



City of East Palo Alto ACTION MINUTES

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL/STAFF WORK SESSION

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

Time: 6:00PM – 9:00PM

**Special Council Closed Session 6:00p.m. – 6:15p.M.
Special Redevelopment Agency Item 6:15p.m.-6:30p.m.
Special Council/RDA & City Staff Work Session 6:30p.m.-
9:00p.m.
1960 Tate Street, East Palo Alto**

6:00PM

Special City Council Closed Session

Special Council Closed Session Call to Order And Roll Call

Present: Woods, Rutherford, Foster, Evans, Abrica

1. **Special Closed Session Public Comments (*Please Limit Your Comments to Agenda Item Only*): None**
 - A. **Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9**
 1. **WindRiver et al. v. City of East Palo Alto**

Report Out: City Attorney Lawson stated item was discussed and no reportable action taken.

Adjournment

6:15PM

Special Redevelopment Agency Item

Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Woods, Rutherford, Foster, Evans, Abrica

ACTION: Motion/Second: Foster/Rutherford Vote: 5-0

2. Policy and Action Items

A. Redevelopment Agency Resolution

1. R617- Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to execute an amended and restated Exclusive Negotiating Rights Agreement (ENRA) with Blake Hunt Ventures Inc.,

(BHV) to extend it 90 days, with the Executive Director authorized to extend it an additional 90-days, for a total of 180 days

Recommendation: That the Redevelopment Agency Approve the Resolution

ACTION: Motion/Second: Foster/Rutherford Vote: 5-0

6:30PM Session Special City Council/RDA & City Staff Work

- 3. City Council/RDA & City Staff Work Session Items**
 - A. Review of City Council Priorities/Objectives**
 - B. City Departmental Reports/Response to Council Priorities**
 - C. Current Mandated Priorities/Projects**
 - D. Budget Information**

ACTION: Attached is the compilation of work session information as written and forwarded by Shauna Wilson, Session Facilitator – Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center

ADJOURNMENT

Attachment: 03-14-06 EPA Council/RDA Work Study Session Document
As produced by the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center

East Palo Alto City Council/City Staff Work Session

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

1960 Tate St. in University Square East Palo Alto

6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Purpose of session: City report and response to City Council priorities. City Staff and City Council Communication and Collaboration

Present: Mayor Abrica, Vice Mayor: Evans, Council Members: Foster, Rutherford and Woods, City Manager: James, Deputy City Clerk: Warren, City Attorney: Lawson

Facilitator Notes:

Approval of notes from 2/4/06 Council work session: PCRC Facilitation notes from the work session were sent to Council members on 2.9.06. The notes were standard facilitation notes and not formatted as East Palo Alto City Council official minutes. Vice Mayor Evans had not previously submitted edits and requested some changes be made to the notes. Vice Mayor Evans would like the official minutes to include Council Members and officials present, and Council Members comments listed with their title instead of their first name. Council Members will send to PCRC any edits to the unofficial 2/4/06 summary within a week. PCRC will incorporate these edits and return to the Deputy City Clerk for formatting into official City Council Minutes.

Overview of City Council Priority Objectives:

City Manager: Alvin James outlined the City Council objectives and the staff presentation outline for City Council/City Staff special meeting. Staff reports were included in Council packet as well as a spread sheet highlighting how council priorities set at the February meeting matched with current City projects.

Outline for City Manager, Department Heads, and City Attorney presentations

- Projects departments are currently working
 - a. Current projects which are also Council priorities
 - b. Projects not Council priorities
 - i. Actions necessary to complete
 - ii. Federal or State mandate
- Resource needs to address priority
 - a. funding available
 - b. what may have to be cut in order to fund other projects outside funding source
- Challenges
 - a. Potential restraints
 - b. Staffing

Public Works: Mr. Anthony Docto:

Role of Public Works is to maintain, inspect, design and implement City's plan for

infrastructure, and make sure the City infrastructure complies with all City, State and Federal regulations. The Department needs a plan for ADA Compliance. Department is currently operating at 60-65 % of authorized strength in administration, engineering and maintenance. The Challenge is in taking on new priorities with the staff shortage. Staff cannot keep up with current demands. Department asks Council to further define priorities given the staff constraints. **Questions from Council:**

1. If Public Works does not have 2 engineering staff members how does department keep up with engineering work?

ANSWER: Department cannot keep up. Public concerns have been raised about the slow turn around rate. Perhaps staff could use consultants or other staff to meet this need.

2. Is contract with Star Landscaping on-going?

ANSWER: Department cannot end this contract without additional staff.

3. Is Dept. recruiting new engineers? **ANSWER: Dept is working with Human Resources to identify appropriate candidates**

City Manager: Since a number of departments are currently understaffed City Manager Alvin James suggested the Council hear from the Assistant City Manager, Human Resources Director: ML Gordon next.

Human Resources Director: Mr. ML Gordon.

Human Resources Department assists the City in:

- assessing labor relations, compensation plans, training, evaluations, recruitment, benefits packages, risk management (safety, health, liability), retirement, and employee terminations, lay offs or other terminations.

- budget development

- city process improvements

- Boards: ABAG, Risk Management Board, City Managers of San Mateo County
The City authorized strength of 138.4 positions. There are currently vacancies due to budget constraints. Some departments hire temporary or provisional staff while conducting on-going recruitment. Mr. Gordon provided some examples of how the Human Resources Dept. works with other City Departments.

Public Works is recruiting an Associate Engineer, Inspector and additional engineer for a total of three positions. HR completed a list of eligible candidates in November and turned the list over to the Public Works department for interviewing within 20 days. HR will process the selected candidates.

A lot of energy and focus is going to fill 6 open positions on the Police Department. In the first orientation and recruitment round no eligible candidates passed the Police Department background check. Four to Six candidates passed the second orientation and recruitment round. They should be hired within the next couple of months.

The Human Resources department has hired an HR administrator. The Department must follow Memorandums of Understanding with City Unions. The SEIU is the largest. They review job descriptions. HR is working with the unions to overcome any delays.

Questions from Council:

1. How does community know about opportunities to apply to the Police Department and Academy? **ANSWER:** Advertisements and announcements in local newspapers and TV and radio, ie: San Mateo County Times and Channel 5. **Council Suggestion:** put ads in Palo Alto Daily News, Palo Alto Weekly and San Jose Mercury. **ACTION ITEM:** HR Dept will place press job announcements/press releases in Council boxes and packets.

2. What are obstacles to getting staff filled? **ANSWER:** EPA is competitive in compensation, but not in benefits. EPA offers retirement of 2% at 60. Other Cities offer 3% at 55 or 2% at 55. HR is working on a proposal to become more competitive within the current budget. Public Works Director added that he has heard from others the compensation package is the big issue for potential hires, as well as the commute, and cost of living.

PCRC Facilitator, Shauna Wilson remarked the Public Works Department and Human Resources Department presentations took 30 minutes. She asked the Council if they would like to adjust the agenda to go longer to accommodate the other department presentations, or reschedule some of the presentations for a later date. Council Members did not want exceed the time limit. Ms. Wilson suggested the City Manager, and City Attorney offer presentations at a future City Council Meeting. City Manager James added the Finance Department is scheduled for the March 21, 2006 City Council meeting.

Council agreed to hear from the City Manager, City Attorney and Finance Department at another time. Department presentation continued with this modification.

Police Department: *Mr. Ron Davis*

Major duty is the facilitation of public safety services. The #1 challenge is staffing. A lot of overtime is required and it is not sustainable. The Police Dept. is currently contracted with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. The streamlined HR process has been very helpful. PD is emphasizing high quality in the selection of potential police recruits. Chief Davis is feeling hopeful about the current candidates in line. At least 4 in line are good options. The Crime Analyst position is currently filled with temporary staff. PD is working in collaboration with City Code Enforcement in cleaning graffiti, blight and abandoned vehicles. PD is also working on disaster preparedness and collaborating with other City staff to best serve the community. A plan to eliminate the need for a contract

with the Sheriff will reduce costs.

Questions from Council:

1. Does Lt. Sibley have expertise to be working on flood issues?

ANSWER: Lt. Sibley is leading representative from PD, in collaboration with other Departments on disaster response. He is not someone contributing technical expertise in disaster. **ANSWER:** City Manager reminded Council that a previous Council had appointed Lt. Sibley as the point person for disaster response in his role as a 1st responder. PD facilitates this function but others contribute expertise.

Building Department: Mr. Chris Gale

Mr. Gale handed out a report card on the department and highlighted aspects of the report. The Building Department works on things the Police Department and Public Works does not cover. The highest need in the Building Department is in the administrative function, such as record keeping. The Department is functioning better than ever because of the improved permitting process, and the City's ability to collect taxes.

Questions from Council:

1. Is the Department doing proactive enforcement?

ANSWER: It depends if it is in the budget to fill vacant positions and expand (add admin, additional code enforcement and dedicated plan checker.) The Department is starting fresh. Previously done in relations with CSG.

2. Does Department have a public works inspector?

ANSWER: The Public works inspector is in the Public Works Dept.

3. How many staff does your department need in order to improve?

ANSWER: We need 5 more staff. We are approved for 2 more staff.

4. Is there a record management system?

ANSWER: No. We are working on getting it computerized now. The records were not kept in the Department in the past. We are having trouble finding all the records.

Community Service Department: Mr. Meda Okelo

The Community Service Department is working on a number of projects. One project is the After School Programs. The programs are supported through grants for arts programs. The CS Dept. has not yet been able to hire positions for this program. The Dept. has been experiencing challenges with background checks. The CSD now has a list to interview. The Dept is collaborating with the School District on a sports program. The CSD has a goal of sending out a quarterly Activity Guide. A Summer Guide will be

available. The Community Service Dept. is partnering with other agencies on special events.

- College Fair
- Senior Center and Senior lunch program
- Ravenswood Health Clinic
- Future Search
- Assisting sports leagues
- Transportation for youth and seniors

CSD provided a handout for answers to additional questions on resources and constraints.

Questions from Council:

1. Why do we need a human needs assessment? We just need programs and we know how to do that. What will we do about the gym being torn down?

ANSWER: While we do know about programs, a human needs assessment covers more than that. **COUNCIL COMMENT:** Parks and Recreation has gotten lost in all the other activity. The Department needs to generate recreation programs. **COUNCIL COMMENT:** Council made request for a human needs assessment. Council requested a needs assessment to evaluate the needs of the homeless, returning inmates and displaced residents. The proposed cost does however seem high.

Redevelopment: Mr. Carlos Martinez

The department is working to:

- Abate blight within redevelopment areas.
- Meet bond obligations
- Economic development activities
- Sales tax generation
- Keep balance of revenue stream

The largest revenue is generated through retail sales – 90% of the sales tax is from a few retail businesses. Focus on developing small businesses, industry, and live/work spaces. The goal is to develop business directory, business incubator and recognizing large businesses. Bring in support for small business development.

Planning Department: Ms. Maria Banico

- Public information, meeting with developers, realtors
- Permit processing
- Formulation of land use policy
- Make sure following State and Federal laws

- Coordinate Building, engineering and related departments there is a staffing issue.

The Department needs 8 full time staff to be a 1st class dept. Currently have 4 staff. Because of the understaffing, the permit process is slower, and there are

more complaints and errors. Consultants are used and are a shared expense of City and Developers. Permit Center staff are not needed full time, but there is a coordination issue with other departments. Some permits require 9 months to 2 years because of regulations. Additional challenges:

- Training
- Restricted work space. Work space slows work down now.
- Rules and regulations are old and need to be updated
- Need clear guidance from decision makers (Council and Commissions)
- Charged with developing processes for dept. coordination

Questions from Council:

1. How many staff budgeted?

ANSWER: four to five planners and one secretary.

2. How do we adjust what we do with what we have and still be 1st class?

ANSWER: Prioritizing what is most important and what public demands. It may mean giving up advanced planning.

3. When we had consultant in the Planning Department, thought the consultant was for training.

ANSWER: When people were trained they went to other Cities. Developers were charged the consultant fee of \$200,000. The City cut a senior planner from the budget.

Housing Department: *Mr. Wilbert Lee*

Administers affordable housing programs, and informs public about the programs. Department manages the housing waiting list for Below Market Rate units and other projects. Five units at the Commons are under contract. Additional projects are coming on line soon. The City will be offering workshops to inform the public about housing opportunities and criteria and requirements. The rent stabilization program continues. Tenants can petition about rental issues. There is a need for people between 35 – 50% AMI for rental opportunities. Between 2006 – 2008 approximately 30 BMR's will become available. This is not enough to serve the current need.

Council and City staff discussed some of the issues presented and potential trade offs and consequences. Issues will be further discussed on a future agenda.

Next Steps:

- City Clerk: *Ms. Minnie Warren* will provide a report to City Council on 3/21
- Finance Department: *Ms. Stephanie Osaze*, will be presenting a mid-year report on 3/21 to City Council
- City Manager: *Mr. Alvin James* will provide information on the City Budget at a future City Council meeting
- City Attorney: *Mr. Michael Lawson*, will be providing a written report on work beyond what has been previously reported at a future date to be set
- Council members will email PCRC any edits they have to the unofficial February 4th facilitation notes. PCRC will incorporate these edits and send the notes to the Deputy City Clerk for formatting into official minutes.

Public Forum/Comments from the Public:

Ms. Lorraine Holmes, resident of East Palo Alto commented on the graffiti on the levee and pump stations.

Mr. Stacy Smith, resident of East Palo Alto stated that a lot of the discussion tonight covered the same information a consultant brought up in 2002. He said he feels the pain of not progressing.

Ms. Keisha Evans, resident of East Palo Alto asked about the old BMR List.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM

Meeting facilitated by:
Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center 650-513-0330 www.pcrweb.org