

**MINUTES OF
A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF ROLLING HILLS, CALIFORNIA
SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rolling Hills was called to order by Mayor Mirsch at 10:00a.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend Road, Rolling Hills, California.

2. ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Black, Dieringer, and Wilson.
Councilmembers Absent: None.
Others Present: Elaine Jeng, P.E., City Manager.
Meredith Elguira, Planning & Community Services Director
Yohana Coronel, City Clerk
Terry Shea, Finance Director
Jim Walker, Contract Accountant
Gordana Swanson, 2 Chesterfield

3. OPEN AGENDA - PUBLIC COMMENT WELCOME

There were no public comments.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP.

City Manager Elaine Jeng gave an overview of how the discussion would be guided via a PowerPoint presentation. She welcomed everyone for making themselves available on a Saturday and proceeded to highlight the workshop guidelines, goals and objectives of the workshop and strategic planning going forward. She also informed the Council that her hope was to focus on their common priorities.

Workshop Guidelines

City Manager Elaine Jeng went over the guidelines and informed the Council that she wanted to make sure time was used efficiently. She requested that the Council be respectful of other Councilmember's perspectives and allow their fellow Councilmembers to fully convey their ideas. She stressed that the workshop was meant to present their priorities and was not a forum for arguments but a forum in which to represent their constituents. She informed the Council that staff was present to support them and answer questions that may arise.

Goals of the Workshop

City Manager Elaine Jeng informed the Council that the goal of the workshop is to get a general direction from the Council. She hoped that the workshop would provide an honest dialogue between the Council regarding the future of the City. She continued to inform the Council that the discussion topics could focus on the priorities specified by the Council or any other areas that the Council may wish to address, for example, expanding services to the community by providing car/shuttle services.

Objectives of the Workshop

City Manager Elaine Jeng stated that the objective of the strategic workshop was to determine the specific and precise goals of the Council. She suggested that the Council establish a minimum of one priority and a maximum of three priorities agreeable among the Council to establish the City's work plan for the next two Fiscal Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Strategic Planning Going Forward

City Manager Elaine Jeng proceeded to review her projected strategic planning session timeline going forward. She expects to report out to the City Council by the next regularly scheduled City Council Meeting on Monday, January 27, 2020. Strategic Planning Session #2 is scheduled for the February 10, 2020 City Council Meeting, and Strategic Planning Session #3 is scheduled for the February 24, 2020 City Council Meeting where she will continue to use the established priorities to define actions items. She informed the Council that on April 13, 2020 the City Council is scheduled to discuss Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget priorities which will hopefully translate from action items to budget items.

City Council Common Priorities

City Manager Elaine Jeng pointed out that common priorities among the Council are as follows; 1) Wildfire Mitigation/Emergency Preparedness, 2) Sewer, 3) Utility Undergrounding, and 4) Drainage.

Sewer

During the Council discussion, it was stated that staff should first review the Sewer Study and wait to see what the predicted cost is first before deciding how to move forward. There was a suggestion about checking with the residents to see if they are interested. A citywide sewer project, given the distance between homes and the sewer connection, could prove to be too expensive. Council also considered that there may be some upfront cost but it may turn out to be cheaper for residents to connect to the sewer in the long run. It was also mentioned that the RHCA project of converting their septic tank to sewer connection could offset some of the sewer cost. There was also talk about Middleridge residents wanting to fund their own sewer connection. Councilmember Black commented that there is no buy-in from the residents because the cost is prohibitive. Councilmember Dieringer stressed minimizing legal liabilities.

Undergrounding

Discussion ensued among the Council about the status of the grants and how much money should be allocated towards undergrounding. Councilmember Pieper stated that he was comfortable if the project cost was \$1.1 million because it was his understanding that there is money available. Mayor Mirsch asked the Council if they would like to continue the on-going funding of one hundred thousand a year or should they allocate the money towards another project. Councilmember Wilson asked staff to confirm if \$250k was still being allocated from the general fund for undergrounding. Finance Director Terry Shea answered yes, and that the City has been doing so for the past two years. The Council concluded that they are in support of undergrounding and would like see that other areas of the City have the opportunity to participate in undergrounding.

Drainage

Councilmember Black stated that he is in full support of catch basins and capturing all the drainage on Palos Verdes Drive North. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper suggested updating the parking area in City Hall and exploring the idea of retaining the storm water on campus. It is his understanding that this may solve the runoff issue. City Manager Jeng informed the Council that in order to discharge runoff to waterbodies, certain requirements need to be met which are very difficult. She suggested that drainage should be directed to the canyons so there is no discharge. She stated that this storm water diversion to the canyons is something to consider if the City wants to eliminate flow and not participate in MS4. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper asked what would it take to eliminate hiring a consultant and keep the water on site. He inquired if there was an exit strategy from the storm water tax on the residents. He would prefer to allocate money towards fixing drainage and improving the water quality. Mayor Mirsch stated that storm water management needs a feasibility study. She pointed out that the City does not own the drains and would rather educate the residents about drainage. Councilmember Dieringer pointed out that if the City builds a catch basin, then the City would be liable and would prefer not to explore that avenue.

Wildfire Mitigation/Emergency Preparedness

Councilmember Black stated that he felt that the Emergency Preparedness is progressing well but some areas need some help. He suggested hiring the association to clear out some vegetation. He

also stated that he felt it was important to determine boundaries within the City. He noticed that brush clearance and complaints are continuous and suggested shifting funds towards more robust firebreaks. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper concurred with Councilmember Black and stated that he would like for the City to continue working with the Land Conservancy for the next 2-3 years. He suggested adding fire breaks between the brush clearing edges and boundary fences. Mayor Mirsch commented that she thought this was a great concept. City Manager Jeng informed the Council that the RHCA stated that the easements are not their obligation and asked for direction from Council as to how to move forward. Mayor Mirsch stated that it was her understanding that the RHCA is waiting for the decision from the Richard Colyear case, so in the meantime they are hands off and are leaving the City in charge. Councilmember Black stated that he agrees with the RHCA's decision. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper stated that he felt that the residents will get used to taking care of the dead vegetation. Councilmember Wilson suggested splitting the cost of clearing vegetation between the City and the RHCA.

Crest Road East Gate

City Manager Jeng stated that the RHCA committee was being inconsistent with their decision about the gate. The primary concern seems to be that the gate would be open permanently allowing public access to private property. It was the Los Angeles County Fire Department's opinion that the Crest Road East Gate is hard to maneuver. They suggested to motorize the gate and to clear the brush around it. Discussion ensued among the Council and it was agreed that the Council would take authority over the gate if needed. Mayor Mirsch reminded the Council that the road is a one lane road and it was her understanding that the Fire Department would prefer it if it was declared a one-way exit for emergencies only. City Manager Jeng stated again that the residents need a clear and open path to exit, which brings the question of whose job it is to clear the easements and maintain them. She asked for clarification from the Council as to how to proceed. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper answered that the easements should be cleared of all vegetation and that the RHCA needs to figure out the gate issue. City Manager Jeng asked if it was the Council's desire to have the residents take responsibility of the easements. The Council replied "yes," Jim Walker asked who is liable for the gate. Councilmember Black answered that he did not care about the liability just as long as the gate is open during an emergency. Councilmember Dieringer stressed that overall the gate needs to be secured except that a gate access plan for emergencies needs to be developed because providing no access to the gate for residents during emergencies presented a greater liability.

Emergency Preparedness/Evacuation Routes

Councilmember Dieringer requested that more money be devoted to the evacuation route preparedness. She stated that residents need to be informed, trained and have a plan in place. Mayor Mirsch stated that the Block Captain program is actively working on an evacuation plan and most of her concerns are addressed at the Block Captain meetings, but she agrees that funding should be increased for this program. City Manager Jeng informed the Council that she is currently working with the Block Captains, First Responders, RHCA and residents to finalize the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Other Topics

It was decided by the Council that the permit process should remain as is. The Council also requested better communication with the residents. It was discussed that the electronic communications (email and/or text) should be made more modern. Mayor Mirsch requested making the Blue Newsletter four pages instead of one and possibly outsourcing the production of the newsletter if it proves to be cost effective. City Manager Jeng stated that the City would prioritize collecting contact information (email, cell phone and landline), keep the Blue Newsletter but expand it periodically. The Council also stated that they would attempt to keep their Council Meetings shorter and acknowledged that it was the responsibility of the Council to keep better time on discussion of topics. Councilmember Dieringer requested allocating money towards items that will help minimize liabilities. Councilmember Black noted that the City's legal cost is rising. Finance Director Shea suggested that staff identify when to talk to the Attorney to try to minimize the cost. Councilmember Wilson asked if the City Council had the right to call the City Attorney. City Manager Jeng responded yes and stated that the City Attorney works for the City Council. She also informed the Council that she will ask staff to curtail their requests to the Attorney's Office and better define what questions and/or requests should be directed to them. She also offered

to provide a list of projects staff is working on with the Attorney's Office. Councilmember Dieringer requested making public safety a priority and suggested better coordination with RHCA to address the community's needs. She also suggested adding community safety measures to supplement the Sheriff's Department and adding cameras that capture more than license plates. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper stated that the community was not ready to have more security and that installing cameras at the entrances would cause privacy issues. He also felt that the RHCA is not aggressively looking to add security measures. Councilmember Dieringer stated that if the City is responsible for public safety but has no authority over the staff at the entrances, how can the City address public safety. City Manager Jeng asked if Council was directing staff to take authority over the gates. Councilmember Dieringer stated that for now she is comfortable advocating for more security measures and cameras. Discussion ensued among the Council about other services they would like to see and how the City can provide more services for its residents. Councilmember Black would like to explore a potential reimbursement to residents.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business before the City Council, Mayor Mirsch adjourned the meeting at 1:28p.m. The next regular meeting of the City Council is scheduled to be held on Monday, January 27, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend Road, Rolling Hills, California.

Respectfully submitted,



Yohana Coronel, MBA
City Clerk

Approved,



Leah Mirsch
Mayor