

**MINUTES
LA PUENTE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2008**

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of La Puente was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 15900 East Main Street, La Puente, California, on January 24, 2008, at 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lujan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Mendoza, Solis, Storing, Holloway, Lujan

Staff Members present: City Manager Cowley, Assistant City Manager Yamachika, City Attorney Casso, Acting City Clerk Giron, City Planner Arreola

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Council Member Mendoza.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

RECESS THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND CONVENED THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

Mayor Lujan recessed the City Council meeting and convened the Community Development Commission at 6:34 p.m.

The City Council meeting was reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

A-1 STATUS REPORT ON THE PUENTE CREEK NATURE EDUCATION CENTER PROJECT

Assistant City Manager Yamachika provided a brief historical update on the Nature Education Center Project including secured funding and project scope. The proposed project includes the reproduction of a riparian environment and will feature a "look out" which will overhang the west side of Puente Creek. The focus of the project is youth

nature education and will include outdoor "classroom" features and rock-climbing elements. Mr. Yamachika noted a cooperative agreement with the Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District to use the facility as part of their 2nd and 6th grade curriculum.

Mr. Yamachika further detailed grant, state, and federal funding secured for the project in the amount of \$1.325 million dollars. He also noted the multiple agencies involved in the project including the school district, which has donated a .22 acre parcel of land, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, local elected officials Napolitano and Molina (who secured funding and support for the project), and the flood control district. He clarified that at this time the school district board could not currently commit an adjacent softball field as part of the project.

In response to Council Member Storing, Mr. Yamachika noted that parking for the project was limited, however students using the facility would typically be transported by buses which would park on the main roadway.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Holloway, Mr. Yamachika noted that the timeframe for the water reclamation project near the school site on Nelson was not currently known and could possibly affect the Nature Education Center project.

In response to Mayor Lujan and Council Member Solis, Mr. Yamachika noted that City staff would supervise the facility, and that permanent restrooms were part of the construction plan. He further stated that the entire facility would be fenced for security purposes.

In response to Mayor Lujan, Mr. Yamachika detailed the potential sources of federal funding and the stipulations made by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy related to the acquisition of any additional federal funds. He further noted the school district has not committed any funding or in-kind resources related to the maintenance and operation of the facility.

In response to Council Member Mendoza, Mr. Yamachika noted that the draft agreement currently under review by the school district does not include any financial requirements on the part of the school district.

City Attorney Casso requested staff to research whether the donation by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) allowed any restrictions related to facilities constructed with RMC funds.

Mayor Lujan expressed the need for sensitivity when negotiating with community partners such as the school district, however, the City must also be concerned regarding the on-going maintenance and operations of facilities that will be utilized in a joint-use arrangement.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Holloway, Mr. Yamachika acknowledged that staff is currently reviewing the staffing array for the Nature Center, and clarified that the staffing would be funding entirely by the City.

Council Member Storing noted that the La Puente Historical Society offers tours of the Rowland House free of charge, if local schools are looking for low-cost field trips for students.

In response to Council Member Mendoza, City Manager Cowley offered to look at various options for internships as an alternative for full or part-time City employees supervising the facility. She also discussed the City's potential use of other school district facilities in exchange for their use of the Nature Center.

Council Member Storing suggested Nature Center internships for high school students as a potential way to fulfill their required community service hours.

In response to Mayor Lujan, Mr. Yamachika agreed to conduct analysis on the issues presented tonight, especially the options offered by Council Members Storing and Mendoza, in a manner as not to delay the on-going negotiations of the joint-use agreement with the school district.

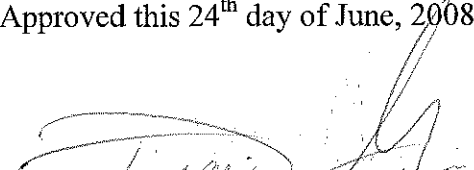
Mayor Pro Tem Holloway suggested expanding the internship opportunities to local college students.

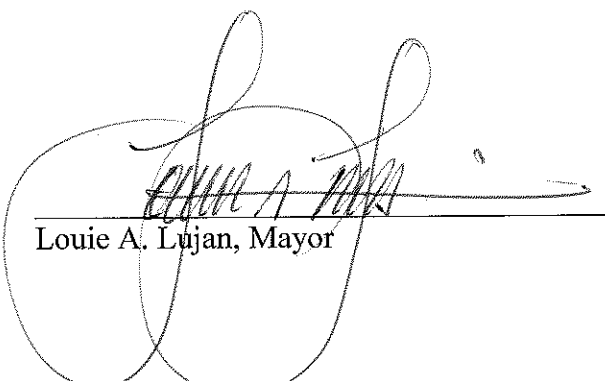
In response to Council Member Solis, Mr. Yamachika noted that staff could be ready to go out to bid on the project within a few months and suggested that bid amounts could be favorable to the City due to the current construction market downturn.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Lujan adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Approved this 24th day of June, 2008.


Diana Giron, Acting City Clerk


Louie A. Lujan, Mayor