

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting Minutes for Monday, April 20, 2009

A Regular Session of the Piedmont City Council was held April 20, 2009, 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 April 16, 2009.

CALL TO ORDER

Following a 7:00 p.m. Closed Session regarding negotiations with SEIU Local 1021 and the Professional/Technical employees held pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6, Vice Mayor Barbieri called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Mayor Dean Barbieri and Councilmembers John Chiang, Margaret Fujioka and Garrett Keating

Absent: Mayor Abe Friedman

Staff: City Administrator Geoff Grote, Deputy City Attorney Judith Robbins, Fire Chief John Speakman, Acting Police Chief John Hunt, Public Works Director Larry Rosenberg, Finance Director Mark Bichsel, Recreation Director Mark Delventhal, City Clerk Ann Swift, City Planner Kate Black, Assistant Planner Kevin Jackson 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 April 6, 2009

Ordinance

Approves the second reading of Ordinance 687 N.S. implementing Bay Friendly Landscaping standards for the City of Piedmont

Resolution 33-09

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

Moved by Fujioka, Seconded by Chiang

Ayes: Barbieri, Chiang, Fujioka, Keating

Noes: None

Absent: Friedman

(0705)

PUBLIC FORUM

George Childs urged residents to attend the May 4 Council meeting to voice opposition to the \$142,551 underground utility assessment assigned to the City's Piedmont Sports Field/Hampton Park in connection with the proposed Piedmont Hills Utility Undergrounding District.

REGULAR CALENDAR

The Council considered the following items of regular business:

Budget Update

Per Council request, the Finance Director submitted a report on the status of the City's FY 08-09 budget for the month of April. The Director noted that projected revenue will slightly decrease from that reported in March (an additional \$10,900 reduction) and expenditure reductions are estimated to be \$458,000 rather than the \$512,000 figure

cited last month. Overall, it is estimated that the General Fund Balance at the end of FY 08-09 will be \$2,282.653. Councilmember Chiang submitted a spreadsheet he prepared detailing the specific differences in comparing the revenue and expenditure figures contained in the March and April financial reports. The Council also engaged in a question and answer session with staff concerning the impact the FY 08-09 budget will have on the preparation of the FY 09-10 budget, historic trends of General Fund Reserve amounts, anticipated state funding shortfalls to municipalities in light of the continuing economic crisis and Fire Department overtime costs.

**Greenhouse Gas
Emission Reduction
Target**

Per the last meeting, Claire Bonham Carter of EDAW, the City's Climate Action Plan Consultant, highlighted her written report in responding to Council questions raised at the April 6 meeting in advance of the City's establishment of a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target so that the development of the City's Climate Action Plan can proceed on schedule. Once an emissions reduction target has been set, EDAW will prepare a preliminary draft Climate Action Plan which will then be reviewed by City staff and the City's Environmental Task Force. Based upon their comments, EDAW will revise the draft as necessary and submit the draft for a 30-day public review period. During this review period, EDAW will facilitate a Climate Action Community Forum on May 27. With input from the Community Forum, EDAW will then prepare a final Climate Action Plan for Council review and adoption. It is anticipated that Plan adoption would occur by the end of July 2009 in accordance with the City's joint agreement with the City of Albany funding the preparation of the City's Climate Action Plan.

Public testimony was received from:

George Kersh suggested that the City set a greenhouse emissions reduction target of 10% below 2005 baseline emissions levels by 2020, that buyers rather than sellers assume the costs of energy upgrades and that the City offer incentives rather than impose mandates to encourage residents to improve energy efficiency.

Tom Brightbill urged the Council to include in the Climate Action Plan a high degree of specificity as to ways residents can improve energy efficiency with the corresponding amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would be reduced, provide mechanisms to receive feedback/input from residents so that the effectiveness of implementation measures can be assessed and tracked over the course of the program, and motivate resident participation based on non-economic reasons.

Susan Ode, a member of the City's Environmental Task Force, urged the Council to set a 25% reduction target, consider imposing bifurcated emission reduction target goals – one for the City and one for the rest of the community, work with PG&E to create a rebate program for homeowners to encourage energy efficient upgrades, explore the possibility of regional grant and/or Federal stimulus funding to help offset the costs of energy improvements and implement educational outreach efforts to encourage resident participation and collect data to assess whether Piedmont is meeting its reduction target.

The City Administrator recommended that the Council establish a 15% reduction target, citing the following reasons: (1) a high rate of resident participation will be required for any emission reductions to occur; (2) given the current economic downturn, a reasonable and achievable goal will help keep residents motivated and encouraged to participate; (3) Piedmont lacks a commercial/industrial base or the potential for new developments that typically utilize new, energy efficient technologies; (4) the Climate Action Plan is such a new endeavor, it will be hard to measure its success rate in the near term; (5) public and regional financing as well as new technologies may become available in future years to help accelerate emission reductions; and (6) the emission reduction target can always be revised upward at any time during the development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan if actual compliance/results exceed initial expectations. The Administrator specifically cited the City's recycling program, noting that when the program was initially proposed, modest goals were projected but residents soon were fully committed and as a result, Piedmont is now one of the leaders in Alameda County with regard to solid waste diversion and recycling. The Council, with the exception of Councilmember Keating, concurred with the Administrator's recommendation, agreeing that establishing a reasonable target initially will avoid the possibility that residents could become shocked or frightened by overly high expectations that could lead to resentment and opposition. Mindful that if as expected Piedmont residents embrace the importance of greenhouse emission reductions, the target percentage can be raised over the course of the program. It was noted that periodic evaluations of the success of the program will probably occur in 2013 and 2017 at which time the target could be revised upward as warranted. Councilmember Keating preferred that a higher initial target reduction percentage be set, stressing the critical importance of addressing greenhouse gas emissions, his confidence that Piedmont residents are environmentally sensitive and will fully embrace the program, his belief that Piedmont has a unique opportunity to set an example for other cities and noting that there is no penalty or shame if the established target is not reached. As to Climate Action Plan specifics, Councilmember Fujioka requested that estimated costs for City implementation of the plan be provided and Councilmember Keating suggested that as inducements the City consider waiving planning/permit fees for residents who implement energy efficient upgrades.

Resolution 34-09

RESOLVED, that the City Council establishes a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 15 percent below 2005 baseline emissions levels by 2020, with the understanding that as the City's Climate Action Plan is developed and implemented, said target goal can be revised upward based upon the results of periodic evaluations of the program's success.

Moved by Chiang, Seconded by Fujioka

Ayes: Barbieri, Chiang, Fujioka

Noes: Keating

Absent: Friedman

(0459)

Future Agenda Items

Recycling Update – the Vice Mayor requested that at a future meeting, representatives from either Republic Services and/or StopWaste.Org be

asked to present an audit of Piedmont's waste stream, including the City's current recycling percentage and suggestions as to how even greater recycling results could be achieved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Fujioka made the following announcements:

Environmental Task Force – the next meeting of the Environmental Task Force will be held April 28. The public is invited to attend.

Arbor Day – the City's annual celebration of Arbor Day will be held April 24 in Piedmont Park.

Gym Dedication – the dedication of the Patio Gym in name and memory of former Recreation Supervisor Buzz Redford will be held May 12.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Mayor Barbieri adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.