



# SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MINUTES

Thursday, February 8, 2007  
5:30 p.m.  
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Menlo Park City Council Chambers

This meeting  
starts at 5:00 p.m.  
with a Closed  
Session in the  
Adm. Building.

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## **5:00 p.m. CLOSED SESSION** (First Floor Conference Room – Administration Building)

1. Closed Session pursuant to Government Code Section §54957 regarding hiring a City Manager. Parties present: Bill McClure, City Attorney and Bob Murray of Bob Murray & Associates, consultant.

**ROLL CALL** - Fergusson, Cohen, Boyle, Cline, Robinson

**STAFF PRESENT** - William McClure, City Attorney, Bob Murray, Principal with the Bob Murray & Associates, Pat Carson, Acting City Clerk and other City staff in the audience.

**A. PUBLIC COMMENT #1** (Limited to 30 minutes)

### **B. REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. Presentation by Bob Murray relating to City Manager recruitment process and receipt of public comment relating to desired personal and professional attributes for a new City Manager. (Staff Report #07-021)

Mayor Fergusson started the Special City Council meeting at 5:39 p.m. and announced Council had just adjourned from a closed session with nothing to report.

Regular Business was initiated with City Attorney Bill McClure who provided some opening remarks and then turned it over to the consultant, Mr. Bob Murray for his presentation.

Mr. Murray thanked the Council for retaining him to provide recruitment services, and stated he is looking forward to working with Council, staff, and the community. He said that ultimately, the selection would include the community to find out what they want based upon the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the City. This means looking at what type of person fits the role. Before preparing advertisements and looking for the best candidate he would like to find out what leadership and management style, will be best suited for Menlo Park. Particularly at this meeting he hopes to hear what the community is looking for in a manager.

Mr. Murray encouraged the public to provide input. The Mayor inquired about the broadcast of this meeting and encouraged those viewing at home to please send in their comments.

Mayor Fergusson announced Public Comment on the matter.

Elizabeth Lasensky spoke about the process of hiring a city manager and noted that she understands the difficulties. She complimented Kent Steffens and Arlinda Heineck for their professionalism and hopes that they will be considered as candidates.

Fran Dehn stated that the city manager should be prepared to take on the present and the future challenges of Menlo Park. The personality is important. The ability to look out ten years from now is important. The ability to deal with local and regional challenges. She is hoping for someone who is open and approachable. She thinks it is important that the city manager live in Menlo Park.

Elias Blawie stated that in terms of qualifications, he is looking for professionalism and someone of integrity, who has the ability to manage the team. Someone who has project management skills and financial acumen.

Council Member Boyle commented that multiple speakers highlighted the need for financial skills. He shared other skills that have been brought to his attention.

Mayor Fergusson has heard comments such as we need a manager just like David Boesch or some have said no we need someone very different. A common theme seems to be to find a peacemaker.

Council Member Robinson thanked everyone for his or her comments about the vision of Menlo Park. He hopes Council will receive a lot of input about what is important in a manager. He spoke about a local newspaper and the use of a town hall comment site.

Kristi Breisch spoke about volunteering in the City Clerk's Office and about her work with the Library. She is still interested as a resident but feels unsure about how the City works. This is not in respect to the city manager but as an interested resident and in her attempts to get involved.

Council Member Boyle said he would like to see us avoid getting to the point of needing a peacemaker. The leadership that he would like to see in a city manager would help the Council exercise leadership, and persuasion in working together.

Council Member Cline has not noticed any surprises about what type of leadership the City needs. There is a lot of change in the City and a lot of controversial issues on the table. He is hoping for more accurate financial information. He would like to see Belle Haven incorporated more as a part of the whole City. He thinks there are very few who have all of the skills needed for such a task. He would like to see a manager who can communicate by explaining, and representing. In his opinion this is a very unique hire and he believes this community needs someone who can oversee several big jobs.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen stated it is helpful to hear all the input. He provided a lot of information to Mr. Murray prior to this meeting and he would like to hear more about what the community wants. There will probably be six to eight individuals who come before the Council as candidates. He thinks vision is a tough way to measure Menlo Park. The M-2 presents a unique challenge as well as El Camino Real. This City is already built up. His choice will be a combination of all the things he has heard.

Council Member Robinson agrees with Council Member Boyle that it would be nice if the city manager could help prevent some of the challenges. It will be a team effort to get through these challenges. He wants someone who can listen, and is really excited about this job. The manager should carry out the will of the Council yet he doesn't want a "yes" person.

Mayor Fergusson asked Mr. Murray to talk a little about the public participation in the interview phase. Mr. Murray said the discussions to date have suggested that he will recommend five or six people for the Council's consideration. The Council will interview those people and narrow it down to two or three then the Council will select members to participate in the second round of interviews. Council will consider the information from the community in its final consideration.

Margaret Fruth asked if she could expand on the peacemaker concept. There have been two political parties in Menlo Park and she would like to see a city manager that remains neutral.

Betty Meisner spoke about the city manager as being able to pull together different points of view.

Council Member Boyle would like the Council to examine different points of views about non-traditional candidates. Could someone with a business background, someone not in city government, do the job and should guidance be given to the recruiter in this direction?

Council Member Cline thinks the Council should definitely be creative, and in response to Council Member Boyle, he thinks that some of this has already been done. Particularly, with financial issues and the challenges in that area.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen does not want to stop creative thinking but thinks Mr. Murray's organization specializes in placement and hires such as this. He expects Mr. Murray to be creative and reach out but wants the expertise that Mr. Murray has in government. He is concerned about getting away from looking at the traditional city manager. He is relying heavily on Mr. Murray and his experience in this area. He doesn't want to jeopardize getting a good candidate.

Mayor Fergusson announced that she will need to leave for a City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (CCAG) meeting and asked if Council would continue without her or wrap up. Mayor Fergusson spoke about her role as mayor and how close she works with the City Manager. She agreed that a peacemaker quality is important, and someone with a strong urban planning background.

The gavel was turned over to Mayor Pro Tem Cohen to continue the rest of the meeting.

Kristi Breisch addressed Council stating that perhaps a good candidate has a good handle on the budget and can assist the public in understanding how it all works. Accountability is very important. The city manager should have a clear vision of the needs of the community and not just his/her own vision.

Council Member Robinson says the person should be strong across the board and needs to have a broad set of skills. Making sure money is spent wisely. He would like comments from Mr. Murray and maybe the city attorney in regards to a non-traditional candidate.

Mr. Murray responded to the question about a non-city manager candidate, he said it is very rare. In Ventura, California the city manager has a background in non-profits with a strong interest in planning. It is very uncommon but that doesn't mean it doesn't happen. The reality is that someone who can manage a budget like Menlo Park in the private sector earns more than the salary paid in government. This structure is very foreign for someone in the private structure. Money is one of the reasons you don't see the crossover because the private sector generally pays a lot more money.

Council Member Boyle mentioned there are actors who have had some degree of success who have crossed over into politics. Money is not the motivator for council members.

The City Attorney stated there are some things that are unique about government. A city manager gets much more actively involved with the management of the city. Laws are unique and very different than what you find in the private sector. People in the private sector don't understand the Brown Act. They lobby every board member prior to decisions that are made. That is not the process with the City Council. Decisions are made in an open forum and with an open process. There are some character traits that are consistent with a city manager but the position as a CEO is different and less likely to be like the city manager role. Council Member Boyle asked about being led by the city manager as opposed to being led by the Council. Clearly it can't be run like a CEO runs an organization but in thinking about the recent child-care issue in M2 Zone what if the city manager

and staff took more of a leadership role as opposed to presenting the facts and asking Council to decide.

Council Member Robinson has heard feedback about comparisons with the former city managers and Mr. Boesch. His understanding is that the former city manager that preceded Mr. Boesch was more in control. The former city manager had more control and guided a little more. An opportunity exists now to get some feedback.

Council Member Cline shared his thoughts about the city manager role. He thinks a good city manager stands strong behind his/her recommendations and the Council makes the decision. An over-powering city manager can be dangerous. He has concerns with placing the city manager and staff in the role of making the decisions. He has witnessed that in the past and didn't think that was well run. A balance is important.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen asked Mr. Murray if he could refer to the schedule listed in the staff report and provide any additional input. Mr. Murray will have a draft of the brochure early March and he will seek additional input at that time.

Additional discussion took place about the upcoming schedule.

### **C. PUBLIC COMMENT #2**

Mayor Pro Tem thanked Mr. Murray and the City Attorney. Allowed additional opportunity for Public Comment #2. There are no speakers for Public Comment #2.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen announced the next meeting.

### **D. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Pat Carson, Acting City Clerk

Approved at the City Council Meeting of March 13, 2007.