

**MINUTES OF
A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF ROLLING HILLS, CALIFORNIA
MONDAY, MARCH 09, 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 7:02p.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend Road, Rolling Hills, California.

2. ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Dieringer and Wilson.
Councilmembers Absent: Black.
Others Present: Elaine Jeng, P.E., City Manager.
Meredith Elguira, Planning and Community Services Director.
Yohana Coronel, City Clerk.
Michael Jenkins, City Attorney.
Alfred Visco, 15 Cinchring Road.
Abas Goodarzi, 2 Wrangler Road.
Marcia Schoettle, 24 Eastfield Drive.
Susan Sleep, 5W Ringbit Road West.
David McKinnie, 3 El Concho.
Brian Wells, Los Angeles County Fire Department.

3. OPEN AGENDA - PUBLIC COMMENT WELCOME

Alfred Visco, 15 Cinchring Road, provided an update on a February 17th Fire Council Letter he submitted to the City Council. He requested that the Council receive a presentation from the California Fire Safe Council at the City Council meeting in April.

Mayor Mirsch asked Mr. Visco if the Association was willing to receive the presentation from the California Fire Safe Council.

Mr. Visco replied that the Association would attend the City Council Meeting for the presentation.

Abas Goodarzi, 2 Wrangler Road, reported property damages due to stormwater discharge. He informed the city of the problem in 2006 and nothing was done. He recently learned that the Association was looking into the matter but postponed action to seek a legal opinion. The stormwater discharge from the roadway eroded a slope area on his property. He stated that he would continue to follow up with the Association and hopes for a resolution. He requested that the Council make drainage a budget priority because he feels drainage is a more serious issue than utility undergrounding.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

Matters which may be acted upon by the City Council in a single motion. Any Councilmember may request removal of any item from the Consent Calendar causing it to be considered under Council Actions.

- A. MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 25, 2020, REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 27, 2020, AND REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 24, 2020.
RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE AS PRESENTED
- B. PAYMENT OF BILLS.
RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE AS PRESENTED

- C. **CONSIDER AND APPROVE RESOLUTION 1250: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROLLING HILLS AUTHORIZING THE DESTRUCTION OF CERTAIN CITY RECORDS AS PROVIDED BY SECTION 34090 OF THE GOVERNMENT CODE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.**
RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE AS PRESENTED

Councilmember Dieringer asked to hold item 4A to the next City Council Meeting.

Councilmember Wilson moved that the City Council approve consent items 4B and 4C as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote as follows:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Dieringer, and Wilson
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.
ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: Black.
ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.

5. COMMISSION ITEMS

NONE.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

NONE.

7. OLD BUSINESS

NONE.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **CONSIDER AND APPROVE A PETITION FOR THE FORMATION OF AN ASSESSMENT DISTRICT FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC WORKS IMPROVEMENTS, TOGETHER WITH APPURTENANCES, APPURTENANT WORK AND ACQUISITION, WHERE NECESSARY, IN A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT KNOWN AND DESIGNED AS UNDERGROUNDING UTILITY ASSESSMENT DISTRICT NO. 2020-1 (EASTFIELD DRIVE UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS).**

City Manager Elaine Jeng reported on the completion of the Eastfield Utility Undergrounding project and that the necessary easements were provided to Edison. Edison has released the design plans for construction bids. The project is proceeding out of order. The formation of the assessment district should have taken place first, followed by design. The process to form an assessment district requires approvals from the property owners. According to city guidelines, 60% participation is mandated to form an assessment district. This translates to a requirement of 60% of total acreage within the proposed district.

Mayor Mirsch inquired about the dollar amount most appropriate to sell a bond to pay for the cost of undergrounding.

City Manager Jeng said that the cost could be paid for by the property owners in cash, or by selling a bond or financing through a private bank. Property owners have 30 days to determine the method of payment and if financing is selected, the amount to finance would be determined during that period. Depending on the amount to be financed, the Bond Counsel and Assessment Engineer will advise on the path forward.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there were other projects looking to form an assessment district.

City Manager Jeng said that there is the El Concho project supported by David McKinnie and Clint Patterson. The proponents held neighborhood meetings to solicit interest.

Mayor Mirsch opened the item for public comment.

Mr. Goodarzi asked for the amount of monies the City will contribute to the project.

City Manager Jeng said the City contributed about 1/3 of the design expenses totaling \$35,882 as indicated on page 42 of the staff report. No other contributions by the City will be made to the project.

Mr. Goodarzi stated that he currently has drainage problems and does not feel that undergrounding should be a priority. Unlike drainage issues, Mr. Goodarzi can call Edison and work with the utility company to underground utilities. He attended two meetings on the Eastfield Utility Undergrounding project and the city's contribution to the project is continuous.

Mayor Mirsch said that she appreciated Mr. Goodarzi's concern for the City's Finances. She assured him that the Council is concerned about drainage as well. The current Council, along with previous Councils, see undergrounding as a benefit to the City and the community. The City may budget \$100,000 each year for utility undergrounding, but that does not mean the City will spend the full allocation. She referenced the staff report and highlighted that the Council is capped at \$35,000 for the project. If the project cost should increase, the assessment district must supplement. The City offers seed money as an incentive to encourage residents to form districts for undergrounding projects. This is something the Council has been doing for some time and this was the first group to progress this far. This does not mean undergrounding is more important than drainage.

Mr. Goodarzi asked if the City will recoup the contribution.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper said the City does not intend to recover this cost. The Council is financially conservative and is very careful about spending the residents money. He stated that the property owners for the Eastfield Utility Undergrounding project spent a lot of money and energy to move the project forward. The Association and the City decided to pay a third of the project design with the residents paying the remaining third to see if they can get the project off the ground. The completion of this project would make the City look better and increase property values. He understood Mr. Goodarzi has a drainage issue and assured him that it was something that the Council has discussed. He also pointed out that Mr. Goodarzi was talking about issues that involve private property and roads. The drainage issue has come up in previous Council meetings and has been flagged as a priority by the Council. He assured Mr. Goodarzi that the Council was listening to his concerns, but he also wanted to point out that undergrounding and drainage are two separate issues.

Mr. Goodarzi stated that he understood the Mayor's points and noted that undergrounding only adds value to properties once reassessed.

Mayor Mirsch said that the removal of poles and undergrounding overhead wires do add value to the community. The streets that have undergrounded utility lines and poles look better. If money was not an issue the entire network of overhead lines in the city would have been undergrounded. She further stated that previous Councilmembers expressed the same sentiment.

Marcia Schoettle, 24 Eastfield Drive, said the City's support helped her gain participation in the project.

Susan Sleep, 5 W. Ringbit Road West, said that she does not live anywhere near Eastfield, but the big heavy overhead lines devalue the entire city. She further stated that she would gladly contribute to the Eastfield project because it helps the entire city.

Mr. Goodarzi added that if the concern was safety then why not add lights to the existing poles for safer roads. Having poles in the community add value because Edison and the utility companies must provide maintenance for the trees around the poles. He stated that undergrounding benefits the utility companies and furthermore the City should leverage them to provide landscaping and maintenance services.

Mayor Mirsch thanked Mr. Goodarzi for his comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper moved that the City Council approve the assessment district as presented. Councilmember Dieringer seconded the motion and the motion passed by voice vote as follows:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Dieringer, and Wilson
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.
ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: Black.
ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.

B. CONSIDER AND DISCUSS A POLICY FOR CITY CONTRIBUTION TOWARD UNDERGROUNDING OF OVERHEAD WIRES AND POLES THAT ARE NOT A PART OF ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS.

City Manager Jeng stated that this item was to discuss setting a policy for undergrounding single utility poles. The Council set a policy for city contribution to assessment district projects. The policy and procedures provided clarity to the residents that were considering forming an assessment district. Single poles, however, have been handled on a case-by-case basis. Establishing a policy for utility undergrounding not a part of assessment districts would be helpful to residents, and be more efficient in processing contribution requests.

City Manager Jeng reviewed recent non assessment district utility undergrounding projects. The most recent project that received contribution was a utility pole on 38 Saddleback. The City Council approved a contribution of approximately 10% of the overall project cost or \$3,295. She highlighted other utility undergrounding projects that received City contribution. In reviewing various projects, the City Council based contribution amounts on overall cost, RHCA's contribution amount, or the percentage of SCE engineering cost.

City Manager Jeng also sought clarity on the process of payouts. For one project, Council approved the payout upon 75% completion. She pointed out that prescribing a particular percent of a project is difficult to measure if it is not 100%. The staff consulted with the legal department regarding the City's contribution to a single party. It was determined that any city contribution must have a public benefit.

Mayor Mirsch opened the item for public comment.

David McKinnie, 3 El Concho, suggested to collaboration with Edison to get a good estimation of the engineering cost. Once that amount is defined, then the City could decide how much to contribute.

Mrs. Sleep stated that she had intended to remove three utility poles along Ringbit Road West, but in talking with her neighbor Mr. Shumaker, they decided that it was best to divide and conquer. She stated that Mr. Shumaker was assigned pole A and B, and she was assigned pole C. She then informed the Council that the pole assigned to her does not affect her view but affects her neighbors, Mr. Joe Hummel, and Mr. Charlie Shumaker. She also added that the pole assigned to her is in her driveway. Her pole is at the end of the line and that she already paid for engineering cost, totaling \$6,600.00. The Association had written her a check for \$2,250, a 1/3 of the cost. The cost to tear up the street for the removal of a single pole was \$22,500.00 and she did not include this amount in the engineering cost for reimbursement.

Mr. Goodarzi stated that he would reach out to Edison executives to see if there was a way for the City to receive credit for the preventative maintenance measures they have taken by doing undergrounding.

Mayor Mirsch closed the item from public comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper expressed an issue with demonstrating community benefit from removing a single pole. He commented that the removal of a pole could help with fire mitigation. There is a huge difference between a single pole and a feeder line pole that powers an entire area. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper suggested to set a flat contribution amount per pole but noted the difficulty is setting the amount as every pole is different.

Mayor Mirsch stated that she supports setting a policy to provide clarity to residents.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that the City does not have money to fund the removal of all the poles. She also was concerned about the legal problems involved with city funding for the removal of all poles. She did not think that the Council can come up with a flat contribution amount. The Council made different decisions on each pole because each pole and circumstance were different. She suggested that the Council develop funding criteria considerations and encourage people to apply before the project begins. This would allow the Council to evaluate the project, find out how many people the project would serve, and determine if there is a community benefit.

Mayor Mirsch stated that she agreed with everyone's points of view. She agreed that assessment districts clearly define project cost and community benefits. She did not support a flat contribution amount per pole. She stated that if the Council considered reimbursing a portion of the project cost, it would have to be based on that project. She then requested counsel's position.

City Attorney Michael Jenkins stated that he was not sure. He informed the Council of two options. They could review each project on a case-by-case basis. The advantage of the case-by-case approach is that the Council could look at individual facts to determine if it would produce a benefit (i.e. fire or esthetic). The disadvantage is that it is more time consuming and does not provide the kind of incentive the Council wants to give applicants. The question becomes how does the Council create a generic policy. Can the Council arrive at a broad conclusion that the elimination of every single pole would produce a community benefit that would be equal? He stated that there would be an equality issue in determining which pole removal would be more beneficial to the community. For example, a pole in an obscure area versus a pole that is highly visible. The Council could create a policy and create some criteria. Some poles may meet all the criteria; some may only meet half the criteria. He suggested that if a pole only meets half the criteria then that pole would then only receive half of the contribution. This is one way to bring consistency rather than have the Council deal with it on a case-by-case basis.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper suggested discussing the matter at the joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission in April. He suggested that the Council come up with something repeatable that will address 90% of the projects. He proposed that applicants can appeal to the City Council if needed. He does not think staff should decide if a pole is a fire issue or a view obstruction.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that further discussion was needed in order to develop ideas.

Mayor Mirsch asked if the Council wanted to form an Ad Hoc Committee to further research the issue. She was interested if anyone cared to join her.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper moved that the City Council form an Ad Hoc Subcommittee with Mayor Pro Tem Pieper and Mayor Mirsch as members. Councilmember Wilson seconded the motion and the motion passed by voice vote as follows:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Dieringer, and Wilson

NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: Black.

ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.

C. CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR CITY CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERGROUND A SINGLE UTILITY POLE AT 5 RINGBIT ROAD WEST.

Planning and Community Services Director Meredith Elguira gave a PowerPoint presentation of a request for city contribution to the undergrounding of a single pole at 5 Ringbit Road West. The request was submitted by Susan Sleep on February 4th. Director Elguira spoke with Southern California Edison (SCE) and they informed her that permits for this project were issued on March 3rd, 2020. The project is expected to be completed within 45 days of the issued permit. Ms. Sleep's pole is part of a larger project but no letters of support were received by staff. She added that Mr. Shumaker was also proposing to remove 2 poles. The SCE project planner said that the Sleep project is an outlier because the pole is small and it is an end pole. The invoice submitted by Ms. Sleep showed pulling of the cable, labor, and project materials, but no design cost.

Councilmember Dieringer asked staff to confirm that letters of support were requested from the applicant and none were received.

Director Elguira stated that Councilmember Dieringer was correct and added that the applicant referred staff to the Shumaker's project to locate letters of support. The bigger project had the support of other residents including Mr. Shumaker and the adjacent neighbor. When Director Elguira visited the site with Mr. Shumaker, SCE, and a potential contractor, two residents were present to support the bigger project.

Mayor Mirsch opened the item for public comment.

Ms. Sleep stated that she was not sure why the Council was trying to reinvent the wheel. The Association had already offered reimbursement of 1/3 of the engineering cost to her project. She has an email from the City dated August 18th stating that City has been contributing 1/3 to engineering cost and it was her understanding that this was encouraged by the City. She does not understand why this is so difficult; the hoops to go through for reimbursement were not encouraging. She informed the Council that COX and Frontier have already run lines at no cost. If a 1/3 of the engineering cost was paid by the Association and correspondences with the Mayor stated that the City has been covering a 1/3 of project cost, then why was the Council making the matter complicated. She suggested that the Council continue to pay 1/3 of the engineering cost. In reference to an earlier agenda item, Ms. Sleep expressed that the reimbursement amount should be determined by the work involved to remove the pole not the value someone attributes to the view or fire hazard or else cap the amount at \$2,500 per pole. The Council was complicating the issue and making the process difficult. She already paid the invoice and would continue with the project either way. She added that removing pole A and B would be nice and it would be nicer if her neighbors received support from the City since they are investing a large amount of money. Ms. Sleep advised that she is willing to contribute her requested reimbursement to the Eastfield project because that project would benefit the whole city.

Mayor Mirsch reiterated that the Council encourages these projects and that was the purpose for the discussion. The Council's policy is to pay for a 1/3 of the engineering cost for assessment districts. When she replied to Ms. Sleep's email in August and Mrs. Sleep indicated "many neighbors" the Mayor thought she was talking about an assessment district.

Ms. Sleep spoke with Edison and said that it was too difficult to form a district. She thought that if each neighbor removed a pole, then the whole street would be done. It was not practical to create an assessment district with a bond. Joe Hummel, the Shumakers, and the Kirkpatrick's all agreed that they wanted the poles removed. The group confirmed that they are all willing to contribute, but that participating in an assessment district would be too cumbersome. Ms. Sleep estimated that if each person removed a pole, the cost would end up being about same as participating in an assessment district.

Mayor Mirsch advised that Ms. Sleep's request would now be under the purview of the Ad Hoc Committee and that the Council had enough information to consider her case.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper explained that these are public funds and the City must follow certain protocols. Until recently, the City donated to larger groups because of the benefit to the entire City. Ms. Sleep's project involved a single pole at the end of a street and the Council had to have a conversation to decide if they can prove that the pole removal provides a community benefit. He agreed that it is a drawn-out process but there are multiple steps that need to happen. He stated that the City strives to make all processes easy for the residents. He thanked her for undergrounding the pole.

Ms. Sleep insisted that this was not a new issue and that the Council had seen this issue before. She suggested that the Council review the Hackamore case because it was a single pole project as well.

Mr. McKinnie stated that there were two key issues before the Council. The first issue is the use of public funds. The second issue is considerations to determine a contribution amount. He indicated that he was not clear regarding the composition of the \$6,700 bill. Did the invoice

include design or construction? He stated that the invoice was hard to read because it was blurry and listed labor, materials, and other items. It appeared that the bill might be for the whole project. He did not believe the Council had all the necessary information.

City Attorney Jenkins interjected to say that this was not a good use of the time. A member of the public was constantly talking out of turn. He then noted that a speaker was testifying while reading a document for the first time. He suggested that staff provide comments on whether the Council was ready to go forward with the issue.

City Manager Jeng stated that staff reviewed all the documents submitted by Ms. Sleep. City Manager Jeng proceeded to review the invoice that Mr. McKinnie questioned. She stated that there was a line item for design but it showed zero cost. There were labor, materials, and other items listed characterizing Edison's fieldwork. She pointed out that cost was not for design but rather for Edison's labor. The pole had not been removed and staff confirmed this status with Edison. The Council generally stipulated that a pay out of the city's contribution occurs after project completion. Since the pole is still standing, City Manager Jeng recommended that the Council not contribute to the project at this time. She recommended that the Council reconsider once the Ms. Sleep demonstrates that the pole has been removed.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that everything must be considered as a whole and that she does not believe that the Council has all the information or knowledge regarding the criteria that the Council should apply for contribution. Past projects are being referenced as a policy and that should not be the case because the Council did not treat it that way. Councilmember Dieringer wanted more information before voting on the item.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper stated that the Council needs to establish a policy.

Councilmember Dieringer moved that the City Council table the item until the Ad Hoc Committee recommends a policy and confirms the cost of Ms. Sleep's project, and that the utility pole has been removed. Mayor Pro Tem Pieper seconded the motion and the motion passed by voice vote as follows:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: Mayor Mirsch, Pieper, Dieringer, and Wilson
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.
ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: Black.
ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS: None.

The City Council recessed at 8:25pm.

The City Council reconvened the regular meeting at 8:31 p.m.

D. CONSIDER AND DISCUSS RESTRICTING THE PLANTING OF SIX HIGH HAZARD PLANTS PER LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT READY! SET! GO! PROGRAM.

City Manager Jeng reported on coordination activities with LA County Sheriff's Department, LA County Fire Department, the Block Captains and the Association on releasing a draft copy of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP is meant to be an action plan that the community can use to mitigate wildfire. One mitigation measure is to restrict the planting of six high-hazard plants listed in the Ready! Set! Go! Brochure produced by the Fire Department. City Manager Jeng introduced Brian Wells from the Fire Department to answer questions. City Manager Jeng stressed that the recommendation to restrict planting of the high hazard plants does not mean the removal of existing plants in the community.

Mayor Mirsch stated that the Association currently has a Landscape Committee that is also addressing this type of issue. She again reminded everyone that this discussion had nothing to do with the existing plants in the community. The proposal before the Council was to consider a restriction to these plants going forward.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that when the Fire Department came to inspect her property, she inquired about a palm tree. She clarified that she did not plant the palm tree but asked the Fire

Department if the palm tree presented a problem. They informed her that the plant was not a problem and that it was fine where it was. She then stated that she wondered if the Ready! Set!Go! Brochure reflects a well researched policy against palm trees and why there would be inconsistent information.

Brian Wells, Los Angeles County Fire Department, introduced himself and stated that he had 10 years of experience working in Rolling Hills. Mr. Wells said that the presence of palm trees is not necessarily bad but rather the dead palm fronds underneath are the problem. He stated that he was not aware of the condition of the palm tree Councilmember Dieringer was referring to but perhaps the Fire Department was able to determine that the palm tree was healthy and did not present a problem during their inspection.

Councilmember Dieringer asked Mr. Wells if parts of the tree were dead or if they were poorly maintained would that be considered a fire issue. She also asked if there was data available to support the claim that the plants listed in the Fire Department brochure are high hazard.

Mr. Wells agreed and highlighted page 4 of the Ready!Set!Go! Brochure that states "special attention should be given to the use and maintenance of ornamental plants known or thought to be high-hazard plants when used in close proximity of structures". Mr. Wells noted fire safety concerns when these plants are placed too close to structures and unmaintained. Mr. Wells stated that he would have to defer her inquiry on the high hazard plants to their Forestry Division and that he would also follow up with Chief Hale on available data to support the statements made in the brochure.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper asked if a healthy Eucalyptus tree would catch fire. He also inquired if restricting the identified plants would be beneficial or overkill for the City.

Mr. Wells said that Eucalyptus could receive embers and it would depend on the location of the ignition. Mr. Wells noted restricting the planting of high hazard plants would be beneficial for the City.

Councilmember Wilson asked about the distinction between an Acacia tree and an Acacia shrub.

Firefighter Wells stated he would have to consult the Forestry Division and report back.

Councilmember Dieringer asked about the note on page 4, which suggests that homeowners pay attention to the use and maintenance of these types of plants when used in proximity of a structure. The brochure does not say these plants should never be planted.

Mr. Wells stated that Councilmember Dieringer was correct and that the fire issue had to do with maintenance and the upkeep of those plants.

Mayor Mirsch opened the item for public comment.

Alfred Visco, 15 Cinchring Road, advised that page 4 of the brochure also included Cedar, Cypress, and Italian Cypress. He stated that it was obvious that the brochure was inconsistent and that it was written as a general guide and not for Rolling Hills. Eucalyptus and Pine trees produce essential oils. Pine tree essential oils are terpenes, which is essentially turpentine. Eucalyptus produce essential oils consistent with Pine trees. The problem with Eucalyptus trees is that it does not need a very high temperature before it starts off-gassing its oils. It creates a fog of these highly flammable oils over itself and this is how crown fires occur in these trees. He stated that trees should be properly maintained but the problem is that a lot of these trees are not close to the roads, they are not close to houses and therefore are not being properly maintained. Palm trees have fatty oils with thylisceral, which are not nearly as flammable as the essential oils but are still flammable. He stated that he knows this because he was in the natural fats, oils, and processing business before he became an attorney. Palm trees are a problem as well because their leaves are horizontal and are more prone to catching the falling embers than a properly maintained Eucalyptus or Pine tree. He added that he had not done any research on Juniper or Pampas Grass and therefore would take the Fire Department's recommendations that both plants are high-hazard and should not be planted. Furthermore it was his opinion that it had nothing to do with structures but rather with fire fuel. He concluded by stating that the Council is taking a good first step in banning the

planting of the six named plants.

Councilmember Dieringer commented that the City has a lot of conditions in place for fire safety but has not implemented all of its conditions. She stressed that she has a problem with rules and regulations that criminalize these conditions when the community simply needs to practice diligence. There is already an ordinance in place regarding dried/dead plants and vegetation. She suggested that placing the planting restriction in the CWPP should only occur only after more research is done with solid science to support such a restriction.

Councilmember Wilson asked Director Elguira if she has seen landscaping plans proposing to plant any of the listed plants.

Director Elguira stated she has seen some projects proposing to plant palm trees.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper stated that the City already has requirements in place for new projects. The City would be in better shape if a couple of plants were banned and it would minimize concerns. If there was a list for homeowners wishing to re-landscape, the homeowners would be likely to use the listed plants.

Mayor Mirsch explained that the reason why this item came before the Council was because the public asked for information regarding the types of vegetation that could be planted. There was work being done by the Association and the fire consultant that they hired recommended not to plant high hazard plants. Mayor Mirsch solicited feedback from the Council on the next steps.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper stated that he would prefer to advise the residents to not plant the six high hazard plants.

Mayor Mirsch noted that the Council is committed to fire safety. She would like to direct staff, if the Council agreed, to eliminate the high hazard plants from being approved as a part of the landscaping plans. She asked if the direction can be incorporated in the landscaping approval process without having an ordinance.

City Attorney Jenkins stated the Council could establish guidelines, but they would not be legally enforceable.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that the guidelines should be put in context.

City Manager Jeng stated that staff could establish guidelines to discourage people from planting the listed plants. If people proceed to plant them then the City would encourage proper maintenance of those plants.

9. MATTERS FROM THE CITY COUNCIL AND MEETING ATTENDANCE REPORTS

A. REPORT BY SOUTHBAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT (SBCCOG) LIAISON ON CONSIDERATION TO CHANGE THE MEMBERSHIP DUES (ORAL REPORT).

City Manager Jeng reported that the South Bay Cities Council of Government (SBCCOG) was considering changing the formula for the membership dues. She stated that she and Councilmember Dieringer met with other Peninsula City Managers and one South Bay CCOG representative to discuss the proposed changes.

Councilmember Dieringer stated that one proposal was for each city to pay a base dues amount of \$10,000. Councilmember Dieringer reached out to other Southbay cities to gain additional perspectives on the matter. She noted that unlike Rolling Hills, most other cities receive funding from sales tax measures distributed by the SBCCOG for transportation improvements and do not object to the membership dues proposals resulting in increases.

Mayor Mirsch asked if the City should continue to be a SBCCOG member.

Councilmember Dieringer said the SBCCOG helped the city with its Climate Action Plan, provides regional information and assists with energy efficiency projects. Councilmember Dieringer noted that she informed the SBCCOG that if the membership dues were changed to include a base of \$10,000, the City of Rolling Hills would withdraw from participating in the organization.

Councilmember Wilson asked about the current membership dues for Rolling Hills.

Councilmember Dieringer said it is \$6,500/year.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper was supportive of leaving the SBCCOG.

Mayor Mirsch thanked Councilmember Dieringer for her efforts.

B. REPORT BY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE ON THE UPDATE TO THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL (ORAL REPORT).

City Manager Jeng gave an update on the Personnel Committee's work on the Employee handbook. Its recent activities include having the City Attorney provide legislative updates, conducting a salary survey and analyzing the medical health benefit package. City Manager Jeng said that another month of work may be needed but acknowledged that committee assignments may change. The updates to the Employee Handbook are not complete, but the anticipated completion is by July 1, 2020. She suggested that the current members should continue with the task through completion.

Mayor Mirsch confessed that the project was bigger than she imagined. There were a lot of changes in laws and work environments; the update to the Employee Handbook required more work. She stated that the Personnel Committee's work has been very comprehensive and apologized for the delay. She stated that if changes are made to the composition of the Personnel Committee it would derail the assignment. It was her hope that the new Mayor would allow the current members to continue the work through completion.

Mayor Pro Tem Pieper agreed.

C. REPORT BY FIRE FUEL REDUCTION AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (ORAL REPORT).

City Manager Jeng reported on the activities of the Fire Fuel Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the City Council. The members of Fire Fuel Reduction Ad Hoc Subcommittee are Mayor Mirsch and Councilmember Wilson. The Rolling Hills Community Association also has a similar subcommittee on wildfire mitigation and the members of the counterpart subcommittee are Tom Heinsheimer and Roger Hawkins. Roger Hawkins was replaced by newly elected RHCA Board member Anne Smith. The two subcommittees have been coordinating efforts and the next coordination meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2020 to review the final draft of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Ms. Smith attended the last meeting and provided tons of feedback on the CWPP. The City Manager reported good progress on having a CWPP for the City.

Mayor Mirsch stated that the coordination meetings have been very productive and noted that the participation of the Block Captains with wildfire mitigation, including producing a CWPP for the City, has been very positive. The Block Captains organized a field trip for the Association and Fire Department to visit the Crest Road East Gate to evaluate the operability of the gate during an emergency.

Councilmember Wilson stated that the Lead Block Captains, the Honbos, have been great in maintaining momentum on implementing wildfire mitigation measures.

City Manager Jeng added that the Fire Department attends all the coordination meetings and Block Captain Meetings and continues educating the City on evacuations. The Fire Department was instrumental on the field trip with the Association Board Members and provided mitigation measures at the Crest Road East gate in preparation for emergencies.

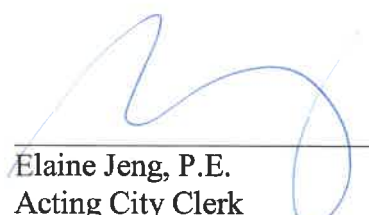
10. MATTERS FROM STAFF

NONE.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business before the City Council, Mayor Mirsch adjourned the meeting at 9:24p.m. The next regular meeting of the City Council is scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2020 beginning at 7:00p.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend Road, Rolling Hills, California.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Jeng, P.E.
Acting City Clerk

Approved,



Leah Mirsch
Mayor

