

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, July 27, 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, July 27, 2009 at the hour of 7:30 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 Monty E. Fisher
Council Member Jim Cohen
Council Member Stuart E. Siegel

Staff:

City Engineer Dirk Lovett
Building Official Greg Robinson
City Manager Cherie L. Paglia

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 July 27, 2009 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Freedland made the following announcements:

Thanks to Connor Weber, Mayor Pro Tem Larry Weber's son, who has been our videographer for some time now; this is his last meeting.

The next Council meeting scheduled for Monday, August 10th, will be cancelled; the next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, August 24th.

The City will be offering CERT training classes on Wednesday nights from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., starting on Wednesday, August 12th; call City Hall to sign up; these are really important classes that teach skills to help your families, children, and neighbors during an emergency.

AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments at this time.

PRESENTATION

A. City Certificate/2009 Achievement Recipient

Mayor Freedland presented a City certificate to resident Shea O'Sullivan, who attends Viewpoint School.

B. Southern California Edison Update

Our region and Public Affairs Manager Rudy Gonzales updated the Council as follows:

Southern California Edison (SCE) is the largest electric utility in Southern California, serving a population of 13 million; SCE is committed to helping the state meet its environmental and stewardship goals to reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil; SCE has increased its infrastructure investment in recent years and continues to invest at even greater levels this year; there will be local investments in distribution and transmission systems to enable the development of new energy, especially renewable energy; steam generators will be replaced to extend the life of the San Onofre nuclear facility; there is a proposal to launch a solar initiative by using the rooftops of commercial buildings; in the next few years old meters will be replaced with advanced meters with new rate options and features to allow residents to better manage electric use; SCE has the largest private electric vehicle fleet in the United States; President Obama recently visited the electric vehicle test facility in Pomona; the local system in Hidden Hills is served from a substation across the freeway in Calabasas on Park Ora; six distribution circuits originate from this substation; the new Sienna circuit, in service at the end of August, will help relieve the load on the existing Horizon circuit primarily serving Hidden Hills, which sits at the end of the SCE system; in relation to the recent issues in Hidden Hills, SCE is just as concerned as the Council is; SCE will address these problems proactively, but will also need assistance from the residents; SCE engineers are evaluating the transformers serving Hidden Hills, and if they are not adequately sized, SCE will reconfigure the system to alleviate the load or change out the transformers; BURD (Buried Underground Residential Distribution) transformers (which can only accommodate transformers up to a certain size) may need to be replaced with pad mounted transformers (the green boxes on concrete slabs), which are more reliable and run cooler; SCE will also assess secondary and service wire size to make sure the wiring is adequate to serve homes; residents can help by contacting SCE when load is added to their homes, such as A/C and large motors (pool pumps, compressors, welding equipment); some electrical additions need permits, but for those that do not, SCE needs to be contacted to evaluate the additional load; if you experience flickering of lights, especially when turning on the A/C, this is a sign that the secondary or service wires need upgrading; panel conversions as part of a remodel allow SCE to install underground wires with greater capacity than overhead wires; however it is more cost effective to have residents implement energy conservation measures to reduce demand rather than have SCE upgrade equipment; he suggested residents go on the www.sce.com website to learn about reducing energy and saving money; residents can sign up for an A/C cycling program that could provide a \$200 credit on A/C for the summer; he is also providing tonight a "Guide to Home Energy Guzzlers", listing the top 10 guzzlers, with the top three being A/C, pool pumps and motors, and refrigerators; SCE has other investments in the region, including 1) new transmission lines to increase capacity at existing

substations, 2) a peaker generation facility to support the regional grid and provide Black Star capabilities, and 3) a proposed substation to ease current and future demand in the east Ventura region; SCE is always available to meet with electeds and staff; as a member of the local business community, SCE realizes the importance of supporting local non-profits; in 2008, SCE bought more than 80% of solar energy produced in the United States for SCE customers, and leads the state in investor owned utilities by producing 16% from renewable energy sources; the goal next year is a challenging 20%; the biggest challenge is to build transmission lines to transport renewable electricity; to do this SCE is embarking on the largest renewable transmission project in the nation to bring 4500 megawatts of renewable electricity, primarily wind generation from the Tehachapi region of California; residents have expressed an interest in solar power, so SCE has been hosting sessions to provide information; the next session will be at the Simi Valley City Hall on July 30th at 6:30 p.m.; if there are any issues, the Council and staff are always invited to contact him.

Mayor Freedland pointed out that there have been several transformer related fires recently, including one just Sunday on Jim Bridger, and wondered if these were attributed to increased loads; to help, he would like to see some type of requirement implemented by the City to assure that residents report additional loads to SCE.

Council Member Siegel agreed that the City should do what it could to help, but he would also like to know exactly what caused these fires – was it the fault of the residents not notifying SCE about increased loads, or was it poorly maintained or installed equipment on the part of SCE.

Mr. Gonzales responded as follows:

He has been serving this area for fifteen years now, and in that time, he has not seen a rash of these types of incidents except during the last six weeks; this community was built in the 50s and 60s, and SCE built its system to accommodate the load in place at that time; a lot of remodeling has taken place since then, and a lot of electrical equipment has been added to each of the homes, increasing the load, which SCE's facilities have not kept pace with; when a resident does a complete remodel, the electrician for the job works with SCE's service planner, and then SCE increases the wire size or transformers to accommodate the change in load; if anyone has flickering lights, it is a sure sign that the service or secondary lines may not be adequate.

Council Member Siegel suggested that SCE's equipment is old, transformers are past their useful life, and there may have been budget cut-backs in maintenance, all of which could have caused these problems. The City will do what it can to help, but he wants SCE to evaluate the problems to determine the cause and have SCE take responsibility if that's where the responsibility lies.

Mayor Freedland asked if the fire on the pole at the end of Round Meadow involved new or old equipment, and if it was new, could the wiring have been undersized. Mr. Gonzales stated it was new equipment, and that there may have been a bad connection in the structure connecting the overhead to the underground. Mayor Freedland and Council Member Siegel felt that if the equipment was new, then it sure sounds like there was a faulty installation. Mayor Freedland asked what SCE was going to do to be more proactive, and what the City could do to help them in that regard.

Mr. Gonzales replied as follows:

Several years ago in the Oak Park area of Ventura County, there was a similar situation in which SCE was responding often to failing transformers; they checked the equipment and determined that they needed to add transformers; the BURDs don't get the same ventilation, so get warmer and are more susceptible to failure; in Hidden Hills, they will do a thorough investigation of the loading on each transformer, and if they are overloaded, SCE will either add BURD transformers in between existing facilities to shift the load or change out the BURD transformers to the pad transformers; knowing that the City is looking at undergrounding as many overhead facilities as they can, he understands that it might be preferable to add BURDs; the new circuit across the freeway will take some of the load from the six existing circuits, including the Horizon circuit that serves Hidden Hills.

Council Member Fisher made the following comments:

Air conditioning is so much more efficient now, as are other appliances; if a transformer is engineered for four homes and each of them has a 200 amp panel that can be handled by the transformer, it should not be a problem; but people do add equipment, and sometimes without the necessary permits, so he would not be so quick to blame the transformers; it would seem the problem would be more with the underground wiring; he wondered who installed the underground wiring from the pole to the home, and whether or not a 200 amp panel would have the proper wiring to handle that size of panel.

The following information was provided by Mr. Gonzales:

SCE does install the wiring up to the meter, and SCE is responsible for the size of the wire; however, the wire is not sized for the panel, but for the projected load; so the wire size is actually less than what the panel can accommodate, which is standard; when the wiring is converted to underground, SCE can install a larger wire.

Council Member Siegel stated the following:

About a year ago, Mr. Gonzales was at a Council meeting and a discussion was held regarding smart (or time of use) meters; he himself had one installed; with these meters, a resident is charged premium rates during peak periods, and then given discounted rates for evenings, weekends, and holidays; this allows the residents to control their usage, and provides a reason for not washing or baking, etc. during the day; he is aware that one of the residents has been waiting a year for his smart meter, and he wondered why it was not available; to have one of these meters would be one of the most effective things a resident could do; in fact, due to the use of his smart meter and other changes in usage he has made, his average daily usage was down 7% from last year.

Mr. Gonzales explained that the smart meters were only available during a pilot program but not currently - once that pilot program is completed, and over the next five years, all 4.8 million SCE customers should be converted to smart meters. He added that even without smart meters, residents should try to shift their usage to non-peak periods (other than between 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.) to help them individually and to minimize the impact on the system.

Mayor Pro Tem Weber and Council Member Siegel both had questions about billing relating to similar rates in different peak periods, and rate increases. Mr. Gonzales said he would investigate those questions if provided a copy of the bills. In response to Council Member Cohen, Mr. Gonzales stated that he was not aware of any grant funding for undergrounding, other than Rule 20-A funds, of which the City gets a very limited amount.

PUBLIC HEARING

Consideration of Approval of 2009 Congestion Management Program (CMP) Self-Certification Resolution and Adoption of Local Development Report

Mayor Freedland opened the public hearing. As there were no comments, he then closed the hearing. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adopt by title only Resolution No. 825 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS FINDING THE CITY TO BE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CMP) AND ADOPTING THE CMP LOCAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65089.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Los Angeles County Fire Department Report - June

Newly appointed Assistant Fire Chief Gary Burden presented the following report:

He is looking forward to working with the City in his new position; he has 32 years of fire service, including time working in the EMS field, wildland areas, and the inner city; during the month of June, there were 3 rescues, 5 false alarm/good intent calls, and 1 public assist; there was 1 hazardous condition with no fire, which involved a downed power line on Oakfield Road; in the City, a total of 570 parcels have been inspected for brush clearance; of those 570, only 34 (6%) have been issued 410s; 24 of the 34 parcels have already been brought into compliance, while the owners of the other 10 are working with the Station to comply; none have been turned over to the Brush Clearance Unit for enforcement.

Council Member Siegel commented on the Fire Department's brochure entitled "Ready! Set! Go! Your Personal Wildfire Action Plan", stating that the brochure was excellent. He suggested that some of the brochures be given to the Community Association for the counter in that office, and that staff put notices on cable TV channel 3 and in the newsletter that the brochures are available both at the City and at the Association.

B. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Report - June

The following report was provided by Lt. John Benedict:

During the month of June, there was a burglary from an unlocked tack room on Long Valley; four bicycles with a total value of \$3000 were taken from the location; there has been a 50% reduction in crime for this year, compared to last year; that is a good reflection on the efforts of the residents to keep doors locked and equipment out of sight in vehicles; in relation to traffic, there were no collisions, 47 citations (38 hazardous and 7 non-hazardous), and 2 parking citations; one West Hills driver who ran a stop sign was reported to STTOP; a letter was mailed to this driver; the www.STTOP.net website has been updated, and anyone can anonymously report drivers on the site; the Department is getting ready to release the bike safety city program.

Council Member Siegel stated the following:

He would like to mention that the Sheriff's Department did a good job responding to the large party a week ago Sunday; the two Deputies (DeSantis and Brownell) were hired by the property owner to assist with traffic; the matter has been discussed with the Association Board of Directors at its last meeting; everyone agreed the event should not happen again; the City has offered to provide an ordinance in the future, if necessary to assist the Association, depending on what the Board and Gate Committee decide to do; he wished to thank the Sheriff's Department for its response, as they handled the situation well.

Lt. Benedict thanked Council Member Siegel for his kind words, and also wished to thank the Fire Department, which was also involved in the response.

C. Consideration of Proclamation for National Night Out 2009

Lt. John Benedict informed the Council of the following:

National Night Out is an annual event, being held this year on Tuesday, August 4th; it is sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch; residents are invited to be involved by turning on their porch lights and promoting cooperative, police-community crime prevention efforts; Sheriff personnel will be traveling throughout the cities; the idea is to let the criminals know that residents and the Sheriff personnel work together.

Upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Weber, seconded by Council Member Fisher and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the National Night Out 2009 Proclamation, which was presented to Lt. Benedict.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. City Council Minutes – July 13, 2009**
- B. Demand List**

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to table Item A and approve Item B of the consent calendar as submitted.

MATTERS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Report from 7/21/09 Hidden Hills Community Association Board of Directors Meeting

Association Board President and City liaison Ron Wolfe presented the following report:

The Board did discuss the large party on 7/19/09, which made everyone unhappy; the Association is looking into any possible rule changes that would hopefully prevent this from occurring in the future; during the next two Board meetings (8/18/09 and 9/15/09), there will be an open discussion regarding the proposed renovations at the Saddlecreek arena; the plan involves regrading the area to provide a new arena and large park with a BBQ; financial matters in relation to the proposed project will be discussed; hopefully the item can be voted on at the Board's annual meeting; the Board also approved a parkway repair project using a new method.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

A. Building and Safety Cost Tracking

The following staff report was presented by Building Official Greg Robinson:

Before October of 2005, the Building and Safety Department tracked the balance of its revenues and costs; this balance, which was called a cap, was calculated by multiplying the revenues by 65% (per the City's agreement with Charles Abbott Associates) and then subtracting the cost of service; over the years, the cap increased to \$650,000, which was not representative of the outstanding workload; now staff manually calculates, approximately every six months, the outstanding workload and the estimated costs to complete that workload; the last calculation at the end of October 2008 resulted in an estimated cost of \$81,000.16; based on plan check and permit revenues received to date, through June 2009, the remaining Building and Safety Department workload is estimated at \$54,603.59; this decrease in workload generally reflects the ongoing downturn in building activity throughout Southern California.

Based on the recommendation of Building Official Robinson, Council directed staff to revise the Building and Safety Department funds balance (estimated costs to complete the current workload) to \$54,603.59, and to recalculate this funds balance in approximately six months.

B. Charles Abbott Monthly Report - June

The report was received and filed.

C. Review and Consideration of Comment in Response to City of Calabasas Public Notice for Initiation of Annexation Proceedings Relating to Mountain View Estates

City Engineer Dirk Lovett informed the Council that the City of Calabasas recently issued a public notice stating that the City Council, at its meeting on August 12, 2009, would consider adopting a Resolution of Application to Initiate Annexation of the Mountain View Estates area, which is in unincorporated Los Angeles County, but partly in the Hidden Hills sphere of influence. He asked the Council Members if they would like to comment on the action at this time.

Council Member Siegel stated the following:

He received a call from the City of Calabasas suggesting a meeting with Hidden Hills involving two Council Members and the City Manager from each City; since Mountain View Estates is partly in the Hidden Hills sphere of influence, as is Craftsman Center, which Calabasas has also expressed an interest in annexing, a meeting should be held in the near future to discuss this matter; he did not feel there was anything to do at this time, nor should a formal response to the notice be sent.

The Council Members agreed, with Mayor Freedland stating that the City should wait to see if and when Calabasas will request a meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Weber, seconded by Council Member Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of July 27, 2009 at 8:20 p.m.

Steve Freedland, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk