



MINUTES
CITY OF NORCO
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, June 4, 2014
Norco City Hall Conference Rooms A & B
2870 Clark Avenue, Norco, CA 92860



CALL TO ORDER: 11:03 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Berwin Hanna, Mayor, **Present**
Herb Higgins, Mayor Pro Tem, **Present**
Kathy Azevedo, Council Member, **Present**
Kevin Bash, Council Member, **Present**
Greg Newton, Council Member, **Present**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Council Member Bash

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING UPDATES ON THE FOLLOWING RELATING TO THE NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER SEAL BEACH DETACHMENT, NORCO:

City Manager Andy Okoro gave a brief overview of the items to be discussed. Mr. Okoro referenced the Joint City Council Meeting with the Historic Preservation Commission, in which the Council and Commission authorized the City to perform its own historical resources survey. Mr. Okoro stated that the City received a letter from the Riverside County Office of Military Services requesting city support relating to Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Mr. Okoro also noted that a public relations survey is being conducted within the City by a public relations firm, which staff was just made aware of this past weekend.

a. HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Bill Wilkman, Historic Consultant summarized the discussion that took place at the Joint Meeting between the City Council and the Historic Preservation Commission on January 27, 2014. Mr. Wilkman noted that in 2010, the Navy hired a firm to conduct a historical resources survey on the property, and determined that there were no historical resources except for Gatehouse on Fifth Street. The City commented on the survey indicating that it was insufficient. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) agreed with City and asked the Navy to reexamine the survey. In 2013, the Navy certified the survey findings and as a result the City requested that the Navy put their findings on hold until the City could conduct its own survey. On January 27, 2014, the City Council endorsed conducting

a historical resources survey and approved applying for a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant. Staff applied for the CLG grant in April 2014 and the Office of Historic Preservation will make a decision this month. Mr. Wilkman noted the importance of conducting an independent survey, primarily because more resources will qualify as historic designations and the Navy would be subject to the State Historical Preservation Act.

Council Member Bash commented that the City has made efforts to counterpoint every time the Navy states that resources on the site are not historic. Council Member Bash expressed his concerns with SHPO not stepping in to support the City. Council Member Bash stated that the Navy cannot continue to ignore the content of the City's comments and is concerned with the Navy's ethics. Council Member Bash indicated that he has sent many emails and spoken to many Navy personnel regarding issues with the last survey. Council Member Bash noted the need for assistance from the federal government to help enforce Section 106.

Council Member Azevedo commented that the Council needs to support the maintenance of the hotel as well as the pavilion and the lake. Council Member Azevedo stated that if the City does not offer a rebuttal to the survey, the lake, pavilion and resources will be lost. Council Member Azevedo expressed that the residents of Norco and visitors should be able to enjoy what Rex Clark built and the resources would be great for economic development.

Council Member Bash noted that if a building loses historic integrity due to lack of maintenance, it could be destroyed.

Linda Dixon spoke in regards to the survey. In response to Ms. Dixon's question, Mr. Wilkman stated that the grant the City applied for is \$25,000 and if the City does not receive the grant, a survey would cost approximately \$40,000-\$60,000. Ms. Dixon expressed her concerns about losing historic designations on this property and that the City needs to move in a more aggressive direction.

Mr. Wilkman noted that he asked SHPO not to endorse the Navy's survey and stated that he has not heard back from SHPO; therefore, in an indirect manner, the City is not losing the battle.

b. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM PROJECT

Mr. Wilkman gave a brief report on the photovoltaic system project. Mr. Wilkman noted that the project is proposed to install solar panels on one or two properties on the site. Mr. Wilkman discussed the Section 106 process, which states that whenever federal money is spent on a project, there has to be a determination of anything on the property that would qualify for historic designation. In this case, Section 106 requires that the Navy inform the City of the proposed project, ask SHPO for support, and to allow for comment from the City. Mr. Wilkman stated that the City was not notified and the City first heard of the proposed photovoltaic project on March 25, 2014. During tour of the facility the Navy mentioned two other projects but did not mention the Section 106 process. Mr. Wilkman noted that it is clear that the Navy had not notified the process, which began in February 2014. Mr. Wilkman stated that on April 22, 2014, SHPO already determined that the project would have no effect on historical resources. Mr. Wilkman indicated that he requested that the Section 106 process start over and as of today, has not heard from SHPO.

Mr. Wilkman reported on the basics of the photovoltaic project and that the ground-mounted systems could include fixed-tilt arrays or tracker-mounted arrays that rotate on an axis to track the sun. One site would include a 1.5 megawatt generating system on 8.5 acres adjacent to Fourth Street. The second site would be a 1.5 megawatt generating system on 10 acres north of Norco College. Mr. Wilkman presented photos from the two sites and stated that the Office of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) produced a document recommending keeping the trees on the sites for wildlife and to reduce the views of the panels. Mr. Wilkman suggested expanding the hotel district to include the hill noted in Photo 11, which was formerly a golf course and contains historic trails.

Parks and Recreation Director Brian Petree stated that NEPA is investigating the effects on wildlife. Mr. Wilkman indicated NEPA is also addressing the effects on vegetation and views but hasn't released the document yet as it is still in draft form. Mr. Wilkman also expressed his concerns that the Section 106 review did not contain photos of the proposed sites.

In response to Mayor Hanna, Mr. Wilkman stated that other purposes of the Section 106 process are to identify alternatives and impacts. He also indicated that SHPO and the Navy could state that the project is important enough despite historical resources and proceed with the project.

Council Member Azevedo suggested an alternative of installing the panels on roof tops to preserve the ground and decrease impact of visibility.

In response to Council Member Newton, Mr. Wilkman stated that Norco College is not listed among the agencies to be copied in the Section 106 process; however, the college could be a participant and comment. Council Member Newton also asked about studies on reflection from the solar panels and Water and Sewer Manager Bill Thompson noted that solar panel technology has non-reflective material.

Mayor Pro Tem Higgins commented that there is a possibility that the project could be stopped if the Navy is offered something tangible. Mayor Pro Tem Higgins suggested that the City conduct an independent historical resources survey and use it to get the attention of state and federal officials.

City Council Member Bash commented that on the national level, the President is stressing environmental issues and every base is trying to go green. Council Member Bash stated that if the solar panels are installed, it would make the base closure-proof and be removed from the BRAC list of closures.

Ed Dixon asked about APEs and Mr. Wilkman clarified that an APE is an Area of Potential Effect and defines boundaries. Mr. Dixon also asked if Rex Clark built the hotel because of the thermal waters and questioned if studies had been done regarding thermal energy.

Linda Dixon commented on the amount of important information contained in this meeting. Ms. Dixon concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Higgins regarding the grant and that the Navy will not wait for the City to get the grant. Ms. Dixon asked how long a survey would take to complete and Mr. Wilkman indicated approximately six months.

City Attorney John Harper stated the need to present substantial evidence in the survey. A course of action that the City could take is to appeal to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

In response to a comment made from a member of the audience regarding the timeline of the photovoltaic project, Mr. Wilkman stated that the Navy is moving forward rapidly. Council Member Bash stated that BRAC will occur within a year. City Attorney Harper indicated that the Navy's timeline will be affected by NEPA.

Ed Dixon asked that if the Navy base closes, could the panels be removed; staff responded in the affirmative.

Council Member Bash suggested a public-private partnership. He stated that public-private partnerships relating to historic properties are a priority of the Department of Defense.

City Manager Okoro stated that he is seeking direction on drafting a letter to SHPO regarding the concerns presented at this meeting. Also, if SHPO does not respond to the letter, should staff pursue non-compliance through the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

M/S Higgins/Bash directing the City Manager to send a letter to SHPO with concerns as presented by Mr. Wilkman regarding the Navy's photovoltaic project and if the City does not receive a response from SHPO, then direct the City Manager and City Attorney to pursue non-compliance through the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: AZEVEDO, BASH, HANNA, HIGGINS, NEWTON

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

City Manager Okoro stated that at the regular City Council meeting today, the Council can request to add \$25,000 to fund the historical resources survey and if the scope of Mr. Wilkman's agreement needs to be amended then it will be brought back to Council on June 18, 2014.

c. DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT (BRAC) COMMISSION LETTER OF SUPPORT; and

d. PUBLIC RELATIONS SURVEY/NAVY DOWNSIZING

City Manager Okoro reported that approximately four weeks ago the City received a letter from the County of Riverside Department of Military Services asking the City Council to take an active position in support of military installations in Riverside County including NWSC. Mr. Okoro stated that he drafted a response to the letter noting communication issues with the Navy. The letter lends support with the caveat that the Navy reduce its footprint. Mr. Okoro stated that Supervisor Tavaglione suggested holding the letter until he has the opportunity to discuss the issues with Congressman Calvert.

City Council Member Azevedo gave a brief history on relations with the Navy. Council Member Azevedo indicated that in 2009, the Navy was in agreement about downsizing from 140 acres to 82 acres because the Navy was not using the lake or the pavilion and it was costly to maintain. After 2009, another Commander was in place and opposed downsizing. Council Member Azevedo also noted that initially Congressman Calvert was in support of downsizing, but no longer supports the idea. Congressman Calvert is seeking the City support in keeping the base. Council Member Azevedo also mentioned that Congressman Calvert's office funded the phone survey of Norco residents that is currently taking place.

City Manager Okoro requested direction on how to proceed with responding to the letter of support.

Council Member Bash suggested that the Navy return to the originally proposed 82-acre footprint, proceed with negotiation with a public-private partnership, requesting an honest survey, issue a response to the letter of support with the caveat of future downsizing, and include in the response that all construction stop until the City's survey is complete. Council Member Bash also suggested that the response letter be sent to all federal and state elected officials.

Council Member Azevedo suggested not sending a response to the letter of support.

Mayor Pro Tem Higgins suggested sending a response letter with comments about downsizing and a joint agency partnership in the near future.

Council Member Newton concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Higgins and suggested including language about freeing up the pavilion for public use.

Council Member Azevedo commented that Congressman Calvert reminded her that the Navy has already reduced its footprint. Council Member Azevedo also noted that Congressman Calvert and Supervisor Tavaglione are upset of the City's stance of downsizing. Council Member Azevedo suggested that the Council consider the repercussions and the possibility of not being able to partner with the Navy to acquire property.

M/S Azevedo/Hanna to not send a response letter to respect Supervisor Tavaglione's request; instead to direct the City Manager to send a letter to federal and state legislators with a synopsis of today's meeting. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: AZEVEDO, BASH, HANNA, HIGGINS

NOES: NEWTON

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

Mayor Hanna left the meeting at 1:02 p.m. and assigned Mayor Pro Tem Higgins as the Presiding Officer.

Linda Dixon commented that she received the phone survey last night and thought the survey to be inappropriate. Ms. Dixon stated that the Council should be cautious about taking a stance.

Ed Dixon commented that Congressman Calvert is in a better position to know what is going on with base and respects his position.

Diana Stiller stated that she is interested in information about the private-partnership option. Ms. Stiller also commented on the event by the County of Riverside Economic Development Department this weekend, which may have contacts that would help the City with the issues concerning the Navy.

Diane Collins commented on the inaccuracies of the phone survey.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

3. ADJOURNMENT: 1:12 p.m.

CHERYL L. LINK, CITY CLERK