

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, March 23, 2009

***MINUTES***

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Hidden Hills was duly held in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, 6165 Spring Valley Road, Hidden Hills, California 91302 on Monday, March 23, 2009 at the hour of 7:30 p.m. Mayor Steve Freedland called the meeting to order and presided thereover after leading the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Council:

Mayor Steve Freedland  
Mayor Pro Tem Larry Weber  
Council Member Monty E. Fisher  
Council Member Jim Cohen  
Council Member Stuart E. Siegel

Staff:

City Engineer Dirk Lovett  
City Manager Cherie L. Paglia

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the March 23, 2009 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Freedland made the following announcements:

The Council would like to wish Mayor Pro Tem Weber a quick recovery from his knee surgery scheduled for Tuesday.

On behalf of the Council he would like to wish a very happy birthday to Council Member Siegel (this Wednesday).

Passover begins at sundown on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Congratulations to Deputy City Clerk Deana Graybill, who will celebrate her 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the City on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Easter will be celebrated on Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **OATH OF OFFICE TO CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECT**

The City Manager stated the following:

The City was scheduled to hold an election for the two Council seats currently held by Mayor Freedland and Council Member Cohen on March 3, 2009; since no one filed for those seats other than the two incumbents, the election was cancelled; this saved the City approximately \$10,000 - \$12,000; even though the election was cancelled, the two incumbents are considered elected; they thus have to take the oath of office to begin their new four year terms.

### **A. Administration of Oath of Office by Judge John Doyle and Presentation of Certificates of Election**

Mayor Freedland introduced his friend and resident Judge John Doyle, and thanked him for taking time to attend this meeting. Judge Doyle then administered the oath of office individually to Jim Cohen and Steve Freedland, both of whom were presented with a Certificate of Election by Judge Doyle.

**B. Remarks from City Council Members Elect**

Council Member Cohen was hopeful that he had served the City competently and loyally for the last four years, which he would strive to continue to do during these next four years; he added that it was both an honor and a responsibility to serve on the Council.

Mayor Freedland commented that the City is very fortunate to have such a competent staff, with whom it is a pleasure to work. He stated it was also a pleasure to work with the other four Council Members, all of whom he has great respect for, and that he is looking forward to the next four years.

**REORGANIZATION OF CITY COUNCIL**

**A. Selection of Mayor**

Mayor Freedland asked for nominations for the Mayor position. Council Member Fisher nominated Mayor Pro Tem Weber, with that nomination being seconded by Council Member Cohen.

Mayor Pro Tem Weber stated the following:

He would like to express his thanks for the nomination, but he would like to decline the nomination at this time; he was elected to the Council only two years ago, and during his acceptance speech at that time, he believes he said he would do the best job he could for the City; he also believes he could be a good Mayor, but not as good a Mayor now as he could be with a little more experience; if the Council would find it acceptable, he would like to serve another year as Mayor Pro Tem (or as a Council Member if the Council chooses), and then possibly in a year, move up to the Mayor's seat.

Mayor Pro Tem Weber then nominated Steve Freedland to continue to serve another year as the Mayor, with that nomination being seconded by Council Member Siegel. There being no other nominations, it was resolved to close the nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Mayor Freedland, electing him to serve another year in that position.

**B. Selection of Mayor Pro Tem**

Mayor Freedland then asked for nominations for the Mayor Pro Tem position. Council Member Fisher nominated Larry Weber to continue to serve another year as the Mayor Pro Tem, with that nomination being seconded by Council Member Siegel. There being no other nominations, it was resolved to close the nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Mayor Pro Tem Weber, electing him to serve another year in that position.

**C. Remarks by Incoming Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem**

Mayor Freedland and Mayor Pro Tem Weber had no additional comments at this time, other than to thank the Council Members for their support in having them continue in their respective positions.

**AUDIENCE**

There were no comments or questions at this time.

**PRESENTATION**

**Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Water Supply Update**

LVMWD Public Affairs and Communications Manager Jeff Reinhardt provided an update on water conditions in the State and in this area, pointing out the following:

At the end of February, the Governor said the drought conditions were a crisis that needed to be treated with urgency; we are entering the third year of substandard rainfall across the state; the existing reservoirs and basins that store water in the Central Valley do have water, but have not been replenished for the last two or three years while water has been drained from them; 2/3 of water falls in northern California, but 2/3 of the population live in southern California, where water has to be transported; the San Joaquin/Sacramento Delta has environmental issues, one of which involves a small 2" fish that is a poor swimmer called a smelt; in addition to pumping water to southern California, there are also problems with pesticides, fertilizers from farming, draining water for farming, and recently discovered large amounts of ammonia in the water being discharged from the Sacramento wastewater facility; the long fin smelt is also stressed, and the salmon population has crashed, so much so that there will probably be no salmon fishing allowed anywhere in the state; the water reserves are still below normal (at about

80%) and with elevated snow levels, water is evaporating or being absorbed cutting down on runoff; the Delta pumping restraints will remain in place and could get even worse; in a normal year, we could see 70% - 90% allocation from the State Water Project; this past week they raised the allocation from 15% to 20%, with the Central Valley farmers getting nothing; at an April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Metropolitan Water District will probably declare a drought between 10% - 20%, which means everyone in the LVMWD area will have to reduce usage accordingly; 70% of the water served in this region is used outdoors, so this usage will have to be curtailed; the base allocation for indoor use across a 2-month billing period will be 16 units per family, plus a budget for outdoor use based on the size of the parcel; a higher allocation would be provided in the summer than in the winter, and if someone exceeds the given amount, there would be extra charges; how the water is used will be up to the customers; to provide an equitable allocation, there cannot be a flat percentage cut across the board, as that would just punish those who have been conserving water all along; they are still working out individual budgets, as they need software conversions, plus they don't know what Metropolitan will declare; in the interim, they have adopted certain measures which do have the force of law; these have been shared with customers; they do not want to do this, but there will be noncompliance measures, with the first being a written notice, as they do want to educate; for a second violation the fine will be \$50, for a third violation \$100, for a fourth violation \$250, and for a fifth the general manager has the option to install a flow restrictor or terminate service; there is a 24-hour conservation hotline number 818.251.2180 to report water waste; they will also be offering rebate programs and educational information on their website (LVMWD.com) and the Metropolitan Water District website (Bewaterwise.com); everyone is going to have to rethink water usage.

Council Member Siegel wished to know how much of the water drought was represented by the smelt problem, with Mr. Reinhardt responding as follows:

The pumping has been reduced by about 30%, with talk of it being reduced even more; and it is not just straight across the board; the pumping cannot happen even when the smelt are in a certain proximity to the pumps, which is driven by the temperature and salinity of the water, etc.; this is about the taking of an endangered species, and is a significant part of the problem, called a judicial drought.

Council Member Siegel then asked about the drainage of his koi pond, which has to be done every once in awhile, and whether or not that would bring out the "water police". Mr. Reinhardt suggested the water be used for irrigation, but if that wasn't possible, this would not be considered an egregious run-off – they are looking more for water geysers, constant run-off, etc.

Council Member Siegel, who initiated the email/fax notification to residents on rainy days to remind them to turn off sprinklers, would also like information from the Water District that could be presented to residents regarding the smart sprinkler systems. Council Member Siegel felt all of the residents would like this information, including himself personally, and that the information would be a benefit to the community, making sure plants were only being watered when they needed water.

Mr. Reinhardt stated the following:

As a public agency, they cannot recommend a particular product or company, but he will certainly provide any information they have on the smart sprinkler systems; he would suggest that residents look for a conservation certified contractor to install such a system; they are also scheduling community meetings to discuss the water situation and to answer any questions residents may have, with one of those community meetings being scheduled in Hidden Hills at the Community Theater; that meeting will be announced to the community; there will also be an appeals process, as all situations are not the same and may not be covered by the rules; there will also be an allowance for equestrians.

In response to Mayor Freedland, Mr. Reinhardt confirmed that notification for the fee schedule will be mailed directly to each customer. Mr. Reinhardt also thanked the City staff for all its help in working with the Water District to disseminate as much information as possible. The Council thanked Mr. Reinhardt for his time, and for the update.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **A. Los Angeles County Fire Department Report - February**

The following report was provided by Community Services Representative Maria Grycan:

During the month of February there were no fires but 6 responses including 2 medical, 1 false alarm/good intent, 2 public assists (helping an invalid and a water problem), and 1 hazardous condition with no fire, that being a non-injury traffic collision; all of the fire hydrants within the City have been inspected; no plans were checked; there were 4 fire prevention bureau inspections, all of which were probably in the City of Calabasas; the Department also provided CERT training in Hidden Hills; the classes ended Saturday with a combined drill of the Hidden Hills class attendees and the Agoura Hills CERT class attendees; the Hidden Hills City Hall is a good facility for conducting drills, and she

would like to thank the City for allowing them to use it; approximately 15 students from Hidden Hills attended the CERT classes, with probably 10 completing the class; the others have some modules to make up before completing the training.

**B. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Report - February**

Lt. John Benedict presented the following report:

There were two incidents in February; a garage burglary occurred in the 25100 block of Jim Bridger, with an unknown person entering the closed garage and slashing two tires; items were taken from an unlocked vehicle in the 5500 block of Paradise Valley; four false alarms occurred during the month; in relation to traffic, there was one collision on Eldorado Meadow Road and Spring Valley, with a motorist hitting a parked vehicle; 37 citations were issued, of which 26 were hazardous, 6 non-hazardous, and 5 parking; one dangerous driver was reported to STTOP.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. City Council Minutes – March 9, 2009**
- B. Demand List**
- C. Disbursement List – February**
- D. Financial/Treasurer's Report – February**

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Fisher and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to approve items A, B, C, and D of the consent calendar as submitted.

**MATTERS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Report from 3/17/09 Hidden Hills Community Association Board of Directors Meeting**

Association Board President and City liaison Ron Wolfe provided the following report:

It was a fairly quiet meeting; several events have been announced, including 1) ride to school week from 4/27 – 5/1, 2) the Hidden Hills triathlon on 5/17, and 3) the adult welcome party, which will be a casino night, on 5/30; new windows were approved for the Burbank gatehouse.

Mayor Freedland asked about an item on the Board agenda that was tabled regarding fencing around the City Hall parking lot. Mr. Wolfe explained the following:

The Association does have plans to install fencing around the City Hall and parking lot; the item was tabled since the new budget will not be in effect for another three months and to also give time for the Association and City staff to coordinate efforts; right now, anyone can park in the City Hall parking lot and walk into the City and down to the Spring Valley Park; four bids have been received for the work; the Association is reviewing those bids in order to submit a grant request to the City for assistance with the costs.

Mayor Freedland expressed the following concerns regarding perimeter fencing:

He often walks on a trail off of Jim Bridger, behind the Bashor property, that separates Hidden Hills from the Mountain View dedicated open space property; there is no perimeter fencing in this area; he has seen people walking into the City in this location from the Mesivta property, and is also aware that there have been some recent problems with paparazzi on these hillsides; he wondered if the Board had discussed adding perimeter fencing, perhaps a 6' chain link fence, on this border.

Mr. Wolfe responded as follows:

They have not had any recent discussions about fencing in this area, although they have put up perimeter fencing in some other areas where there were problems; the area in question is next to property on which there should not be people coming and going; they can certainly address this issue again, but to install fencing in this area would be very costly; a recent bid he obtained for another location was about \$30,000 for 100' of fencing, and this area could cost in the millions; working with the City staff, the Association was able to obtain Sheriff assistance to remove trespassers from the Mountain View property, whether the complaints come from Hidden Hills residents, the gate guards, or the HHCA.

The City Manager provided the following additional information:

The Association asked for assistance when it was discovered that paparazzi were climbing the fence on Mureau Road, and walking up onto the hillsides on the Mountain View property with their telephoto lenses focused on Hidden Hills; normally the owner of a property has to call the Sheriff to ask for trespassers to be removed; but the City's liaison Lt. Benedict suggested that a general letter of agency could be submitted to resolve that problem; the letter lists those that, per the owner, are authorized to call the Sheriff to remove the trespassers; such a letter was submitted, so in addition to the owner of the property, the Sheriff can also be called by the Association, the gate guards, or any of the Hidden Hills residents.

## **MATTERS FROM STAFF**

### **Charles Abbott Monthly Report – February**

The report was received and filed.

At this time (8:18 p.m.), Mayor Freedland called for a short recess and invited all those in attendance to join the Council for a reception and refreshments in honor of the newly elected Council Members. The meeting was reconvened by Mayor Freedland at 8:48 p.m., with Council Member Fisher no longer in attendance.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

### **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

**A. Potential Initiation of Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(c):  
Number of Potential Cases: 2**

**B. Anticipated Litigation:  
Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(b)  
Number of Potential Cases: 1  
The City has received a claim from the County of Los Angeles regarding the discharge of stormwater and non-stormwater in the Los Angeles basin. A copy of that claim is available for public inspection at City Hall.**

At this time, City Attorney Roxanne Diaz joined the meeting by telephone. Upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Weber, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn to closed session at 8:49 p.m., at which time the Mayor announced that the Council in closed session would be discussing the items listed above.

Upon MOTION of Council Member Cohen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weber and unanimously carried, it was resolved to return to open session at 9:20 p.m., at which time City Attorney Diaz announced that the Council in closed session discussed the items listed above, and that no reportable action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of March 23, 2009 at 9:21 p.m.

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Steve Freedland, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk