

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the La Mesa City Council
Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
Lemon Avenue Elementary School Auditorium
8787 Lemon Avenue La Mesa, California 91941

From 6:00 to 6:30 p.m., members of the public were encouraged to visit informational displays regarding Emergency Preparedness, Community Development projects, Neighborhood Watch and various La Mesa Police Department programs, La Mesa e-gov, 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 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: City Manager Garrett; City Attorney Sabine; Assistant City Manager Humora; Deputy City Clerk Richards-Crawford.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Donna Valerie, La Mesa, complained about the unpermitted medical marijuana dispensaries near her business and their activity during her business hours. She wanted to know why the dispensaries were not shut down if they were illegal in La Mesa.

Mr. Ken Sobel, San Diego, stated he was a medicinal marijuana advocate. He complimented the City on the work done to create a procedure for issuing conditional use permits for medical dispensaries. He also spoke of an organization called "Grow for Vets" which benefited veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

A male resident said he did not like the smell of marijuana. He asked if the 1,000 foot separation considers zone to zone. He lives in a residential zone that abuts up to an industrial zone, and is concerned that dispensary customers will smoke as soon as they are outside, and wanted to know how to report that activity.

Ms. Angela Deegan, La Mesa, wanted to know the status of bike lane installation at University between Massachusetts and Baltimore. She also wanted to know when the draft Climate Action Plan from 2015 would be finalized and adopted by the Council

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Continued

Mr. Bruce Akins, La Mesa, asked about the University Avenue improvements and closing some intersections near Pomona and University Avenues. He reported on various accidents and speeding traffic in excess of 50 mph. Mr. Atkins thought closing the intersections to left hand turns to try to quell traffic was a good idea.

Mr. Steve Love, La Mesa, described a traffic situation on Baltimore Drive approaching University Avenue. He said coming from El Cajon Boulevard on Baltimore towards University Avenue, there were two lanes to turn left, followed by one lane to turn right. He asked the City to look at the traffic patterns at the intersection.

Ms. Chris Murphy, La Mesa, said he was surprised to learn the location of the library was temporary. She said the library was a critical and heavily used resource. Ms. Murphy also expressed concerns about producing a viable Climate Action Plan.

Ms. Kathleen Brand, La Mesa, expressed interest in contiguous sidewalks around parks and schools and asked about funding. Ms. Brand also spoke of her concerns about children walking and riding their bicycles to school in traffic. She complimented the City on the downtown improvements keeping the architectural heritage of the city. Ms. Brand said La Mesa was the new "North Park" and said the city had affordability, great schools and parks.

Mr. Dan Kincaid, La Mesa, complained about speeding traffic on Pomona Avenue. Mr. Kincaid said he was also concerned about the recent shootings in the neighborhood and asked for a status on the investigations.

Ms. Robin Theilmanh, La Mesa, complained about a barking dog in her neighborhood that barks five to six hours a day. She asked if the City had an ordinance that protected citizens from barking dogs. Ms. Theilmanh said even after mediation, the dog continued to bark for hours while the owner was at work. She wanted to know what to do next.

Ms. Rufina Main, La Mesa, wanted to know if the City budget was available online. She also expressed her concern about pot holes on Glen and Spring Streets.

Mr. Sean Connacher, La Mesa, asked the Council to provide insight on federal level unilateral decisions on immigration and travel restrictions.

Mr. Jack Shu, La Mesa, said he hoped the City moved forward on finalizing the Climate Action Plan, including a Community Choice Energy component. He said it was important to reduce total vehicle miles travelled within the City. Additionally, he supported La Mesa becoming a sanctuary city.

Ms. Pat Keller, La Mesa, complained about the traffic around the schools in her neighborhood. Ms. Keller said she was in favor of a new library and spoke about the beautiful library in National City. She also complained about the intersection at Yale and University Avenues and said it was difficult to turn left onto University because of the angle. Ms. Keller asked for the intersection to be modified so the turn would be at a 90 degree angle.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Continued

A male resident complained about the noise from a neighbor's construction project until 10:00 p.m. He asked whether the time could be modified from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. He also stated he had a problem with birds on overhead wires and asked if there were any plans to underground them.

Mr. Dennis Selder, La Mesa, said he was worried about the Climate Action Plan, and asked for an explanation of the Plan's goals and how it was going to help the citizens.

Mr. Jack Shu, La Mesa, stated there was evidence to prove cities that reduced greenhouse gasses improved economically. Mr. Shu said having a legally binding Climate Action Plan was a good start.

A male resident said there was a longstanding problem with trash, illegal dumping of televisions, sofas and other items, as well as graffiti on the SR125 overpass on Panorama. He said the area was an eyesore and needed lights for people to walk in the evenings.

Mr. Mark Gracyk, Lemon Grove, Helix Water Board Member, District 3, invited everyone to attend a meeting at 6:00 p.m. on February 1, 2017 at the Helix Water District offices. The County Water Authority would be making a presentation about a major pipeline project on Spring Street.

Ms. Lois Knowlton, La Mesa, said she would like Nebo Drive to be a one-way street because it was narrow and crowded where it curves up into Pasadena Avenue. Ms. Knowlton also spoke about the problem of homelessness and affordable housing in La Mesa.

Ms. Jeanie O'Dell, La Mesa, thanked the City for the improvements in the downtown, and said the walkability was much improved. Ms. O'Dell said she was happy about the return of local special events, and wanted to know if there were plans for improving the parking at the events.

A male member of the audience complained about an illegal medical marijuana dispensary operating near his business. He said the dispensary leaves trash and uses his parking spaces. He indicated he has notified the City, but nothing has been done. He expressed his concerns that the problem will get worse now that the dispensaries have been legalized. He said there were strict guidelines for dispensaries, but not for manufacturing and cultivation. He offered to work with the City to create a subcommittee for Measure U to enforce compliance.

A female resident asked whether the City would consider an ordinance against smoking in public places.

Ms. Nina Babiarz, La Mesa, Board Member of Public Watchdogs.org, said Southern California Edison was permitted by the California Coastal Commission to bury 3.6 million pounds of nuclear and radioactive fuel and waste at the San Onofre Beach Park. Ms. Babiarz expressed her concerns that the park was next to the second busiest rail corridor in the U.S., along the side of an interstate highway, in the middle of eight and a half million people, on an earthquake fault, and in a tsunami zone.

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

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

No action was taken by the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Piper Richards-Crawford', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Piper Richards-Crawford
Deputy City Clerk