

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, January 26, 2009

***MINUTES***

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Hidden Hills was duly held in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, 6165 Spring Valley Road, Hidden Hills, California 91302 on Monday, January 26, 2009 at the hour of 7:32 p.m. Mayor Steve Freedland called the meeting to order and presided thereover after leading the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Council:	Mayor Steve Freedland Mayor Pro Tem Larry Weber Council Member Jim Cohen Council Member Stuart E. Siegel
Staff:	City Engineer Dirk Lovett City Manager Cherie L. Paglia
Absent:	Council Member Monty E. Fisher

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to excuse the absence of Council Member Fisher.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the January 26, 2009 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Freedland informed everyone that tickets for the Association's Valentine Musicale, which will be held February 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, are now on sale at the Community Center.

### **AUDIENCE**

There were no questions or comments at this time.

### **PRESENTATION**

#### **Consideration of Approval of Support Letters for Request for Federal Funding on Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Projects**

Mayor Freedland introduced the following, who were all in attendance on behalf of the Water District: Charley Caspary, President of the Board; David Lippman, Director of Facilities & Operations; Jimmie Cho, Director of Resource Conservation & Public Outreach. Mr. Lippman provided the following information:

The Water District would like the City's support to place two projects into the stimulus package that is being worked on in Washington, DC; the first project is the construction of a pipeline from the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility in Malibu Canyon to Mulholland Highway in Calabasas; this would allow for the expansion of the recycled water system, which hopefully can serve Hidden Hills at some point in the future; the second project is in relation to the potable water system in the Chatsworth area where the District serves part of the unincorporated area; the project would improve the pump station to help meet existing and future demands; both projects are shovel ready.

In response to Council Member Cohen, Mr. Lippman explained that shovel ready projects were those in essence that would be ready to go to bid within 90 days. He added that the plans for the

two proposed projects were complete, they were going through the permit process, and both should stimulate the economy locally.

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to authorize the Mayor to send letters to Congressman Henry Waxman, Congressman Elton Gallegly, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Congressman Brad Sherman, expressing support for the request by the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District for federal funding in support of two local Water District projects.

Mr. Lippman, at the request of Council Member Siegel, agreed to provide an announcement that could be sent out by the City on rainy days to remind residents to conserve water by assuring that sprinklers were not being used.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

#### **A. Recognition of New Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Member**

Resident Mathy Wasserman recently completed CERT training at classes in Malibu. Emergency Services Director Jim Doran administered the oath of office to Ms. Wasserman, who was then presented with a certificate of completion by L.A. County Fire Department Community Services Representative Maria Grycan, and a CERT backpack by Mayor Freedland.

#### **B. Los Angeles County Fire Department Reports – October, November, and December**

The following report was provided by Community Services Representative Maria Grycan:

During October, there were 5 responses, including 1 medical call, 2 false alarms, and 2 snake removals; there were 4 Fire Prevention Bureau inspections; regarding brush clearance, the City reached 100% compliance some months ago; there were 9 responses in November, including 7 medical calls (all different), 1 false alarm, and 1 fire for which no details were available other than that it caused no monetary damage; there were 8 responses in December, including 2 medical calls, 5 false alarm/good intent calls, and 1 public assist, which was some type of animal response other than a snake; there were no

fires during the month, and no Fire Prevention Bureau Inspections; there were no plans checked during any of the three months.

Ms. Grycan then reported on an issue that was raised at a previous meeting:

During the last fire in the area, for some reason (she is not sure why) the Fire Department was unable to unlock the gate at the end of Long Valley Road that provides access into the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson); Chief Ranger Walt Young was called, and he did open the gate; there is no requirement for a Knox box on that gate, as there is a lock on the gate which requires a standard L key, which the Fire Department does have.

Mayor Freedland pointed out that it was another agency's Fire Department (probably the City of Los Angeles), not the L.A. County Fire Department, that was requesting access and apparently did not have a key. He added that during a major fire, there are always many different agencies in the City, and thought there should be some coordination.

Ms. Grycan stated the following:

The good thing was that it was not an emergency at that point, so there was time to call Chief Ranger Young to open the gate; in a worst case scenario, the Fire Department would ram through the gate if necessary; Battalion Chief Anthony Williams personally drove the whole area recently and was able to access all of the gates, even though there is no (and there is not supposed to be) any public access at that gate.

Assistant Fire Chief Joseph Graham arrived at this time, and commented that perhaps the L key was not universal and only in the possession of L.A. County. Ms. Grycan will investigate this further. In response to Council Member Siegel, Mayor Freedland replied that he thought it would be better to coordinate with Chief Ranger Young during each specific instance, to let him and the Fire Department decide when the gate should be opened, rather than asking him to automatically open it. The City Manager agreed, informing the Council that the City did not have a key, and would not have that authority to decide when it should be opened.

Ms. Grycan was also recently asked about some water pressure problems in the Yorba Linda fire, and whether or not Hidden Hills could experience any of those same water pressure problems.

Ms. Grycan informed the Council of the following:

During the Yorba Linda fire, it was felt that the loss of approximately five homes was due to the lack of water pressure; there are a number of factors involved, and Mr. Lippman from the Water District will be able to address the water pressure and supply issue; but there are some factors people need to understand from the Fire Department's perspective; a wind driven brush fire is not the norm, and she believes no water system in the country is designed to deal with this type of fire; when you have multiple units in multiple areas all drawing from the same water system, there will be problems; there will be a lack of pressure, and at some point there just will not be enough water; they have had the same problems in Malibu, when there is a high demand from every hydrant; when it is a structure fire, that is isolated, and there is no problem, as the Fire Department has all the water needed, along with redundancy and contingencies; but with the wind driven fire, there may be multiple structures that need protection over a wide spread area; power can also be lost to pumps; when the Fire Department does training for wild land fires, it is not the norm to hook up to hydrants; if hooked up to the hydrant, then you are committed instead of being mobile; when fighting a structure fire, there are probably 25 firefighters on that one fire; in the wind driven fire, one engine with 4-5 men may be protecting 4-5 homes; they have to remain mobile (rather than hooking up to the fire hydrant) and obtain replacement water in their engine from water tenders; people have to also remember that water is used to defend homes that are not burning and can be saved, as those that are already burning can most likely not be saved.

Mayor Freedland asked if there was anything in particular the City could do, or any assets or equipment that it could purchase, to help the Fire Department defend the houses in the City any better than what they can do now.

At this time, David Lippman, Director of Facilities & Operations at the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, offered to provide information that he thought might help the Council Members understand how the water system worked within Hidden Hills in relation to the questions they had regarding fire protection. Mr. Lippman stated the following:

Yorba Linda has a pump station, which pressurizes hydrants from an air bladder at the pump station; there is no tank storage; Hidden Hills does not have that type of system; Hidden Hills is served from two pressure zones, the Jed Smith system (blue area on map) and the 1235 backbone system (red area on map); the Jed Smith North and Round

Meadow Road pump station pumps to a tank in Mt. View Estates with one million gallons of storage; there is another Mt. Gate pump station in Mt. View that also pumps into that zone; there is a total of 5 pumps pumping into the blue zone; the 1235 red zone is served from a main feed in Calabasas Road to an eight million gallon tank near the Haller property at the Round Meadow gate; there is also a feed from a connection from Metropolitan through Chatsworth; the system has been designed to provide fire flow to the City; the pumps are electrically driven; there are three mobile emergency generators that can be taken to different sites and connected to the pump stations to continue to power the pumps if power is lost; storage is designed to give five hours to respond to a failed pump station; so this is a different system from that in Yorba Linda; it is integrated throughout the District and not localized to the City; it is robust; in 2005 the Jed Smith pump station was enlarged to pump 1700 gallons per minute; the Water District works closely with the Fire Department, and sends someone to the EOC during an emergency; even though the office is open normal business hours, they are available 24 hours to respond to any problems; they have a computerized network that tells them the state of the pumping station and the tanks; what the City can do to help during a fire is to ask residents to conserve water, to make the most use of the existing storage.

Council Member Siegel had several questions, which were answered by Mr. Lippman as follows:

The difference in elevation creates pressure; the pumping station pumps to refill the tanks, and gravity feeds the system during normal demand; if there is a bigger draw, it feeds from the tank and the pump station; if power is lost, the pressure is not lost; the system works without power, unless there is a large main break which draws more quickly on the system; the blue area is a higher pressure system; there are interconnections at various points between the high pressure and lower pressure systems; if a feed is lost into the lower system, it can be fed from the other system; there is also a small connection at the front gate with the City of Los Angeles to add redundancy to the system.

In response to Emergency Services Director Jim Doran, Mr. Lippman stated that the generators were located at the Rancho Composting Facility on Las Virgenes Road.

**C. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Reports – October, November and December**

Captain Tom Martin presented the following report:

There were three part I crimes in October, including a residential burglary in the 5600 block of Hoback Glen, a theft on Hilltop, and patio furniture stolen on John Muir; no one has been caught in connection with these; there were four false alarms; during November

there was one part I crime, that being a grand theft in the 5600 block of Round Meadow; an electric bicycle was stolen from the driveway; there was one collision which involved a Sheriff's car hitting a tree when responding to a "suicide now" call; there were no false alarms in November; six part I crimes occurred in December; one was a burglary in the 5300 block of Round Meadow with jewelry being taken from a safe with no signs of forced entry; a safe itself was taken from a house in the 25000 block of Eldorado Meadow and rolled end over end down a bridle trail and out across the boundary of the City; there were also three vehicle thefts, all of which occurred on either 12/9 or 12/10; they believe these are related to a vehicle theft in the 25000 block of Eldorado; this vehicle was pursued and caught by the LAPD, with the female driver stating the car belonged to her boyfriend, who is a known criminal on parole; during December there was also one collision, with a male on the way to see his parole officer crashing up into the Round Meadow/Mureau corner recently landscaped by the City; this person was taken into custody; in each of both 2007 and 2008, there was a total of 29 part I crimes; on another note, the Sheriff's Department recently conducted a sting for the sale of spray paint; decoys were used, with paint being illegally sold at five businesses (two in Agoura Hills, two in Malibu, and one in Topanga); the sellers were cited; an attempt was made to purchase paint at five locations in adjacent areas of the City of Los Angeles, with none being sold.

**D. Consideration of Approval of the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS) Authority Joint Powers Agreement**

Mayor Freedland introduced Lt. Keith Swenson and Lt. Bill Cicchillo from the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. Lt. Swenson provided the following information:

He is in charge of communications; the purpose of LA-RICS is to build interoperability for all public safety agencies throughout L.A. County (Fire, Sheriff, Police, etc.); it will provide a platform for both voice and data; it is in essence building a new backbone to support all communications for the entire County; the project will cost approximately \$700 million, which has not been completely funded; how the project will be funded has not yet been decided; they are asking the City to sign the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which will give the City a voice in how the project will proceed and how the funding will occur; the JPA does allow a city to opt out once the financial arrangement has been decided upon, if a city finds it too expensive or does not like that financial arrangement.

Mayor Freedland wished to make it very clear that: 1) there would be no initial costs to the City, 2) that the City would have opportunities to opt out of the JPA in the future, and 3) that the City could approve the JPA subject to final approval by L.A. County and the City of Los Angeles.

The City Manager pointed out that the County had approved the JPA, after which the City of Los Angeles added its approval, with several minor changes; the JPA must now be approved again and signed by the County, with those minor changes, and then signed by the City of Los Angeles. Lt. Swenson thought that would occur within the next several weeks, after which each of the cities would have 45 days to then approve the JPA.

Council Member Siegel commented as follows:

The Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments (of which he is the current President) is very supportive of this project; this is a very important issue for Hidden Hills; when there is a fire in the area, agencies from all over the County, and often the State, respond; it is totally unacceptable for those agencies not to be able to communicate with each other; government agencies always need funding for different projects, but if there was ever one that should be supported, this would be it, since it is so very important to the safety of our community.

In response to a question from Council Member Siegel regarding the size of the project, Lt. Swenson stated the following:

There are actually two programs being worked on simultaneously; one is the Los Angeles Regional Technical Communications System for all of Southern California from Ventura down; LA-RICS is even bigger; it is not just for the Sheriff, Police, and Fire, but also for hospitals, ambulances, and all first responders; it would cover any event, such as earthquakes, terrorism, a train crash, etc.; LA-RICS is building the platform so when agencies from all over respond to any event, they will be able to communicate; he is not aware of how many cities have agreed to the JPA at this time, but no one has as yet declined.

The City Manager pointed out that the Sheriff's Department would like to see as much support for this project as possible, as that shows unity and usually helps in obtaining grants and funding.

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel and seconded by Council Member Cohen, it was resolved on a 3-0-1 vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Weber abstaining due to a possible financial conflict of interest, to approve The Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System

(LA-RICS) Authority Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), subject to the JPA being approved by both Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. City Council Minutes – January 12, 2009**
- B. Demand List**
- C. Disbursement List – December**
- D. Financial/Treasurer’s Report – December**

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Cohen and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to approve items A (with Mayor Pro Tem Weber abstaining on this item, as he was not in attendance at the meeting), B, C, and D of the consent calendar as submitted.

**MATTERS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- A. Report from 1/20/09 Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments Meeting**

Council Member Siegel, who is also President of the COG, presented the following report:

The COG is continuing efforts to communicate with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) although it appears there are a few issues; counsel for the RWQCB does not feel that the Board Members should be speaking directly to others outside of a Board meeting; however, Board Members have been invited to attend a COG meeting to open the line of communication and for a general discussion on how the cities can satisfy the guidelines and requirements set by the RWQCB; another issue involves the League of California Cities, which is funded by cities, including Hidden Hills; since many issues addressed by the RWQCB are very complicated, the League prepares briefings for one of the Board Members to help summarize those issues; the COG asked for copies of those briefing summaries and was told they were confidential and not public information; so even though cities support the League, and the League prepares this information, we cannot obtain copies of the information; this along with the fact that it is very difficult to talk to the Board Members makes it very difficult to resolve issues; if none of the Board Members attend a COG meeting, there is the possibility that the Executive Director might attend.

Mayor Freedland asked if Alex Soteras, who lives in the region, was still on the RWQCB. Council Member Siegel explained that even though he was appointed by the Governor, and sat

on the Board for a short time, his appointment was not confirmed; Mr. Soteras was trying to represent the interests of the cities, and thus seemed out of favor with our area representatives as a dissenting voice.

**B. Report from 1/20/09 Hidden Hills Community Association Board of Directors Meeting**

Board President and City liaison Ron Wolfe addressed the Council:

Parks & Recreation Committee Chairman Bret Katz is working on the New Resident Party, which will be held on May 9<sup>th</sup>; the Board approved some changes to the gate entry procedures regarding parties and to make better use of the online system.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Weber, Mr. Wolfe said he was not aware of any problem with real estate signs, although he will check into it, as the signs are not allowed per Association regulations. Mayor Freedland asked if there would be guard retraining in relation to a recent incident whereby a guard may have allowed news media into the City. Mr. Wolfe said he was aware of the incident but was not able to comment further at this time.

**MATTERS FROM STAFF**

**Charles Abbott Monthly Report – December**

The report was received and filed.

At 8:18 p.m., Mayor Freedland called for a short recess, reconvening the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

**CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

**Potential Initiation of Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(c):  
Number of Potential Cases: 1**

At this time, City Attorney Roxanne Diaz (by telephone) and Assistant City Attorney Steve Orr joined the meeting.

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn to closed session at 8:29 p.m., at which time the Mayor announced that the Council in closed session would be discussing the item listed above.

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to return to open session at 8:49 p.m., at which time the City Attorney announced that the Council in closed session discussed the item listed above, and that no reportable action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Weber, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of January 26, 2009 at 8:50 p.m.

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Steve Freedland, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk