

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting Minutes for Monday, October 6, 2008

A Regular Session of the Piedmont City Council was held October 6, 2008, 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 October 2, 2008.

- CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Friedman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ROLL CALL** Present: Mayor Abe Friedman, Vice Mayor Dean Barbieri and Councilmembers John Chiang, Margaret Fujioka and Garrett Keating
- Staff: City Administrator Geoff Grote, City Attorney George Peyton, Police Chief Lisa Ravazza, Fire Chief John Speakman, Public Works Director Larry Rosenberg, Recreation Director Mark Delventhal, City Clerk Ann Swift and Recording Secretary Chris Harbert
- CONSENT CALENDAR** The following items were approved under one vote by the Council:
- Minutes** Approves as amended Council meeting minutes of September 15, 2008
- Agreement** Approves a 3-year agreement with the City of Berkeley for animal shelter services in the amount of \$52,515 (no increase from previous agreement)
- Resolution 79-08**
RESOLVED, that the City Council adopts the consent calendar as noted.
Moved by Fujioka, Seconded by Chiang
Ayes: Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Fujioka, Keating
Noes: None
Absent: None
(0045)
- PUBLIC FORUM** There were no speakers for the public forum.
- REGULAR CALENDAR** The Council considered the following items of regular business:
- Crime Statistics** The Police Chief reported on Piedmont crime statistics for 2007 and 2008, noting that in 2007 the City experienced its lowest crime rate in over 7 years. In 2008, there have been 30 more cases of serious offenses than in 2007, with the majority of these crimes being *crimes of opportunity*. She reviewed the specific actions undertaken by the Police Department to reduce crime and educate residents on how to avoid being victims of *crimes of opportunity*. Councilmember Fujioka encouraged residents to take advantage of the many special services the department provides to residents to improve public safety. Councilmember Keating requested that the department's crime site map include information regarding the specific street, dates and times where and when offenses have occurred. The Chief agreed to work with the City's ITT team to determine if such information can be added to the map. The Mayor thanked the Chief for her report.

**Blair Park Sports
Field Development**

The Recreation Director reported that *Piedmonters for the Development of Youth Recreation and Sports Spaces* (PARCS) has requested that the on-going CEQA study of its Blair Park Sports Field Plan be amended to increase the size of one of the two fields from 80 yards by 50 yards to 100 yards by 50 yards (from an Under 10 field to an Under 12 field). The CEQA study for this sports field development proposal was authorized by the City Council on June 16 and entirely funded by PARCS donations.

Public testimony was received from:

Clarence Mamuyac, Project Architect and member of PARCS, narrated a power-point presentation describing the minor adjustment in field size, noting that this slight increase in size will not reduce the proposed 40-car parking lot at the west end of the property nor significantly affect the size and location of proposed retaining walls. However, increasing the size of the field will provide greater safety for the children using the facility as well as allow the field to be suitable for use by teenage soccer players.

Leesy Taggart, Recreation Commission Chairman, stated that although the Recreation Commission has not had an opportunity to review the proposed modification to the CEQA study, she was confident that the Commission would be unanimous in its support. She requested that the CEQA study include information regarding the incremental cost associated with enlarging the field to an Under 12 size versus the cost of the original Under 10 field.

Ralph Catalano stated that his home will directly overlook the expanded portion of the field. He voiced concerns regarding the CEQA study in terms of process, noting that unlike typical City-initiated projects, this privately-initiated project involving the use of public land does not include any alternative options for achieving the objective of creating additional field space. He felt that the City should identify alternatives for meeting the objective and require that the environmental impacts of such alternatives should also be considered under the CEQA study. In this case, only one objective is being evaluated.

George Childs reiterated his previous concerns that any field development at Blair Park not create any additional maintenance or staffing costs that would be borne by City taxpayers.

Eric Havian and Mark Landheer, President and Vice-President respectively of the Piedmont Soccer Club, underscored the critical need for new soccer fields in Piedmont to accommodate the 1,200 kids who participate in the program. They stressed that Piedmont access to soccer fields in Alameda may cease next year and it is imperative that new fields be developed to replace those being lost. They stated that currently there is no Under 12 soccer field in Piedmont and the revised proposal to the Blair Park project will remedy this situation, with no anticipated difference in the total cost of facility construction. They also emphasized that there are no alternative sites or options in Piedmont for creating the fields proposed by the PARCS plan.

Kirit Shah stated that his property will be the most affected/impacted by the PARCS proposal; however, he voiced strong support for the project, including expanding the size of one of the fields. He also suggested that (1) children safety could be enhanced and retaining wall height reduced if the proposal balances the cut and fill so as to make the level of the field higher than the level of Moraga Avenue; and (2) facility maintenance costs could be offset if the City charges fees for parking on site.

Steve Schiller of PARCS noted that it has been determined that enlarging the field from 80 to 100 yards will not significantly increase the overall cost of project construction but will provide sports groups with much greater flexibility in utilizing the facility.

The Council voiced support for revising the scope of the CEAQ study to include examination of a 100 yard field and requested staff to: (1) verify that estimated facility maintenance costs would be essentially the same regardless of whether one of the fields was 80 yards or 100 yards; (2) identify possible revenue streams to off-set facility maintenance costs; and (3) explore whether there are any special CEQA burdens on the City because of the rather unique nature of the PARCS proposal – a privately initiated development concept and a privately funded CEQA study involving the use of public property.

Resolution 80-08

RESOLVED, that the City Council approves an amendment to the Environmental Studies (CEQA) currently in process for the Blair Park Sports Field Plan to increase the size of one of the two fields from 80 yards by 50 yards to 100 yards by 50 yards (from an Under 10 field to an Under 12 field).

Moved by Chiang, Seconded by Barbieri

Ayes: Friedman, Barbieri, Chiang, Fujioka, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: None

(0745)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Hall Meetings – the Mayor thanked residents for their input at the three recently held *Town Meetings*.

Voter Registration – the Mayor announced that October 20 is the deadline to register to vote in the November 4th General Election.

Haunted House – the Mayor encouraged residents of all ages to visit the Recreation Department's *Haunted House* to be held October 23 through 25.

Exedra Plaza Dedication – the Mayor announced that the dedication of the *Barbara Magee Overlook* and Exedra Plaza Phase III Renovation Project will be held October 15. The public is invited to attend.

Environmental Task Force – Councilmember Fujioka reported on recycling suggestions and recommendations discussed at the September 23 meeting of the City's new Environmental Task Force. The Task Force will hold its next meeting on October 28 and the public is invited to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further agenda business, Mayor Friedman adjourned the Council at 9:00 p.m. to Closed Session for the purposes of discussing contract negotiations with the Piedmont Police Officers Association and International Association of Firefighters held pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6 and of discussing FY 07-08 City management employee performance evaluations pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.