

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, January 24, 2011

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 24, 2011 at the hour of 7:33 p.m. Mayor Larry Weber called the meeting to order and presided thereover after leading the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the January 24, 2011 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Weber made the following announcement:

The Valentine Musicale will be held on Saturday, 2/12; there will be three shows that evening; call the Community Center for tickets and information.

AUDIENCE

Resident and Gate Committee Member Patrick Finn and his wife Farnaz Fardad-Finn expressed concerns over recent burglaries, and asked the Council to better inform the residents of what is currently being done, and to discuss and consider what could be done additionally to enhance security in the community. Council Member Siegel suggested that Mr. & Mrs. Finn stay to hear the Sheriff's report, and then talk to Lt. John Benedict after the meeting.

PRESENTATION

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

David Lippman, LVMWD Director of Facilities and Operations, accompanied by Jeff Reinhardt, LVMWD Public Affairs and Communications Manager, asked the Council for support letters for two grants being requested by the LVMWD from the Bureau of Reclamation. He stated that one grant (with \$150,000 matching funds) was for a feasibility study to explore the expansion of the District's recycled water distribution system, while the second grant (up to \$1 million in matching funds) was for assistance in implementing the District's Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) conversion program. In response to a question from Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, Mr. Lippman stated that the AMR system would give residents the ability to track their water use and obtain additional information on the Internet. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, it was resolved on a 4-0-1 vote (with Mayor Weber abstaining as his company has supplied meter equipment parts to utilities) to authorize the Mayor to sign the two support letters requested by the LVMWD.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Los Angeles County Fire Department Reports – October, November, December

Community Services Representative Maria Grycan presented the following report:

During the month of October, there were no fires and 10 responses, including 5 medical, 4 false alarms, and 1 snake removal; there were 2 Fire Prevention Bureau inspections, and the Department participated in the Area B mass evacuation workshop; in November, again there were no fires but 12 responses, including 7 medical calls, 4 false alarms, and 1 smoke/odor removal on Little Valley; 1 plan was checked, and the Fire Prevention Bureau conducted 5 inspections; during the month of December there were 16 responses, including 7 medical calls, 8 false alarms, and 1 accidental fire on Round Meadow Road, which involved an equipment malfunction resulting in \$500 property damage; there were 2 Fire Prevention Bureau inspections; of 570 parcels in the City, all except five were in compliance with brush clearance requirements; once these are turned over to County Agriculture, she no longer has information on whether or not those properties have complied; however, once the properties are cleared by County Agriculture, the cost for that clearance and the fines are placed on the property tax bill of the homeowner.

B. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Reports – October, November, December

Lt. John Benedict provided the following information:

There were no crimes and no accidents during October; 18 citations were issued, 12 of those hazardous and 6 nonhazardous, with no parking citations; there were no DUI arrests; during the month of November, there was one residential burglary on William Bent Road; things were stolen from upstairs bedrooms after a laundry door was kicked in for entry; this burglary is part of already solved cases; there were a total of 10 burglaries during the entire past year, with 8 of those being cleared; they were all associated with one burglary crew from which 3 arrests have been made and filed with the District Attorney; these three are responsible for and looking at numerous counts of residential burglary in Hidden Hills and Los Angeles, involving safes and jewelry; to answer Council Member Freedland, yes, they are locked up; besides the one burglary in November, there were no collisions but 37 citations, with 27 of those being hazardous, 8 nonhazardous, and 2 parking; there were no DUI arrests; in December, there were 3 residential burglaries connected to the same group, so they have been solved; one collision occurred at Mureau and Round Meadow, with property damage to a mailbox; 15 citations were issued, including 12 hazardous, 3 nonhazardous, and no parking; again there were no DUI arrests.

Council Member Freedland asked Lt. Benedict to address concerns or misconceptions expressed earlier by Mr. Finn that the Sheriff's Department is not actively patrolling the community but just sitting and watching for traffic violations. Lt. Benedict stated the following:

The Sheriff serves several functions within the City; traffic is certainly one of the functions, but they also patrol for crime prevention, and provide prevention tips; there are Deputies back and forth in the City all the time, based on calls for service in other areas and here in the City; they are here for the community; if anyone calls for service, they come, day or night, anytime; if anyone sees something, or has any issues or questions, they should not hesitate to call the Sheriff; Sheriff personnel are meeting Wednesday night with the Gate Committee to discuss any issues the community has, and at that time, they can also go over the functions of the Sheriff's Department.

Council Member Freedland wondered, in Lt. Benedict's professional opinion, if the City would contract for additional patrolling time, that would have stopped those ten burglaries from this past year, or solved them any faster. Lt. Benedict responded as follows:

It is hard to say; if a patrol car is rolling along and sees something, of course that would help; but frankly, those things are few and far between; Hidden Hills is actually one of the safest cities in Los Angeles County; because of the gates, there is some control over comings and goings; the residents here are pretty savvy, but if they would call the Sheriff first, rather than the gate guards, the Sheriff could respond faster and know quicker what is happening; a lot has to do with forming a partnership with the community, as the Sheriff can't be everywhere all the time; residents should report things they see, even if at the time it doesn't seem that serious.

Council Member Freedland also asked if the Sheriff had any concrete specific recommendations for procedures at the gates that would assist the Sheriff and improve the City's security, and if those would be shared with the Gate Committee. Lt. Benedict said yes, they would be more than happy to share ideas and have open communication with the Gate Committee as well as the City Council, sharing any recommendations they might have to make the area safer.

Ms. Farnaz Fardad-Finn wanted Lt. Benedict to clarify the recent reporting and notification of the community in relation to the attempted child abduction in January. Lt. Benedict stated the following:

He can only say so much as it is an open investigation; most of the information was already shared with the community in a BOLO (be on the lookout); yes there was a child annoyance or attempted abduction on January 19th which was a major concern for both the community and the Sheriff, as things like that don't normally happen in this area; as soon as they were made aware of the incident, they responded and took a report; they did the best they could to get the information out as quickly as possible based on the information they had; you never want to give out misinformation, jeopardize an investigation, or alarm the community – they have to make sure the information they have is accurate; the investigation is ongoing; they have been following numerous leads, and he would like to thank the Hidden Hills community and the surrounding areas for all the responses; they have received numerous tips and are very busy following up on those; hopefully, there will be a resolution in the near future.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen understood that misinformation should not be given out, but on the other hand, he felt delayed information was not good either and that the residents here would like to know as soon as possible. He added that no one wants to scare people or cause a panic, but he feels the residents can handle the information if put in the right terms. Mayor Pro Tem Cohen then invited Mr. Finn to return to the next Council meeting to give a report on the Gate Committee meeting that the Sheriff personnel were going to attend, in order to keep the dialogue going.

Council Member Siegel added his comments:

One thing the community can do a good job on are the video cameras at the gates; this would be a good time to find out if the cameras are providing valuable information or could be improved; the cameras provide eyes 24-7, whereas the Sheriff cannot see everything; the cameras would be something that would not be that expensive, and if the data can be accessed and provided to the Sheriff immediately, that would certainly help; there was another recent crime in the community where the cameras in the home identified a theft that occurred; this is something we can do and have the finances for.

Council Member Freedland then asked, based on the fact that a lot of the crimes in the City are inside jobs, if the Sheriff routinely and randomly checked contractors' vehicle licenses for outstanding warrants when they were patrolling, to which Lt. Benedict replied yes. Council Member Freedland also pointed out there are a lot of things people may not realize are being done to keep everybody safe, such as logging in drivers' licenses at the gates.

The following information was provided by Lt. Benedict:

There is technology that they have in two of the patrol cars called ALPR – automated license plate recognition; a patrol car can sit at a corner and with this technology pick up every license plate and run the plates through records; it can provide instant information on warrants, felony warrants, etc.; the computer filters the information and gives a warning signal, telling the user what it has found; it is a great tool which is used often.

Mr. Finn stated that the gate camera equipment is good, but that there is software that can look at patterns in relation to license plates. He wondered if the gates could tie their software system into the Sheriff's program. Lt. Benedict explained that the software is obtained through a vendor, and it might not be readily available, but they could look into it; however, it would not be up to the Sheriff's Department, and the gate cameras could not connect to the Sheriff's system.

In response to Mayor Weber, Lt. Benedict stated that those responsible for most of the burglaries did not live in Hidden Hills, but had friends in the City and were given access through the gates by community members. Mayor Weber reminded everyone that the gates are for access, not security, and there are numerous ways to get into the City if one wants to.

Lt. Benedict agreed that crooks can always find a way to get into areas, even if they're gated, which is why people have to be vigilant, aware of their surroundings, and work together to keep the area safe. He believes that Hidden Hills does a good job of this, as shown by the numerous tips provided in relation to the recent child annoyance incident, and that's what the Sheriff needs, as they can't do it all alone.

C. Consideration of Assignment of 2010-2011 Brulte/COPS Funds

Lt. John Benedict provided the following information:

Every year a letter is provided by the Lost Hills Station Captain suggesting expenditures for the \$100,000 in Brulte/COPS funds received every year by the City; the recommendation this year is almost the same as that of last year; about 63% is recommended for motorcycle enforcement; the five area cities together pay for two full

motorcycle officers, which results in 16 hours per week for each city; the motors serve mostly for traffic functions, but do other things as well; the Captain is recommending 30% be spent for the Sheriff's Teen Traffic Offender Program (STTOP); this has been a good program for all five of the area cities that again share in the cost; the program allows people to make anonymous tips regarding traffic violations or poor driving, or anything suspicious; the program was set up and is mostly for kids, but is also for adults; the last 7% is for a crime impact fund that can be used for specific crime problems or trends as the City and Sheriff see fit when necessary.

Council Member Siegel pointed out that these are grant funds received from the State, not general fund money, that can only be used for additional Sheriff enforcement above and beyond the usual Sheriff contract. The City Manager added that some of the crime impact funds are used for the LET (fingerprint technician for our area) and the City's Blackboard Connect emergency notification system. Upon MOTION of Council Member Freedland, seconded by Council Member Goldberg and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to allocate \$100,000 in Brute/COPS funds for the following, as recommended by the Sheriff's Department: \$63,687.10/Motorcycle Enforcement Officers (Motors); \$30,155.01/Sheriff's Teen Traffic Offender Program (STTOP); and \$6,157.89/Crime Impact Funds.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. City Council Minutes – January 10, 2011**
- B. Demand List**
- C. Disbursement List – December**
- D. Financial/Treasurer's Report – December**

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

MATTERS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- A. Report from 1/18/11 Hidden Hills Community Association Board of Directors Meeting**

The following report was provided by Association Board Member and City liaison Ron Wolfe:

In relation to the earlier discussion, we do have video from the gates that both Sheriff and Association personnel have been reviewing in hopes of matching the vehicle and person descriptions given; maybe they can look at upgrading the equipment, but that is a separate issue, as what they have now is being used for the child annoyance incident; at the January 18th meeting, the decision was made to close one of the arenas at Saddle Creek as it was deemed unsafe by the Equestrian Services Committee (ESC); they are now getting bids for repairs so the area can be used; the three charities for the Valentines Musicales are Saving Wildlife International, the Talbert Family Foundation, and Calabasas High School; the middle show of three is already sold out, so everyone should get their tickets for the 2/12 event; for years the Hidden Hills Horsemen (HHH) was a non-profit club that put on equestrian events in the City; it has been dissolved, and the Association is exploring the formation of a committee to take its place; announcements have asked for residents who might want to serve on such a committee, and the response has been good; they are not sure if it will be a separate committee or a subcommittee of the ESC; anyone interested should let the Association know; they will also be determining what the exact functions of the committee will be; wifi is now available at the Community Center, available to all residents, with a password.

Board President John McGinnis said the coverage was for the office and multi-purpose room, but he didn't believe it went as far as the pool. He also just checked and there is no password required. Mayor Pro Tem Cohen asked about insurance coverage for the new committee to be formed. Mr. Wolfe explained that before the Association was unable to get coverage for horse events, but they are now able to get that coverage, and at a lesser cost than what the HHH were paying.

B. Report from 1/18/11 Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments Meeting

Council Member Siegel reported that long time COG member Dennis Washburn was not running for reelection in Calabasas, so would no longer be able to serve on the COG. Other than that, the normal business of the COG was addressed, with a lot of the discussion revolving around Measure R, which will be used by the other cities for major overpass and roadway projects.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

A. 2011 Fiesta

Fiesta Co-Chairmen Bonnie Frank, Bret Katz, and Lisa Moriarity led a discussion with the Council and staff regarding the 2011 Fiesta, during which the following issues were raised and points made:

This year's Fiesta will be the 50th golden anniversary (the City was incorporated in 1961), so they would like it to be special and somewhat different; September 24th has been confirmed as the date; they would like authorization to spend an additional \$25,000 for this special occasion, to help provide bigger and better rides, different vendors, additional activities, more varied meal offerings, etc.; they will try to balance the additional expenditures with additional income if possible; they will be meeting with the ride company in the near future; a meeting will be held for all those interested to discuss different ideas, such as providing incentives to build floats, holding float building classes, providing a glass of champagne for all adults in attendance, or anything else that the group might come up with; some of these ideas can be brought to the Council for their input; they need the leeway now of knowing that they can spend the additional funds in order to pursue what is needed to assure the event is bigger, better, and has more of a "wow" factor.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen had some concerns about approving an additional \$25,000 without knowing exactly how that money would be spent. Council Member Freedland felt they needed the ability to know now what they could spend in order to allow the Co-Chairmen to negotiate for the additional rides, activities, etc. He reminded everyone that the Council would still have the final say on the actual budget that would be provided at a Council meeting once all the plans have been finalized. Upon MOTION of Council Member Freedland, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to authorize the expenditure of an additional \$25,000 for this year's special 50th anniversary Fiesta, with the understanding that a final budget for the event must still be presented to the Council at a meeting in the future.

B. Round Meadow/Long Valley Road Utility Undergrounding Project -Update

The following staff report was provided by City Engineer Dirk Lovett:

There will be major power outages scheduled over a four day period from 2/8 – 2/11 to allow SCE to cut over from the existing overhead to the new underground facilities; he has provided a map of the affected areas; the utilities are a little behind schedule,

claiming that they will now be done by the middle of February; he has been assured that the poles will come out two days after the power outage schedule; the outages will occur during the day, which they feel is the time of least impact, rather than during the night; SCE will notify each affected residence 72 hours before the outage in the area; he will also get a list of all the affected addresses for each of the four days; the first outage will occur on 2/8 from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., affecting the Eldorado Meadow loop (both old and new Eldorado Meadow) and Spring Valley, which will include City Hall (this will be a good test for the City's new generator) and the Burbank gate, which does have a small generator; the second outage is scheduled for 2/9 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., affecting the Community Center, which also has its own generator; the third outage will occur from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on 2/10, affecting those along the horse trail immediately across from Wingfield; and the last outage will occur on 2/11, also from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., affecting those on Wingfield and Deepwell; this schedule is subject to change, but those affected will be notified of any changes.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen wanted to make sure the residents were notified as much as possible. Staff stated that an email/fax notification would be sent, information would be put on channel 3, and the Association would be asked to put information in the Round-Up if possible (the City's newsletter has already gone to print, so it is too late to place a notice in that publication).

C. Charles Abbott Monthly Report - December

The report was received and filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Freedland and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of January 24, 2011 at 8:28 p.m.

Larry G. Weber, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk