

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, April 27, 2015

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, April 27, 2015 at the hour of 7:30 p.m. Mayor Larry Weber called the meeting to order and presided thereover after leading the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council:

Mayor Larry G. Weber
Mayor Pro Tem Jim Cohen
Council Member Steve Freedland
Council Member Marv Landon
Council Member Stuart E. Siegel

Staff:

City Engineer Dirk Lovett
Water Quality Consultant Joe Bellomo
City Manager Cherie L. Paglia

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Siegel suggested that items 7A and 7B be addressed right after item 6A. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cohen and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the April 27, 2015 regular meeting be approved as amended.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Weber made the following announcements:

Happy birthday to Public Safety Commissioner Martin Zane today.

The HHCA's welcome party for new residents will be Saturday, May 9th, from 7:00 p.m. until midnight; call the Association for more information.

Don't forget Mothers' Day on Sunday, May 10th.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, on behalf of the Council, wished a very happy anniversary to Mayor Larry Weber and his wife Nanette Walden (their 30th).

AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

A. To Sergeant Phil Brooks in Recognition of His Retirement from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

On behalf of the City Council, staff, and residents, Mayor Weber presented a City plaque to Sergeant Phil Brooks, who recently retired, in appreciation of his 32 years of service to the Sheriff's Department and his extraordinary dedication and expertise provided over the years, especially in the area of traffic, to the City of Hidden Hills.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Los Angeles County Fire Department Report - March

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

there were 12 responses during the month of March, including 3 medical responses, 5 good intent calls, 3 service calls (2 snake removals and 1 public assist), and 1 trash fire on Round Meadow Road; the Fire Prevention Bureau conducted 6 inspections, and 4 plans were checked; the Fire Department's Urban Search & Rescue task force, which includes quite a few firefighters from Battalion 5, is going to Katmandu, along with a

team from Fairfax, Virginia (the only two international teams in the country); they landed in Germany just hours ago.

Mayor Weber asked about the upcoming fire season, with Ms. Grycan responding as follows:

they are always ready; in fact they had a strike team staffed in this region last night and today, due to the winds; they did assist the L.A. City Fire Department today with the Granada Hills fire; there was also a small brush fire in Topanga just a short time ago caused by a vehicle that went over the side of the road; brush inspections will be starting in May.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, Ms. Grycan stated that the Fire Department is not doing anything special in relation to the water shortage, other than doing their part to conserve water, as everyone is being asked to do.

B. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Report - March

Deputy Robert DeSantis presented the following report:

during the month of March there were no Part I crimes, but two incidents of domestic violence along Round Meadow Road (in one the suspect assaulted his wife, and in the other the suspect assaulted his girlfriend); both of these cases are ongoing; a Los Angeles resident was arrested on Long Valley Road for driving on a suspended license and having an unregistered vehicle; 39 citations were issued with 26 of those being hazardous (mostly for failure to stop at a stop sign, which is always a concern), 5 non-hazardous, and 8 parking; in regards to Sergeant Phil Brooks' retirement, that is a great loss for the Department.

At this time, there were numerous questions from the audience and Council, which Deputy DeSantis answered as follows:

citations that are called hazardous refer to traffic violations that are more dangerous, such as running a red light or failure to stop at a stop sign, as opposed to other violations such as talking on a cell phone; the STTOP program has been expanded to include not just teens, but also adults; if you see a dangerous driver, you should get the license plate number and call the Station; you may get a recording, but someone will get the message and return your call if necessary; Deputies often visit the home of those drivers reported, and if the behavior persists after that, they will pursue it further; this program has been very effective, as are other programs such as the Every 15 Minutes program, in helping to reduce speeding, which is the number one cause of accidents (not DUIs); he has been getting questions about pedestrians walking in the middle of the street; logic says you

should walk against traffic; in general, the concern is the inattention of drivers, who might sometimes go after a pedestrian blocking the way; in this City, you also have to be very cautious of the horses, so everyone should be encouraged to always be aware and alert; there are also problems with bicyclists, some of whom violate the laws, such as running through red lights or stop signs; the Sheriff can cite both pedestrians and bicyclists; bicyclists are supposed to stay within any bike lane, such as the lane along Mureau Road; when there are big groups of cyclists, they often do go outside the lane; the law does say to share the road; in relation to speeding, it is easier for the Motors, which are shared by the area cities, to enforce violations; citations do work, especially since the penalties are much more expensive now.

The City Manager provided additional information:

to report an incident to the STTOP program, you can call the Station directly, per Deputy DeSantis, but the City also has a form that you can fill out; that form can be picked up at City Hall, or staff can email it to you; when a resident calls City Hall to complain about anything, we always ask the caller for their name, just to make sure the call is legitimate; however, the caller's information is not given out; in relation to pedestrians walking in the middle of the street, there will be an item in the City's upcoming newsletter; the item asks for walkers to be courteous and to move for vehicles, but for vehicles to also be courteous and slow down for pedestrians, horses, etc.

Deputy DeSantis had some additional comments:

when someone calls the Station, the person taking the call will ask for the caller's name and number in case there are questions or additional information is needed to help them resolve the issue; however, callers can remain totally anonymous, as they would rather have someone call anonymously than not call at all; residents should know that the Sheriff will respond to all calls, even if they end up being false alarm calls; residents should never feel like they are bothering the Sheriff's Department, as that is what they are there for.

PRESENTATIONS

B. Las Virgenes Municipal Water District's Mandatory Water Conservation/Drought Response

Mayor Weber introduced Jeff Reinhardt, Public Affairs and Communication Manager, who introduced Board Member and Hidden Hills resident Charlie Caspary. Mr. Reinhardt, along with Mr. Caspary, presented a great deal of information regarding the drought, how the District is

responding, the water supply, water usage, state and local regulations regarding that usage, and how residents will be affected (copies of that presentation are available at City Hall). During and after the presentation, there were a lot of questions from both the Council Members and packed audience, with some of the issues raised and points made being as follows:

we are now entering the fourth year of the drought; if the drought continues long enough, it could result in no water being provided for outdoor irrigation; there will be greater mandatory water reductions for areas with higher gallons per capita use per day, which includes our region, resulting in the LVMWD being required to reduce usage by 36%; since 70% of water used in this region is used outdoors, if everyone can cut their outdoor usage in half, that would almost meet that required 36%; there will be no ban on new construction, but new homes will have to have water efficient appliances and drip or microspray systems for any outdoor potable water irrigation; the LVMWD Board will be imposing additional regulations including 2 days/week watering with a 15 minute limit at each station; residents may have to start making very tough decisions on what is sustainable and what is not; there will have to be enforcement, mainly for egregious use of water; if enforcement is necessary, it can start with a warning letter, then fines that can escalate to \$500, and finally flow restriction devices or termination of service; however, the District is really asking for and would prefer community cooperation; residents can anonymously report serious problems by taking a picture of the problem with a cell phone (with the GPS on) and send it to the District (it helps to have the address, but that is not necessary); it is very important to find and take control of your irrigation controller, since many landscapers are only concerned about providing owners with a beautiful and green yard, not saving water; they still have conservation rebates, including a very successful "Mow No Mow" lawn replacement program (\$2/square foot), which now does allow artificial turf as a replacement; real grass needs approximately 5' of water per year; in the future, water budgets will be determined for each individual residence based on the number of people living in the home (the standard water amount is 55 gallons per person per day), plus the irrigated area of the property, and then any necessary adjustments (elderly care, horses, etc.); part of this will be determined from aerial photos, but also from a form completed by each resident; the indoor budget will remain consistent, while the outdoor budget will vary depending on the time of year; hopefully this will be a fair way to determine water allocations, especially for those who have already done so much to conserve water and have no other options left to cut back, as would someone who has not been conserving; billing will switch from every other month to monthly.

The discussion continued with additional questions and the following information being provided:

some residents would like to have the option of using recycled water on their property (currently there is only one recycled line serving the City at the top of Lasher Road); as this was studied at one time, District personnel will check on that possibility and provide additional information to the City staff; swimming pools use about as much water as a lawn, but there are no restrictions on pools at this time; it will probably be around mid- to late May or June when all the new District regulations will officially go into effect, but any water saved starting now will help; the State Water Board will be voting on the final set of emergency regulations called for by the Governor on May 5th or 6th, to be effective June 1st; the Diamond Valley Lake Reservoir was built in the late 1990s near Hemet, and that is one of the things that has been helping to sustain the District; it was at 800,000 acre feet when full, but is now down to 40% capacity; the possibility of building additional or expanding existing reservoirs in the state is being looked at, as adding to storage capacity is a target, but that will not happen overnight; desalination is not going to be a magic bullet, but may be part of the solution; it is very costly, as a lot of electricity is needed to operate a plant; one plant is being built now in Carlsbad at a cost of \$1 billion, and will provide only 1/8 of the water needed by San Diego; there were wells in Hidden Hills years ago, and if there are wells on a property now, the LVMWD does not regulate them, other than to require a back flow device; however, the water is of very poor quality (and per one resident who looked into digging a well, full of horse urine); some residents have completed research on properly drilling a well, which would be allowed by the City with the required permits; gray water systems (water from dishwashers, kitchen sinks, washing machines, etc. - but not the toilet) require changes in plumbing and are regulated by the County Department of Public Health; however, sewer water from residences connected to the District's sewer system is already treated and recycled; if a resident needs to drain a pool, you do not need permission from the District, but of course refilling it will raise your water usage; if the pool water sits for a few days, it will declorinate and can then be used for irrigation (although the salt can be harmful to some plants) or put into the sewer system to be recycled; a recent court decision regarding tiered rate structures in San Juan Capistrano (where the tier 4 rate was 2.5x higher than the LVMWD's tier 4 rates), at this time only pertains to Orange County; however the implication of that case is that tiered rates need to be justified in relation to costs; LVMWD feels its tiered rates are justified, but the District will be moving away from tiered rates anyway when switching to the budget based system; there will be different budgets for different residences, and it is still unit based, but if you live within your budget, you will pay the lowest rates; efficient water use is the main focus.

As there were no further questions, Mr. Reinhardt and Mr. Caspary wished to make several final comments:

the District will be having workshops on how the budget based system will work, and they will hopefully hold one of those workshops in Hidden Hills; they would ask that

everyone stay current on these water issues, which are unfolding daily; residents and their decisions and actions regarding these water issues are very important; even the little things, like shutting the water off when you brush your teeth can add up to large water savings; in the LVMWD service area, people are using 50% more water per person than people who live in Beverly Hills; it is very important to try to cut outside water usage by 50%, as the District does not want to waste \$10,000/day of residents' money to cover fines; customers can log onto the District's website to look at their customer records and water consumption; if you look back at June of 2013, this will be the starting point from which the 36% reduction is to occur; the District staff will be given authority to recognize those who have already cut their usage substantially; the District has good data, and they are trying to be fair; everyone needs to raise their consciousness, and share this information with neighbors and friends.

Mr. Reinhardt thanked the Council and everyone for their time, and invited them to a free tour of the District's water distribution facility this coming Saturday, with Mayor Weber highly recommending the tour.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. City Council Minutes - March 23, 2015**
- B. City Council Minutes - April 13, 2015**
- C. Demand List**
- D. Disbursement List - March**
- E. Financial/Treasurer's Report - March**

Upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, seconded by Council Member Landon and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to approve items A, B, C, D, and E of the consent calendar as submitted.

MATTERS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- A. Report from 4/21/15 Hidden Hills Community Association Board of Directors Meeting**

The following report was provided by Community Association Board Member and City liaison Bret Katz:

the Board approved budgets for both the kids welcome party to be held on June 13th and the new resident party scheduled for May 9th; they would really like to see a large

turnout for this event, as it is one of the most important besides the summer BBQs; two variances were approved, one at 24922 Jim Bridger, and the other at 25005 Lewis & Clark; the Board toasted new Mayor Larry Weber; additional parkway renovations on Jed Smith were authorized; they approved the expenditure of \$187,000+ to continue slurry sealing additional roads; the new landscaping at the Community Center is still a work in progress, so they would like any ideas from residents; there are some basic drawings available for review.

Council Member Freedland said he believed there were three residents on Jed Smith, one of whom called him, that did not have their parkways redone; he referred them to the Association, and wanted to make sure the Board was aware of their concerns. Mr. Katz suggested that there were probably more than three, and they would be taken care of, as the Board approved around \$50,000 for those renovations.

Mayor Weber and Council Member Freedland had questions regarding whether or not the landscaping plans for the Community Center included grass, a hybrid grass that might use less water, or AstroTurf, rather than drought resistant plants, since so many activities occur in the current grassy area. Mr. Katz stated that they were working very closely with Park West, who has a hydrologist and other very knowledgeable people on staff, to determine what will work best in the different areas, including the horse facilities, especially in light of the drought conditions.

B. Report from 4/21/15 Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments Meeting

Council Member Siegel reported that those at the COG meeting heard the same presentation by the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District given earlier this evening, and also approved a resolution adopting the Las Virgenes-Malibu Regional Bicycle Master Plan.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

A. Update and Discussion Regarding the Proposed Utility Undergrounding on Lasher Road

Resident Mike Ashley addressed the Council:

he and some residents on Lasher are asking for the City to participate, by contributing \$5000, in an initial engineering study by Southern California Edison (SCE) to allow them to underground a series of poles from Long Valley Road up Lasher Road; it should be economical because it is the easiest place in Hidden Hills to be able to do this; all the poles are presently transport poles rather than serving individual residences, which means the undergrounding does not involve the expense for any individual residents to pay for the undergrounding of their service to the poles; hopefully six poles could be removed, some of which can be seen from Long Valley; there are already plans to replace some of the poles with larger poles; this project only involves the poles on Lasher, but possibly in the future this project would allow undergrounding for some of those homes along Long Valley between Lasher and the front gate.

Council Member Freedland commented as follows:

he walked the area today with City Engineer Dirk Lovett, up to the pole on the edge of the Baker property, which would not be removed; it looked like a total of six poles could be undergrounded, and that a transformer would have to be dropped to the ground on the Gonen's property; in talking with Ron Gonen, he would not necessarily be opposed to that; they did talk to Kasey DeVarenes (on the southwest corner of Long Valley/Lasher), who might be willing to participate in this project, since she is already undergrounding wires from her property to the pole on Lasher (closest to Long Valley), which is now going to have to be replaced with a larger pole; no one answered at the Rosenberg house (on the southeast corner of Long Valley/Lasher), so he is not sure what that resident's intent is, but there is a pole at the very back of that property (or it could possibly be on the Levy/Blossom property) that would also have to be a part of this project.

Mr. Ashley said Council Member Freedland's comments were partially accurate, but stated the following:

Ms. DeVarenes has already paid to replace the Lasher pole closest to Long Valley on her property, but the replacement pole will be larger; this is now on hold in hopes that the undergrounding may occur; the wires from the higher pole would have gone directly across the street to the Rosenberg property, with a transformer on the Rosenberg property facing Lasher; but in talking with SCE, the second pole up Lasher (on the corner of the DeVarenes property and his property) could be used to underground behind the

Rosenberg house along the trail with the transformer set on the property line between the Rosenberg and Levy/Blossom property, which would eliminate the need to go directly across the Rosenberg property and the need for the transformer on Lasher.

Council Member Freedland had additional comments as follows:

the last time the City tried to do an undergrounding project, there was a problem with the Association not wanting the large transformers on the parkway; with this project, it is most likely that all transformers and equipment will have to be above ground; before the City spends money on such a project, he would like some assurances from the Association that they would be okay with the placement of the necessary equipment; this is a unique situation with an alignment of people whose interests are also in alignment, as it sounds like Ms. DeVarenes, Mr. Gonen, and the Rosenbergs are all interested in participating in the project; however, some interests might change when the actual costs become known; again, he does not want to spend the City's money to engineer a project if all the stakeholders are not willing to financially support the project; however, having said that, this is a unique opportunity to remove a lot of poles, and he would like to champion this project as long as he has some idea of how committed everyone is.

Council Member Siegel suggested that the first step might be to talk to the Association and get some feedback from them, with Council Member Freedland agreeing, reminding Mr. Ashley and everyone that some of this discussion is hypothetical, as there is no way to know exactly where any equipment is going to be placed or how the undergrounding can proceed without having engineering drawings. Council Member Landon stated that he would really like to see this project happen.

Mr. Ashley stated the following:

he has already talked to the Association, and they are okay if there is something undergrounded in the trail, but anything above ground on the trail would be a problem for the horses; for each of the three transformers, a 10' square easement would be necessary; he has already talked to the Rosenbergs, who are fine with giving such an easement, and he himself would have no problem granting SCE an easement for the transformer that would be placed on his property; the only easement he can't speak for is the one on the Gonen property; he thinks this could be easily done.

Council Member Freedland suggested that none of these projects are ever easy. Mayor Pro Tem Cohen asked if SCE would need an easement over the trail to get to a transformer on the

resident's property. Mr. Ashley stated that there are already existing trail easements for ingress and egress, and that SCE would have no problem going down the trail with their trucks - in fact it would be easier for them than trying to access the existing poles that are right in the middle of the back yards of the properties that run along Long Valley.

HHCA Board Member Bret Katz felt the Association would probably not have a problem with equipment in the parkway as long as it did not interfere with the horses, which was the problem with the proposed project on Paradise Valley that would have required very large vaults and pads that took up almost the entire parkway. He also did not think the Association would have any problem giving SCE a new easement over the trail for ingress/egress if needed, as long as actual equipment was not placed on the trail that would interfere with horses.

Council Member Siegel thought that if everyone here in attendance that was involved was agreeable to having a transformer on their property so equipment would not end up on the parkway or trail, then it might be worth it for the City to spend the \$5000 for the engineering drawings. In response to Council Member Freedland, City Engineer Lovett explained that per SCE, the \$5000 was just a deposit to begin the design drawings, but the cost for the complete drawings could go way higher than that. Council Member Freedland then expressed his thoughts:

he did not feel that the City should bear the entire cost of the engineering drawings, and wondered who would pay the additional costs if those costs did go much higher; at this point, there is no way of knowing what those costs are going to be; he also pointed out that two of the poles are on Mr. Ashley's property, and if his future project goes forward, one of the conditions imposed by the City would require Mr. Ashley to underground those poles; this is a unique opportunity to do the other four poles; he would like to see some type of an equitable split with the major participants and possibly even the Association; he wondered what Mr. Ashley would be willing to contribute at this time.

Mr. Ashley stated he did not believe the engineering costs would be more than \$10,000, since he thinks this is a very simple undergrounding project that involves nothing but removing poles. Based on that, he agreed to match the City's \$5000 to have SCE begin the engineering drawings,

suggesting that we see how far that \$10,000 goes, and if more money is needed beyond that, then it would come back to the Council for further discussion. Mr. Lovett reminded everyone that the engineering drawings also involved designs from AT&T and Charter Cable, not just SCE. Council Member Siegel thought Mr. Ashley's estimate of \$10,000 might be very low.

After a bit more discussion, everyone agreed that this proposed project could benefit the community, and in order to possibly move forward and get an idea of future costs, the City would need to start the process with SCE to obtain engineering drawings. As such, the City Manager was directed to: 1) talk to the Community Association about this project, the possibility of equipment being placed in the parkway, and the possible need for additional easements for trails; 2) obtain \$5000 from Mike Ashley to help cover preliminary costs for engineering drawings from SCE; and 3) use her authority to spend City funds (not to exceed her \$5000 limit) to also help cover preliminary costs for engineering drawings from SCE.

B. Consideration of a Proposed Ordinance Regarding Storm Water and Urban Runoff Pollution and Amending Chapter 11 of Title 3 of the Hidden Hills Municipal Code - First Reading

Water Quality Consultant Joe Bellomo provided the following information:

under the federal Clean Water Act, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board issued the region's fourth generation MS4 permit in 2012; the proposed ordinance updates the City's Municipal Code to comply with the 2012 permit requirements; the updates include new terminology, reorganization of the City's non-storm water discharge section, bolstering the inspection enforcement capabilities of the City, and compliance with new requirements for certain development in redevelopment projects; in 2013 the City opted to develop an EWMP which extended this update, now due by June 28th of this year.

Upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to introduce and give first reading by title only to an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS AMENDING CHAPTER 11 OF TITLE 3 OF THE HIDDEN HILLS MUNICIPAL

CODE (STORM WATER AND URBAN RUNOFF POLLUTION), TO INCLUDE LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND ADDITIONAL REVISIONS PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM.

C. Selection of Two Council Members for Ad Hoc 2015-2016 Budget Committee

Mayor Weber said he would like to serve on the budget committee, but before anyone else volunteered, he wanted to suggest that the budget committee look into a compensation package for Council Members, and then make a recommendation to the Council on whether or not to approve such a compensation package. Mayor Weber explained his rationale: years ago when this City was established, many of the residents volunteered, but there are very few volunteers today; since that time four other cities have come into existence in this region, and Hidden Hills needs to deal with them on a regular basis, along with the County; all of those other cities provide a compensation package to their Council Members, averaging \$17,000 - \$23,000 per year, varying with different items such as meeting fees, retirement, car allowances, and health, dental and vision.

Council Member Siegel did not see the justification for a compensation package, stating the following:

Council Members in other cities put in way more time than what is required here in Hidden Hills, which might be three hours a month; this would be a major change in policy that would require quite a bit of time and cost to research for comparison purposes, and he would not want to spend that time and money if a majority of the Council Members were not interested in a compensation package; before the budget committee takes on such a task, the Council should have a major discussion on an upcoming agenda to see if there are enough votes to move forward with a study; if there are three Council Members who agree philosophically to move forward, then so be it; he, however, is opposed to any compensation package.

Council Member Landon agreed with Council Member Siegel. He also thought this should be a separate item addressed at an upcoming Council meeting, adding that there are very few cities

like Hidden Hills, which is not complicated, having no retail, no utility users tax, or other matters that take up so much time in other cities.

Mayor Weber said he originally wanted the item placed on an agenda, and directed staff to add a discussion to the next agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Cohen then volunteered to serve on the budget committee with Mayor Weber.

D. Consideration of Appointment of Public Safety Commissioners

Upon MOTION of Mayor Pro Tem Cohen, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to reappoint Michael Bloom and Gabe Nussbaum to the Public Safety Commission, each to serve a two year term effective May 1, 2015 through April 30, 2017. The City Manager pointed out that there is now one vacant seat on the Commission due to the recent passing of long time Commissioner and Emergency Services Director Jim Doran. Staff will advertise and search for a qualified candidate to fill that vacant seat.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Freedland and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of April 27, 2015 at 9:45 p.m.

Larry G. Weber, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager