

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, February 9, 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, February 9, 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 (7:58 p.m.)
Council Member Monty E. Fisher
Council Member Jim Cohen
Council Member Stuart E. Siegel

Staff:

Assistant City Attorney Steve Orr
City Engineer Dirk Lovett
City Manager Cherie L. Paglia

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Fisher and unanimously carried, it was resolved to excuse the absence of Mayor Pro Tem Weber, who was running late, in case he was unable to arrive before the end of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Fisher and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the February 9, 2009 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Freedland congratulated everyone who participated in the annual Valentine's Musicale, including Marv Landon's wife Jill, and Council Member Siegel's wife Peggi. Council Member Siegel added that resident Natalie Blossom did a fantastic job as director, and that it was very nice to see David and Bonnie Frank acknowledged for their involvement for the last ten years.

Mayor Freedland made the following additional announcements:

CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) classes started here in Hidden Hills last week; the classes are held on Wednesday nights from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.; these are great classes to attend in preparation for helping yourself, your families, and your neighbors during emergencies; call City Hall for details.

Don't forget your loved ones on this coming Saturday, which is Valentine's Day.

City Hall, the Community Center, and Building and Safety will all be closed and there will be no inspections on Monday, February 16th, in observance of Presidents' Day.

Also on Monday, February 16th, the Round Meadow gate will be closed, both incoming and outgoing lanes, from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon for some restriping.

AUDIENCE

Susan Hilary Tregub, an attorney representing resident David Bergstein, addressed the Council as follows:

She is here to update the Council on the status of her client's property on Dixon Trail; she has been working with Assistant City Attorney Steve Orr regarding an agreement; she prepared the original draft, which was then revised by Mr. Orr and returned to her 1½ - 2 weeks ago; she does not believe there is a lot of disparity with the draft document, with the primary focus of both parties being the performance schedule; it is not available yet,

as her client is still working with a builder to put together a schedule that will be workable for both him and the City; it is a complicated issue as the property is large and there is a lot of money involved; they are expecting a performance schedule from the one builder early next week, but are also waiting for bids from two other potential builders, which should be provided in one week to ten days; her client's inclination is to move forward with the first builder, who has done other work in the City; she understands that Resolution No. 820, passed earlier by the Council, provided a time limit to her client to abate the declared nuisance, and that the time limit is due to expire Wednesday; she would ask for a reasonable extension of time; between now and the next meeting she would be more than happy to report on their progress to the City Manager, and continue to work with Mr. Orr to present an agreement acceptable to everyone.

Mayor Freedland felt that if legitimate progress was being made, he would not want to see the house demolished by the City, but he has to see that her client is moving forward diligently.

Ms. Tregub asked that any notices regarding this property be sent directly to her, as well as to her client. The City Manager said that would not be a problem, but that agendas were not normally sent out unless requested. Ms. Tregub declined to receive the agendas, asking only for any notices regarding the property on Dixon Trail.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Consideration of Approval of Expenditure for Relocation and Purchase of Traffic Calming Devices

Public Safety Commissioner Gabe Nussbaum presented the following information:

He is here to answer any questions the Council might have; the Public Safety Commission approved the purchase and installation of additional equipment as part of the traffic calming system; the original traffic calming sign was commissioned in November of 2004; the Commissioners felt the sign has been effective in slowing traffic, and has been well received by the community; they also felt it should be relocated and moved around to be more effective and to benefit other locations in the City where speeding might be a problem; a quote has been received from Fortel Traffic, Inc. which includes 1) the purchase and installation of two new posts, one on Eldorado Meadow and one on Jed Smith, with both locations shown on the map included with the memo, 2) the removal of the existing sign from the original post (which will be left in its position) and its relocation and installation on the new post on Eldorado Meadow, and 3) the purchase of

an additional reconditioned sign to be installed on the new post on Jed Smith; the new locations were determined with the help of the Sheriff's Department, staff, and himself; to keep the costs down, the vendor has agreed to do everything at the same time; all of the involved costs can be paid from existing MTA STP-L funds.

In response to Mayor Freedland, the City Manager stated that the original sign was installed in its current location without any survey of residents in the area.

Council Member Siegel commented as follows:

He personally likes the signs, and believes they make drivers slow down, but there is perception as opposed to reality; at one time there was a perceived problem on Penland; speeds were measured, which determined that it was the same one or two people at the same time every day causing the problem; tickets were issued, which took care of the problem; so what appeared to be a larger speeding problem really was not; if the Council would choose to install the sign on Eldorado Meadow, which he thinks would be a good location, he would first like to measure the downhill speeds to determine a baseline; then once the sign is installed, wait a month or so and measure again to see if the sign is actually making a difference; the City has in the past also used center line and edge line striping and raised markers which perceptually narrow the roadway, effectively slowing drivers.

Mayor Freedland agreed with Council Member Siegel's suggestion, adding the following comments:

When the original sign was installed, the Council even then discussed adding extra posts and moving the sign to different locations, due to the fact that drivers become acclimated to it if left in one spot for too long; at one point, the Sheriff was also asked to target the area on Round Meadow near the sign to issue tickets to those speeding; the sign itself can also record some data regarding speeds, which could give before and after data for comparison.

Mr. Nussbaum confirmed that there is existing data from the current location of the sign. The City Manager and City Engineer informed the Council of the following:

Every so many years, the City has to conduct speed surveys in order to justify and set speed limits; these surveys were just conducted last April; in looking at these surveys, Eldorado Meadow was shown to have higher speeds than other locations; so this existing data from the speed surveys could be used, as well as data gathered by the sign itself, to establish a baseline for comparison purposes.

Mayor Freedland wanted to make sure that if the sign was removed from the existing post, some type of other traffic sign would be placed on the post so it would not be just an empty post sticking up from the ground. Staff assured him that other traffic signs would be placed on any of the “empty” posts, such as “Watch Downhill Speed”. In response to Mayor Freedland, Mr. Nussbaum confirmed that data pre and post installation of the original sign was collected and summarized in two reports that he had completed in June and August of 2005, showing that the sign was indeed effective.

Council Member Fisher was concerned that there was no recent data at the current location of the sign to show that it was still effective, and wondered if the sign were to be removed from that original location, if that would then result in more speeding in that area. Mr. Nussbaum pointed out that the sign had been there for quite some time, and agreed with Mayor Freedland that when the sign is left in one location too long, its effectiveness is diminished.

Mayor Freedland suggested doing the following at this time:

Install two extra posts at the suggested locations, which would give the flexibility of moving the sign at any time to one of three areas; relocate the existing sign to the Eldorado Meadow location, which recorded higher speeds than other areas; after a period of time, collect data and see if the sign is effective; possibly consider asking the Sheriff to target the area near the sign for additional enforcement; then review everything at a later date to see if the Council felt an additional sign(s) should be purchased.

Council Member Siegel felt by using the Sheriff in the area when the sign is first installed might complicate the data. He felt the sign should be installed, and then after a month or so, the data should be collected and reviewed. City Engineer Lovett reminded the Council that the sign could actually be installed, left dark for a month, during which time it could still be collecting data, and then turned on to collect comparison data for the next month. The Council Members liked that idea. Council Member Cohen had several questions relating to the proposal and whether or not the sign could be installed by the Association’s maintenance crew. The Mayor and staff confirmed that the existing post was going to remain in its current location, and that to

protect the sign and liability, Fortel should be relocating and installing the sign, which was originally purchased from them.

Mayor Pro Tem Weber joined the meeting at this time. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Cohen and carried on a 4-0-1 roll call vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Weber abstaining since he was not available for the discussion, it was resolved: 1) to authorize the expenditure of not-to-exceed \$5000 from flexible MTA STP-L funds to Fortel Traffic, Inc. for the purchase and installation of two new posts, one to be placed on Eldorado Meadow Road and the other on Jed Smith Road, and for the removal of the existing traffic calming sign from its current location on Round Meadow Road and reinstallation on the new post on Eldorado Meadow; 2) to purchase and install regular traffic signs on the two posts without the calming sign (the new post on Jed Smith and the old post on Round Meadow); 3) to collect data from the sign at its new location, for a time period with the sign dark and then with the sign turned on, with the Public Safety Commission and staff to determine the length of the time periods; and 4) to review the data after its collection to determine the effectiveness of the sign in its new location and whether or not the Council Members may wish to purchase an additional sign(s).

CONSENT CALENDAR

A. City Council Minutes – January 26, 2009

B. Demand List

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to approve items A and B of the consent calendar as submitted.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

Undergrounding of Overhead Utilities – Update

City Engineer Dirk Lovett informed the Council that staff now has three of the four designs from the utility companies, with the one last design expected from AT&T by the end of this week. He added that once the final design is submitted, estimates would be prepared for both locations, and then submitted to the Council to determine whether or not to proceed with one or both of the projects.

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) joined the meeting. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn to closed session at 8:01 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 Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to return to open session at 8:18 p.m., at which time the Assistant 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 Council Member Fisher, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of February 9, 2009 at 8:19 p.m.

Steve Freedland, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk