staff to bring back a report on consolidation, compensation and standards pertaining to the boards and commissions.

B. City Identity (marketing efforts, website)

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett spoke briefly about the City's marketing and identity project to increase the City's presence in La Mesa, and to update the website and increase the use of social media, as previously directed by the Council. Ms. Garrett introduced Ms. Rita Vandergaw and Mr. Chris Biele from MJE Marketing.

Ms. Rita Vandergaw discussed the guiding principles of the strategic plan and communications, the planning process, strengthening the City's identity, and improving communications with and from residents and businesses. Ms. Vandergaw explained the strategic marketing and community engagement plan, and said only 20 percent of the residents and businesses were engaged with the City. Ms. Vandergaw also discussed the goals of the project.

Mr. Chris Biele discussed the outcome of *La Mesa Shimmer* and what was done to promote the event. Mr. Chris Biele and Ms. Vandergaw also discussed the importance of using the media in promoting the City and its events. In addition, Ms. Vandergaw and Mr. Chris Biele spoke about the development of a new business kit, the updated website, increased use of social media and potential future projects.

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett also discussed the update of the City's website.

Following Council questions and input to staff, no action was taken.

C. City's Role in the Downtown Village

City Manager Witt provided historical information about the downtown area and its key milestones. City Manager Witt discussed key focus areas for the downtown: economic vitality, design quality, maintenance and safety, developing long-term partnerships, managing the "Public Realm," parking management and sources of funding. City Manager Witt also discussed the current situation in the downtown Village and asked for the Council's input on the City's role in the Downtown Village.

ACTION: Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to bring back a report with recommendations on the City taking a more active role in the downtown.

Mayor Arapostathis recessed the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH – Continued

The meeting reconvened at 10:22 a.m. with all members present.

Councilmember Sterling said she was told the City would be funding the Flag Day Parade only through 2018. Councilmember Sterling asked for the Council's approval to direct staff to come back with a report to have the City responsible for the \$15,000 annual expenditure until such time as the current endowment yields a total dollar amount from the principal to sustain the annual event.

ACTION: It was the consensus of the Council to approve the request.

Councilmember Sterling said homeownership was the biggest investment most people make and that she would like staff to craft a plan for making older neighborhoods throughout the City more vibrant. Councilmember Sterling said pride of ownership lifted the spirit and walkable neighborhoods with trees and good lighting were also economically beneficial to the homeowners, as well as the City. Councilmember Sterling asked for the Council's approval of her request to spruce up the older neighborhoods.

ACTION: It was the consensus of the Council to approve the request.

V. MAINTAINING VITAL CITY SERVICES

A. Civic Center Master Plan and Old Police Department Site

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett briefly reviewed the Council's direction to staff to revisit the completion of the Civic Center Master Plan. Ms. Garrett indicated that part of the considerations for discussion would be the opportunity for a new city hall on the Civic Center site, potential for a second building, conversation about the library and discussion about the old police station site. Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett said staff had been working with several urban planners and introduced Mr. Paul Mara, Keyser Marston & Associates, and Mr. Larry Schlossberg, Gruen & Associates.

Mr. Paul Mara, Keyser Marston & Associates, presented the preliminary findings of the feasibility study. Mr. Mara said the objective of the study was to analyze the physical, planning and economic feasibility of new public facilities on the Civic Center site and the possibly a multi-family or mixed use development on the old police station site.

Mr. Larry Schlossberg, Gruen & Associates, presented conceptual site plans for a range of alternatives for both sites.

Mr. Mara discussed preliminary cost estimates, feasibility of office development for another government/institutional user, potential for a new library, feasibility analysis of private development components and reviewed potential financing approaches.

Council discussion ensued.

Ms. Joyce Purcell, La Mesa, spoke regarding building a new library or expanding the existing library. Ms. Purcell also spoke about the need for a community meeting room in the library.

V. MAINTAINING VITAL CITY SERVICES – Continued

Ms. Lois Knowlton, La Mesa, said there was a need for affordable housing in La Mesa and spoke in support of affordable housing developments.

Mr. Joe Glidden, La Mesa, spoke regarding the need for a larger library and said a new library would be the focal point of the Civic Center.

Mr. Aaron Amerling spoke regarding the development of the old Police Station site as a mixed use development.

Mr. Dexter Levy, La Mesa, spoke in support of exploring more design concepts for the Civic Center and said the proposed designs needed more vetting.

Following continued discussion and input to staff, no action was taken.

Mayor Arapostathis recessed the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 12:58 p.m. with all members present.

VI. REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

A. Six-Year Financial Forecast

Finance Director Waller-Bullock presented the six-year financial forecast for the City's General Fund. Finance Director Waller-Bullock discussed the national, state and local economies and the State actions impacting the City's budget. Ms. Waller-Bullock also discussed the base forecast for revenue and expenditure assumptions, interfund transfers and a revenue sensitivity analysis.

Following Council questions and comments, no action was taken.

B. Major Fiscal Issues Facing the City

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett reviewed the State impacts, pension reform costs, the potential for a San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) revenue measure, the Regional Communication System (RCS), homeless issues, the sales tax sunset, and aging infrastructure and water costs.

Following Council questions and comments, no action was taken.

C. Revolving Loan Program Update

Public Works Director Humora discussed the State Revolving Fund Sewer Program in relation to the City's Sewer Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Humora also discussed current and future State Revolving Fund projects throughout the City, as well as future sewer obligations for the secondary water treatment program at Point Loma, Pure Water San Diego.

Following Council questions and comments, no action was taken.

VII. WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE

A. Future Initiatives –

a. Park Master Plan Update

Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director Garrett discussed the purpose, vision and goals of the Master Plan, short and long term opportunities, various park projects, and challenges to the completion of the Plan.

Following discussion and input to staff, no action was taken.

VIII. CLOSING DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

The Mayor and Members of the City Council made closing comments, thanked staff for their efforts and thanked members of the public for attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Arapostathis adjourned the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

Mary J. Kennedy, CMC
City Clerk