

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting Minutes for Monday, February 5, 2007

A Regular Session of the Piedmont City Council was held February 5, 2007, in the City Hall Council Chambers at 120 Vista Avenue. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this meeting was posted for public inspection on February 1, 2007.

CALL TO ORDER

Following a 7:00 p.m. Closed Session regarding performance review and salary and benefits for management and mid-management employees; negotiations with the Piedmont Education Foundation and Campfire USA regarding lease of City property at 711 Highland Avenue; and negotiations with Piedmont Choirs regarding lease of City property at 401 Highland Avenue held pursuant to Government Code Sections 54957, 54957.6 and 54956.8, Mayor McEnroe called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Nancy McEnroe, Vice Mayor Abe Friedman and Councilmembers Dean Barbieri, John Chiang and Garrett Keating

Staff: City Administrator Geoff Grote, City Attorney George Peyton, Police Chief Lisa Ravazza, Fire Chief John Speakman, Finance Director Mark Bichsel, Public Works Director Larry Rosenberg, Recreation Director Mark Delventhal, City Clerk Ann Swift, City Planner Kate Black, Building Official Chester Nakahara and Recording Secretary Chris Harbert

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were considered under one vote by the Council:

Minutes

Approves as submitted Council meeting minutes of January 16, 2007

LAIF Report

Accepts the December 2006 Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) statement

Resolution 9-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council adopts the consent calendar as noted.

Moved by Barbieri, Seconded by Chiang

Ayes: McEnroe, Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None

(0165)

(Note: Vice Mayor Friedman abstained from the vote approving the January 16, meeting minutes)

PUBLIC FORUM

Ryan Gilbert submitted a memorandum dated February 5, 2007, requesting the Council to consider the following:

1. Establishing a minimum threshold of support for the proposed Piedmont Undergrounding Assessment District prior to the tabulation of ballots on March 5;
2. Appointing a consultant to review the total benefits and costs of forming a citywide utility undergrounding district;

3. Publishing a *Guide to Undergrounding in Piedmont* to address the many frequently asked questions related to undergrounding initiatives, including clarification as to cost overrun liability and the tax deductibility of undergrounding assessments; and
4. Requesting staff to review a list of questions compiled by homeowners in the proposed Central Piedmont Utility Underground District and officially respond to said questions within two weeks. He also requested that staff advise homeowners within this proposed district that any cast ballots may be rescinded and new ballots issued to allow homeowners an opportunity to change their position regarding district formation. Mr. Gilbert noted that the list of questions would be submitted to the City Administrator tomorrow.

As a property owner within the proposed boundaries of the Central Piedmont Utility Undergrounding Assessment District, the Vice Mayor recused himself from discussion and action on this item and left the chambers.

The Council referred Mr. Gilbert's memo to the City Administrator for review and comment. The City Administrator agreed to submit his response at the February 20 Council meeting.

General Plan Update

Pursuant to Council discussion of September 5, 2006, the City Planner and Planning Consultant Barry Miller briefed the Council on the status of the City's update of its General Plan. Mr. Miller submitted for Council review a *General Plan Assessment and Update Strategy* setting forth a complete assessment of the City's 1996 General Plan and a process and timetable for updating the plan. During discussion of the update process, the various opportunities available for community input throughout the process were highlighted. It was noted that the Planning Commission will spearhead this update process. The first in a series of public hearings will be held February 12.

Public testimony was received from:

Drew Bendon urged the Council to directly involve community residents in the update process.

06-07 Mid-Year Financial Report

The Finance Director presented the FY 06-07 Mid-Year Financial Report, stating that because of continuing greater than anticipated property transfer tax and property tax revenue, the City's General Fund revenues are projected to be approximately \$1.4 to 2 Million higher than originally estimated last June. In addition, operating expenditures for FY 06-07 are within budgetary estimates. Therefore, the City's financial condition is quite strong. The Public Works Director delivered a brief status report on the City's on-going Sewer Rehabilitation Program.

Resolution 10-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council accepts the 2006-07 mid-year fiscal report.

Moved by Friedman, Seconded by Barbieri

Ayes: McEnroe, Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None
(0165)

**06-07 Mid-Year
Appropriation
Requests**

The Finance Director requested Council approval of mid-year appropriation requests in the amount of \$953,277 which will be funded from the General Fund balance; a transfer of \$500,000 from the General Fund to the Equipment Replacement Fund and approval of a job reclassification in the Finance Department which will be funded through salary savings with the department. The appropriation requests included:

- Centennial Video \$ 40,000
- Corp. Yard Maintenance \$ 6,000
- Tree Service \$ 32,000
- Sidewalk/Curb/Gutter \$ 50,000
- KCOM Upgrade \$ 50,000
- Basement Renovation \$225,000
- Blair Park Improvements \$250,000
- Coaches Field Improvements \$250,000
- Street Resurfacing \$ 50,277

Staff noted that General Fund transfers to the Equipment Replacement Fund have historically be done in strong financial years to compensate for less funding flexibility in leaner times. The appropriation requests reflect funding for projects previously approved/supported by the Council.

The Building Official submitted blueprints of the proposed renovation of the City Hall basement in support of the requested \$225,000 mid-year appropriation to create much needed work and storage space, provide proper heat and ventilation to this area of City Hall which currently contains several City employee work stations as well as fund office furnishings and equipment. The increased cost of this renovation project is directly related to greater than anticipated structural problems, the need to provide code complying ventilation, heating and electrical service and the funding of furnishings for the office and conference room spaces.

Public testimony was received from:

Michael Bruck, Chairman of the Centennial Committee, voiced support for a mid-year appropriation of \$40,000 to create a high quality, professional DVD as a permanent record of the City's 2007 year-long Centennial Celebration. He also thanked his committee, community residents and the City Clerk for making the City's January 31 *kick-off* Centennial events so wonderful. The City Clerk explained the proposed content of the Centennial video and the fact that copies of this video will be made available to the public at cost – City produced videos typically sell for \$10.00 apiece.

Drew Bendon supported: (1) the funding request for the Centennial video but urged that copies of the video be available at no charge to the public; (2) the \$50,000 request to electrically upgrade the KCOM studio, further requesting that public hearings be held regarding a possible future proposal for a complete digital renovation of the KCOM

control room; and (3) the \$250,000 funding request for renovation of Coaches Playfield as a means of convincing residents that the City is committed to improving this playfield once the Recreation Commission completes its examination of this issue. He urged that the \$250,000 request to fund improvements at Blair Park be deferred until such time as extensive policy discussions are held regarding potential uses of this site.

George Childs inquired if the basement renovation project was intended to increase existing City Hall staffing levels. He also suggested that Blair Park improvements be restricted to only those necessary for public safety. He was opposed to any aesthetic enhancements of the site, noting that the area is not suitable for use as a park.

George Kersh criticized staff for failing to include the blueprints of the City Hall basement remodel in the public packet.

The Council preferred that the requested funding of the Equipment Replacement Fund, Blair Park Improvements and Centennial Video be resubmitted for evaluation during the year-end appropriation budget session in order to maximize the Council's flexibility in considering all available options given this year's greater than anticipated revenue.

Resolution 11-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council approves the FY 06-07 mid-year appropriation requests for:

- Corporation Yard Maintenance
- Tree Service
- Sidewalk/Curb/Gutter
- KCOM Electrical Upgrade
- Basement Renovation/Office Space
- Coaches Playfield Improvement
- Street Resurfacing

and directs staff to resubmit funding requests for the Equipment Replacement Fund, the Centennial Video and the Blair Park Improvements during the Council's year-end appropriation budget session; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, the Council approves the job reclassification in the Finance Department that will be funded through salary savings within the Finance Department.

Moved by Friedman, Seconded by Keating

Ayes: McEnroe, Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None

(0165)

**FY 07-08 Council
Budget Goals**

In response to Council requests to identify potential issues to be explored during the FY 07-08 budget preparation/approval process, the City Administrator submitted the following three ideas:

1. Re-examine the issue of Oakland and Highland Avenue traffic control – this issue will be examined in connection with the Civic Center Master Plan;

2. Re-examine this issue of Swim Club lease renewal and/or the set aside of funding for City operation of the facility in 2008 or sooner if the club disbands;
3. Reduction of green house gasses.

During discussion, Councilmembers suggested the following additional issues be added to the list:

- Utility Undergrounding – explore whether there is a more efficient approach toward utility undergrounding in the City; consider retaining a consultant to evaluate and prioritize those corridors in the city where undergrounding would provide the greatest public safety; examine the feasibility and cost of creating a comprehensive “Guide to Utility Undergrounding” to assist homeowners interested in forming utility undergrounding districts;
- City Website – improve City website technology; compare the feasibility of dedicating an in-house employee to prepare the website to the current practice of contracting out this service; examine the feasibility of e-mailing City notifications as a cost reduction measure; provide more public documents on-line and increase the imaging of documents;
- Election Costs – explore the feasibility of reducing election costs for school board and council candidates;
- City Taxes – request the Municipal Services Tax Review Committee to examine the City’s business license, home occupation permit and rental tax programs and fees;
- Increase Energy Efficiency – examine ways to reduce energy use in City operations and buildings;
- Garbage/Recycling – explore the feasibility of funding the cost of larger wheeled recycling containers for residents;
- City Logo – examine the feasibility of retaining a graphics designer to design a new City logo. Also explore funding for additional Centennial banners/posters for display during the City’s celebration and then selling these items at the end of the year;
- Budget Process – request the Municipal Services Tax Review Committee to examine the feasibility of amending the City’s Charter to allow for the preparation of a 3 or 5 year budget plan/process;
- Earthquake Retrofit – examine ways to encourage residents to retrofit their homes for earthquake preparedness, including exploring the feasibility of providing funds for this purpose, streamlining the permitting process, providing homeowner *how to* guides and other resource material and information, etc.

On a Motion by Councilmember Barbieri, Seconded by Councilmember Chiang and Unanimously Carried, the Council agreed to extend tonight's meeting to 11:15 p.m. to complete agenda consideration.

Public testimony was received from:

George Childs stated that he provided the City with a copy of PG&E's guide to utility undergrounding and stated that the public safety benefits of utility undergrounding are overstated.

Drew Bendon agreed with the need to improve the City's website, suggesting that a community calendar be added to the site to avoid meeting scheduling conflicts. He also suggested that the examination of pedestrian/traffic safety along Oakland/Highland Avenues be conducted as part of the City's General Plan Update rather than the Civic Center Master Plan.

Gerald Schnurmacher voiced opposition to a citywide utility undergrounding program and supported renewal of the City's lease with the Piedmont Swim Club.

On a Motion by Councilmember Barbieri, Seconded by Councilmember Chiang and Unanimously Carried, the Council agreed to extend tonight's meeting to 11:30 p.m. to complete agenda consideration.

**Civic Center
Steering Committee**

Councilmember Keating requested the Council to reconsider the issue of appointing residents who are professionals in the field of urban planning to the Civic Center Steering Committee. He suggested that two residents (an architect and a planner) be appointed to the committee to serve as extra consultants to assist the Council and Committee members following meetings with the Civic Center Master Plan Architect (Fisher-Friedman).

Public testimony was received from:

Gerald Schnurmacher opposed Councilmember Keating's suggestion, noting that there is no need to duplicate the expertise of Fisher-Friedman consultants. However, he suggested that homeowners in the immediate vicinity of the Civic Center be appointed to the Steering Committee to provide input and representation.

Drew Bendon voiced support for Councilmember Keating's suggestion, agreeing that residents should have representation on the Committee and be directly involved in the process.

The Council, with the exception of the Mayor and Councilmember Keating opposed the suggestion, stressing that the purpose of the Steering Committee is to keep the process on track. The Council majority agreed that Fisher-Friedman has sufficient architects, planners and engineers to provide all necessary technical expertise and that Piedmont residents will be involved in the process through extensive public hearings and opportunities to provide direct input to the City on this matter. Councilmember Keating reiterated his belief in the benefits

of providing the City with a second expert opinion regarding proposals/recommendations submitted by Fisher-Friedman.

Resolution 12-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council shall appoint two resident members to the Civic Center Master Plan Steering Committee to assist the Council in evaluating Civic Center related issues and concepts.

Moved by Keating, Seconded by Friedman

Ayes: McEnroe, Keating

Noes: Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang

Absent: None

MOTION FAILED

Resolution 13-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council grants authority to Civic Center Steering Committee members Geoff Grote, Vice Mayor Friedman and Councilmember Keating to invite, per their majority vote, experts to attend Steering Committee meetings.

Moved by Keating, Seconded by Friedman

Ayes: McEnroe, Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None

(0271)

**Management
Compensation
Consultant**

Councilmember Chiang recommended that the Council approve a contract in the amount of \$6,960 with Koff & Associates to review the City's compensation methodology and practices for its management and mid-management employees. He stated that Koff & Associates was the low bid of the five received in response to the City's RFP for consultant services and based upon the interview and outstanding reference checks, appears well qualified to perform the task.

Public testimony was received from:

Drew Bendon inquired why Koff & Associates is being recommended when the cost proposals of the other candidates ranged from \$17,700 to \$138,416. Councilmember Chiang replied that the other bids reflected a much greater scope of services than requested.

Resolution 14-07

RESOLVED, that the City Council appropriates \$6,960 in order to enter into a contract with Koff & Associates to review the City's compensation methodology and practices for its management and mid-management employees.

Moved by Friedman, Seconded by Barbieri

Ayes: McEnroe, Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None

(0045/X0910)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Policing—the Police Chief invited all residents to attend a March 6 community forum to discuss crime related concerns and community policing partnerships.

Centennial Celebration—the Mayor thanked the members of the Centennial Committee and its volunteers for providing the community with a spectacular day and evening of events on January 31 in celebration of the City's 100th birthday.

Civic Center Master Plan—Councilmember Keating encouraged residents to attend the first community forum concerning development of a Civic Center Master Plan. The meeting will be held on February 15 at the Community Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor McEnroe adjourned the meeting at 11:25 p.m.