



MINUTES
CITY OF NORCO
SPECIAL MEETING – STUDY SESSION
CITY COUNCIL
CONFERENCE ROOMS “A” & “B”
NORCO CITY HALL – 2870 CLARK AVENUE
FEBRUARY 10, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Miller called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:
Mayor Malcolm G. Miller, M.D. - **Present**
Mayor Pro Tem Berwin Hanna - **Present**
Council Member Kathy Azevedo - **Present**
Council Member Kevin Bash - **Present**
Council Member Harvey C. Sullivan – **Present**

Staff Present: Groves, Okoro, Petree, Thompson, Milano, Askew, Oulman, King, Vallejo and Germain

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Pro Tem Hanna

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS:

Sharon Haman: Ms. Haman asked if the City will be receiving any funds or assistance regarding pot holes caused by the recent rains. In response, Director Thompson stated that a new contract for street maintenance has been awarded and once the weather is better, the temporary asphalt patches will be replaced with more permanent asphalt.

In response to a member of the audience, Director Thompson noted a list of streets that are set for upcoming street improvements, which will also be posted on the City’s web site.

Jeff Pipik: Mr. Pipik introduced himself as representing Pavement Recycling Systems. Mr. Pipik gave a short PowerPoint presentation showing an asphalt in-place recycling technique.

Thomas Platten: As a Norco Citizens Patrol member, Mr. Platten stated that he has become very familiar with the City streets. He shared his concerns regarding Cedar Avenue, which connects Norco Drive to Fifth Street; the lack of a cross walk from the parking annex across the street of City Hall and that there is no horse hitch at City Hall.

5. CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEMS:

A. Overview from the City Manager:

City Manager Groves addressed the two projects to be discussed, the Second Street Widening Projects which entails Valley View Avenue and Corona Avenue possibly remaining closed, and the Community Center Parking Lot Expansion and Hamner Avenue Improvements. She stated that staff would like for some direction from the Council on how staff should proceed with each project. City Manager Groves reviewed the funding of these projects stating that all or in-part of each project rely on RDA funds, but keeping in mind that funding is a bit fragile at this time.

B. Southeast Quadrant of the City Circulation – Second Street in Light of Decisions to Leave Valley View Avenue and Corona Avenue Closed:

Planning Manager King presented the City Council item and gave brief background information on the Second Street Widening Project.

Public Works Director Thompson gave a current overview of the project which will widen Second Street from the I15 east to Corona Avenue and will also correct the intersection at Valley View Avenue.

Discussion continued with Director Thompson giving additional information on the available options for Council's review.

Mayor Miller asked for the appearance of those wishing to speak.

Vern Showalter: Mr. Showalter stated the project needs to be finished and is in favor of Corona Avenue being opened.

Don Bowker: Mr. Bowker is in support of widening Second Street to Corona Avenue as he has learned that the Corona-Norco Unified School District has re-zoned school boundaries that will bring an additional 383 students to Norco schools, which will result in more traffic during school peak hours.

Pat Overstreet: Ms. Overstreet is concerned with the large amount of traffic to come if Corona Avenue is opened. There are many equestrians and large horse ranches in the area. She asked that the City wait before doing any of this work.

Linda Dixon: Ms. Dixon is concerned with having four lanes in residential areas; she prefers keeping Second Street to two lanes.

In response to a member of the audience, Director Thompson reviewed the busy/rush hours within the area in discussion as 6:30 am – 8:00 am and 2:00 pm -3:00 pm, and the Elementary kindergarten mid-morning rush as well.

Sharon Haman: Ms. Haman is in favor of opening Corona Avenue to ease access to the area for emergency services.

Mayor Miller returned discussion to the Council and staff.

Discussion continued.

C. Community Center Parking Lot Expansion and Hamner Avenue Improvements Project:

Public Works Director Thompson presented this Council item with assistance from **Parks and Recreation Director Petree**.

Director Petree reviewed for the Council the previously-approved plan of the entire project, as well as the approved Capitol Improvement Program Budget by funding source.

Discussion between Council and staff continued regarding the budgeting of the project. Options were reviewed regarding the process of the project. It was agreed that this project is a good investment for the City.

Mayor Miller asked for the appearance of those wishing to speak.

Don Bowker: Mr. Bowker stated the importance of the area looking its best as planned as it is the gateway to Silverlakes. He is in favor of the completion of this project.

Bonnie Slager: Ms. Slager is in favor of the project based on having this additional staging area in the City and for the ease of crossing Hamner Avenue. Ms. Slager also stated that she is advocating for the change of the horse trail on Detroit Street bridge, to be moved to the center as opposed to either side of the bridge.

Mayor Miller returned the discussion to Council and staff.

RECESSED: 4:11 p.m.

RECONVENED: 4:34 p.m.

D. Corona Chamber of Commerce Business Plan Discussion:

Mayor Miller stated for the benefit of all present that this is a proposal from the Corona Chamber of Commerce and that no “back room” meetings have occurred. He added that this is an open discussion item.

Council Member Azevedo stated that she and **Mayor Pro Tem Hanna** have been liaison with the Corona Chamber. She further stated that the Corona Chamber has a lot to offer to the business community of Norco.

Bobby Spiegel, CEO and President of the Corona Chamber, gave a presentation on the sphere of what the Corona Chamber can offer. He further stated that the business community is looking for support from its chamber. Mr. Spiegel stated that the Corona Chamber is there to offer help to the businesses of Norco. He introduced **Kerry Pendergast**, Chairman, and **Cynthia Schneider**, Board Member of the Corona Chamber.

Chairman Pendergast gave insight regarding what is planned and what resources and other assistance the Corona Chamber is able to offer to the businesses of Norco.

Mayor Pro Tem Hanna stated that he has been meeting with the Corona Chamber since last year. He is impressed with the professionalism and their respect towards the businesses they serve. He further stated that the local chamber is dysfunctional and local businesses are treated unfairly. The mega mixer recently hosted by the Corona Chamber was the best organized event in Norco as well as the grand opening of Bob's Big Boy Restaurant. He noted that local businesses would benefit with the Corona Chamber.

Council Member Azevedo stated that she likes all nine proposals as provided by the Corona Chamber. She asked for more information regarding the Ambassador Program and how it would be established. **Chairman Pendergast** replied by using the City of Riverside Chamber as an example and noted how they are able to provide service and consideration to each community's uniqueness.

Council Member Sullivan asked about the Chamber's interest in expanding within the Corona area, including Eastvale and other unincorporated areas. In response, **President Spiegel** stated that the Corona Chamber is planning to do so, starting with Norco.

Council Member Azevedo added that there is a need for a greater chamber especially with Silverlakes coming soon, and shared her concern for the small groups which have formed due to the lack of performance by the Norco Chamber. **Chairman Pendergast** stated that it is their job to network with these small groups to help them achieve and grow.

In response to **Council Member Bash**, **Chairman Pendergast** gave information and procedures followed in the seating of board members.

Further discussion ensued, including the additional service as a visitor's bureau, where they would provide literature on Norco; answer calls promptly and send out information upon request.

Linda Dixon: Ms. Dixon stated her concern about losing the name of Norco within the name of the chamber.

Vern Showalter: Mr. Showalter inquired about the legislative body concerning either the state or city laws passed, or are going to be passed. In response, **Corona Chamber Board Member Schneider** stated they are able to react to any legal changes quickly, either at the State or local level.

Pam Smith: Ms. Smith questions the City's involvement since the City is a separate entity from the Norco Chamber. She is also concerned about City taxes subsidizing Norco businesses to join the Corona Chamber; and stated that the proposed agreement seems to benefit the city not the local businesses.

In response, **President Spiegel** re-iterated that the City and Chamber are a partnership that will both help and benefit the local businesses.

Karen Leonard: Ms. Leonard stated that she recognizes the opportunity the Corona Chamber can offer; she asked if there may be a mentoring program so that Norco could build its own great chamber.

Lisa Shaver: Ms. Shaver asked about presentation and branding of Norco and how this partnership would affect the Norco Valley Fair.

President Spiegel stated that the Corona Chamber has no interest in the fair. He further stated that the Chamber may not be for all businesses, but re-iterated that we are more alike than not.

Robert Leonard: Mr. Leonard stated he is against the City subsidizing fees for Norco businesses to join Corona Chamber; and asked how the Corona Chamber is going to benefit his business.

Chairman Pendergast addressed some of the issues brought up by members of the audience, stating that the proposal was not designed to answer all questions. Many issues would be dealt with within the membership business community.

Mayor Miller reminded all present that the purpose of this discussion is to get the businesses' input.

Mary Higelin: Ms. Higelin has concerns about the Chamber not being available in Norco. She fears that the Corona Chamber would take a lot away from Norco and that Norco would possibly get lost.

Shirley Benson-Rowland: Ms. Benson-Rowland stated she is not a business owner but an active community member. She noted that she frequents the Norco Chamber office for miscellaneous information. She is sad to see the Norco Chamber become just a committee under the Corona Chamber. She asked that Council not approve an agreement with Corona Chamber and is afraid Norco would get lost in the shuffle.

Tom Wilson: Mr. Wilson stated that he feels that the Corona Chamber is a fine organization but Norco deserves its own Chamber of Commerce. He noted that there are a few focus groups that have been meeting around town, as well as another chamber called the Norco Valley Chamber which is not currently active. He requests 120 days before the Council makes any decision.

Mayor Miller returned the discussion to Council and staff.

Council Member Sullivan stated that he feels that the current Norco Chamber of Commerce has lost its focus and is not promoting the City as it should. He agreed that the Corona Chamber will do a good job for Norco.

Council Member Azevedo stated that she is glad that this meeting took place. She noted that the information discussed is insightful for all those present. She added that she feels strongly that Norco needs a strong advocate such as the Corona Chamber.

Council Member Bash stated that non-profit organizations and businesses alike can be board members in Corona. The organization is a venue and a means to meet additional customers. He added that with the current economy we need to help local businesses from going under.

Mayor Pro Tem Hanna thanked the Corona Chamber for coming to make the presentation. He noted that he sees the advantages to the City and businesses in our area and added that the business community can only benefit with this presentation.

Mayor Miller stated that we all know our Chamber is in trouble. He further noted that all opinions will be taken into consideration before any decisions are made.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

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