



**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING
MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

7:00 p.m.

**701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Menlo Park City Council Chambers**

ROLL CALL – Cohen, Robinson, Boyle, Cline, Fergusson

Staff present: City Manager Rojas, City Attorney McClure and City Clerk Kelly. Other staff were present in the audience.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STUDY SESSION

1. **Overview and discussion of the Fiscal Year 2008-09 Budget process; consideration of proposed 2008-09 Capital and Study Project Priorities.** ([Staff Report #08-035](#))

City Manager Glen Rojas presented the staff report, including an overview of the Fiscal Year 2008-09 budget process as well as anticipated new revenues and upcoming expenditures. He expressed the importance of taking a long term approach to the budget, neither over-committing City resources nor over-correcting for near-term conditions. The City Manager stated that we would not be proposing substantial budget reductions, significant new initiatives, or changes in tax rates for next year; but would be proposing a reserve policy to guide the City over the long term.

Assistant City Manager Audrey Ramberg reported that staff has prepared a list of 54 potential projects for Council consideration, of which staff is recommending 35 for inclusion in the list of project priorities for Fiscal Year 2008-09. She stated the list does not include those current projects that are fully funded in this or a previous year's budget and are continuing into Fiscal Year 2008-09, but focuses on new projects and current projects that require an additional funding appropriation. Ms. Ramberg asked the Council to identify, which, if any projects, council members would like to discuss, remove or add to the list. She informed the Council that at the meeting of April 1 staff would present the Council with the revised list for consideration and adoption.

Members of the public commented as follows:

Elizabeth Lasensky referred to the priorities recommended by both the Green Ribbon Citizens Committee and the Housing Commission and encouraged the Council to consider including them as projects in next year's budget.

Chuck Kinney expressed his desire to persuade the Council to include E15, El Camino Streetscape, in next year's list of projects. He reminded the Council that this project was approved by former councils, is a state approved project, and is a joint project with Trees for Menlo Parks. Mr. Kinney suggested that the project be implemented in phases.

Mitch Slomiak, co-chair of the Green Ribbon Citizens Committee (GRCC), and member of the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC), spoke of the importance for moving forward on projects that reduce green house gas emissions and following through on the recommendations of the GRCC, the EQC, and development and implementation of a Climate Action Plan.

Patti Fry expressed her desire to see street infrastructure improvements included in next year's budget and list of project priorities. She also suggested that CD3 related to developing residential design guidelines could be modified and implemented by considering adoption of standards already in place in other cities and that CD5 related to sustainable development be downscaled and be implemented in phases so that some part of this initiative could be included in next year's list of projects.

Megan Iverson stated her support for the Willows Avenue Traffic Study project.

Omar Kihaan provided background on the work the community has done related to traffic concerns in the Willows and support for a Willows Avenue Traffic Study. He requested that the Council approve this project for next year.

Syed Shariq talked about the relationship of crime and traffic in the Willows and urged the Council to move forward on the Willows Avenue Traffic Study and to also consider installing surveillance cameras.

Anne Hilbert reported on the meetings held by the Willows Task Force and their support of the Willows Avenue Traffic Study.

Morris Brown requested that Council fund a study for quiet zones in the upcoming budget and as part of next year's project priorities.

Assistant City Manager Ramberg requested that the Council review each section of the staff prepared list of projects, as recommended by staff, for consideration in Fiscal Year 2008-09 and indicate which projects the Council wishes to discuss, add or remove from the list. She stated that staff may not be in a position to give detailed responses at this meeting, but would take Council input and direction and provide a revised list along with responses at the Council meeting of April 1.

Under the section for Community Development, Ms. Ramberg reported that five projects are listed, of which staff recommends CD1 and CD2 be included in the list of project priorities for Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Mayor Cohen suggested that staff look at an alternative approach to CD3, Single Family Residential Zoning Standards and Review Process. Council discussed approaches that would use a community based group to assist in determining the best approach to the review process. Mayor Cohen described work that he and a small group of residents have already done towards this. By consensus, the Council requested that staff provide information on alternative options for this project at their meeting of April 1.

Members of the Council discussed whether or not CD5, Program for Streamlined Processing of Sustainable Development, could be implemented in phases so that a portion of this project could be included in next year's project priorities. One option suggested was to focus the use of sustainable development standards on the

construction of City building projects. By consensus, the Council requested that staff consider a phased approach to this project and report back what that would look like and at what cost.

Council Member Fergusson requested that two additional projects be put on the list, under the “below the line” for purposes of tracking. These projects are the Willow Corridor Land Use Study and Haven Avenue Land Use Study. Staff was directed to develop a project description for these projects and present this information on April 1.

Council Member Boyle cautioned doing pieces of projects and asked that staff be prepared to discuss the pros and cons of doing some of the projects in this manner.

Assistant City Manager Ramberg noted that four projects are listed under Community Services and that staff recommends all four projects be included in next year’s budget. The Council did not add or remove any of the projects listed under the Community Services section of the list.

Assistant City Manager Ramberg informed the Council that two projects are listed and recommended for approval under Library Services. The Council did not add or remove any of the projects listed under the Library section of the list.

Ms. Ramberg reported that there are 19 projects listed under the Public Works Engineering section, and that E1 through E14 are being recommended by staff for inclusion in the project priority list for next year.

Council Member Fergusson questioned whether E15, El Camino Streetscape, could be implemented in phases so that it could be started next year. Public Works Director Kent Steffens responded that the project could be implemented in phases and that there is the possibility for grant funding through the Grand Boulevard process.

Council Member Boyle questioned how E15 would fit in with other streetscape projects on the list. Mr. Steffens gave an overview of these projects.

Several members of the Council expressed some reservations about proceeding with this project before the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Process is completed.

Council asked that staff return with additional information on E15, based on Council’s comments, and taking into account all of the streetscape projects on the list.

At the request of Council Member Boyle, and with Council concurrence, staff was asked to consider, related to E4, the Green@Home Conservation Project, whether currently available energy conservation tools available to PG&E customers may be sufficient rather than spending City funds on this project.

Council Member Boyle suggested Council consider deferring, E8, Renovation of Parking Plaza 8, until there is a long term parking plan or until the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision process is completed. Council Member Robinson stated his desire to see undergrounding utilities or upgrades included in this project. By Council consensus, staff was directed to return on April 1 with additional information.

Council Member Fergusson suggested adding the following projects to the list “below the line”: 1) providing more environmentally sustainable Downtown landscaping and 2) providing Gateway signage. Vice Mayor Robinson suggested that these items might be included in the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision process or be managed as separate projects. By Council consensus, staff was directed to add these projects to the list presented on April 1.

Assistant City Manager Ramberg noted that there are six projects listed under Public Works Maintenance. She stated M1 through M5 are projects being recommended by staff for inclusion in next year’s list of project priorities. Vice Mayor Robinson, with Council support, recommended including M6, Onetta Harris Community Center Gym Floor Restriping, in next year’s list of project priorities.

Ms. Ramberg reported that 18 projects are listed under Public Works Transportation with staff recommending T1 through T8. Public Works Director Steffens responded to Council questions on various projects in this section.

The Public Works Director, at the request of Council Member Boyle, provided an overview of all of the projects related to school commute issues and the City’s shuttle service. It was Council’s consensus that staff return with an evaluation as to whether or not some components of T11, Study for Shuttle Bus Expansion for Student School Busing, and T12, Shuttle Expansion Study, could be included with T1, Alternative School Transportation, or T3, Study for Residential.

Vice Mayor Robinson suggested that an educational component be included in the safe routes projects and asked that staff return with additional information on the scope of T2, Safe Routes to Encinal School,

Public Works Director Steffens responded to questions raised by Council Member Cline and other members of the Council regarding T4, Willow Area-Wide Traffic Study. By Council consensus, staff was directed to consider conducting this study in coordination with T14, Willow Road Traffic Study, to ensure that impacts on the latter be understood.

Mr. Steffens provided an overview of T8, Ringwood Avenue Overcrossing project, at the request of Council Member Boyle. Council asked staff to provide additional information on the scope of the project and to consider surveillance cameras.

Council Member Fergusson expressed an interest in studying a grade separation at Ravenswood Avenue and quiet zones at the Caltrain grade crossings. Council expressed interest in obtaining information from staff on April 1 regarding a study session on quiet zones.

Council Member Cline asked that four additional projects be put on the list, “below the line” so that these projects would be tracked for future consideration. These projects are: a) El Camino Real Reconfiguration; b) Downtown Parking Structure Financial Feasibility Study; c) Valparaiso Safe Routes Study; and d) Audible Pedestrian Signal at El Camino Real and Santa Cruz. By consensus, Council supported asking staff to add them to “below the line” on the list of priorities.

Assistant City Manager Ramberg reiterated that staff would return on April 1 with a revised list of projects, along with project descriptions for new projects that have been added, and additional information based on Council's direction at this meeting.

A. COMMISSION/COMMITTEE VACANCIES AND REPORTS

Bob Steele, a Bicycle Commissioner, reported that the Commission asked him to report to the Council on two matters. He stated that the Commission doesn't believe that the modernization plans for the Oak Knoll Elementary School promote safe bike access to school and asks that the Council request additional information from the School District. He reported that the Commission also asks the Council to request that the Police Department enforce compliance with speed limits and bicycle lane restrictions on Sand Hill Road.

Les Koonce, Chamber of Commerce Chairperson, stated the Chamber's appreciation for the work being done on the El Camino Real Vision Process and encouraged the Council to include sufficient monies in the budget to proceed with Phase 2 of this process. He requested that a Downtown parking study be considered in next year's budget and that undergrounding of utilities be included in the renovation of Parking Plaza 8.

B. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS - None

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 -

Action: No speakers.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR - None

E. PUBLIC HEARING - None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. **Authorization for the Executive Director of the Community Development Agency to approve up to \$40,000 for legal fees in connection with the restructuring of the Community Development Agency Tax Allocation Refunding Bonds, Series 2006.**
[*\(Staff Report #08-036\)*](#)

Finance Director Carol Augustine presented the staff report. She provided a history of the financing of the bonds and the current unprecedented market situation whereby bond rating agencies have begun to down-rate bond insurers. She stated the Community Development Agency's insurer, Ambac, has had its rating down-rated, which has resulted in nearly doubling the Agency interest costs on its debt. Ms. Augustine recommended the Agency Board authorize the Executive Director to approve monies for legal fees so that the Agency can proceed with restructuring the bonds. She stated that staff will be coming back to Council on March 25, 2008 with the restructuring proposal.

Action: Moved, seconded (Fergusson/Boyle) and carried unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to approve up to \$40,000 for legal fees in connection with restructuring of the Series 2006 Bonds.

2. **Consideration of state and federal legislative items, including decisions to support or oppose any such legislation, and items listed under Written Communication or Information Item.**

Action: None

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION - None

H. INFORMATION ITEMS - None

I. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council Member Fergusson reported that she attended the Regional Water Quality Control Board Hearing today regarding the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that is proposed for adoption in the near future. She stated this will result in a huge unfunded mandate and that there were scores of elected officials and senior staff at this hearing, expressing support for clean water goals but firm in their position that the permit, as drafted, should not be approved.

Mayor Cohen announced that on Wednesday, as part of the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Speaker Series, Jeffrey Tumlin from Nelson/Nygaard Associates, will be speaking on parking and transportation demand management strategies for cities like Menlo Park. He stated this event is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

J. ADJOURNMENT – Adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry M. Kelly
City Clerk

Approved at the Council meeting of April 1, 2008