



CITY OF SAN DIMAS MINUTES

**COUNCIL – STAFF RETREAT SESSION
May 12, 2007 8:00 AM**

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM – CITY HALL

PRESENT:

Mayor Curtis Morris
Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Templeman
Councilmember Emmett Badar
Councilmember Denis Bertone
Councilmember John Ebiner

City Manager Blaine Michaelis
City Attorney J. Kenneth Brown
City Clerk Ina Rios
Assistant City Manager Ken Duran
Director of Development Services Dan Coleman
Director of Public Works Krishna Patel
Director of Parks and Recreation Theresa Bruns

ABSENT:

Assistant City Manager of Community Development Larry Stevens

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Morris called the study session meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

a. Staff report on the progress of the Development Services reorganization. Oral reports regarding 'Are we there yet' progress.

- 1) City Manager Michaelis mentioned that with Rhonda Abangan on board, Mr. Stevens is pleased to have a full complement of staff. Mr. Michaelis reported that with quality analysis and concepts, Mr. Stevens was successful in having the RHNA adjusted, and said few cities get their numbers adjusted. He said each department director would give a brief progress report.
- 2) Public Works Director Patel outlined the plan to improve the plan check process and said a plans examiner was hired, consultants were made accountable, and architect does minimal work. Mr. Patel reported that the installation of Verizon infrastructure is moving smoothly and service to residents would be provided in January. He said three inspectors were hired and staff is working through the activities.
- 3) Assistant City Manager Duran said front desk staff would be educated to direct calls to the appropriate individual; Parking Control Officer Jeff Hartung has made a difference in 1.5 months. He realized drivers were not properly exhibiting permits and now he provides an informative note.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Mr. Duran replied that Mr. Hartung has a work station at city hall.

4) Parks and Recreation Director Bruns said an internal management team was formed to discuss activity and review goals. The leadership has looked at improving customer service by utilizing an internal tracking software program; community involvement - going out to mobile home parks and apartments to promote activities; email process; create a better brochure, fliers, email blasts, newsletters and work toward targeting sports parents; weekly staff meetings to focus on expectations and support. Staff will continue with public promotion, strategic marketing plan, master plan, and tighten training.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Ms. Bruns stated an informal program is available at most park locations for emergency situations. Staff is trained to take control and communicate the message, and move to where needed to take command of the situation. She added that Sheriff's Deputies are contacted if someone is seen loitering at park sites or day camp.

In response to Mayor Morris, she stated that staff is aware of the matter, but is not placed in a situation of enforcement - just observe and report.

5) Development Services Director Coleman distributed copies of a customer survey form to be filled out by citizens and said there have been no negative comments. He said it has been a good morale booster and staff enjoys knowing the customer is pleased with the service. He said staff is working hard to be accessible to citizens. He and City Manager Michaelis met with homeowners association to inform them staff is available to meet with them, with the exception of code violations. He and the Code Enforcement Officer would meet with individuals after he has had a chance to look at the history of the issues.

City Manager Michaelis mentioned an incident of a resident who called the Utility Company regarding removal of a wire in their front yard. The cables belonged to Time-Warner.

Consensus: Staff has Council's support. Sheriff's could provide training to key staff.

b. Action plan for Development Review improvement

Director Coleman conducted an audit of development services with an emphasis on planning, building and safety, and code enforcement. He said the report represents a number of things that could be done better.

The second recommendation is to develop a review of the Development Plan Review Board. Mr. Coleman provided an overview of the DPRB process and said the DPRB is a critical step in the process - in some cases the DPRB makes the final decision, or submits recommendations to the City Council. Mr. Coleman commended staff for providing a valuable tool - a binder of policies, which he thought should be made part of the ordinance or standards.

A weekly review committee has been established consisting of Mr. Coleman, Mr. Hensley and RKA Consulting Engineering to address development permits.

Mr. Coleman said the next recommendation is customer feedback and a lockbox placed on the counter for customer convenience seems to be working well. As part of this step, Mr. Coleman stated he met with citizens who appreciated staff listening to their concerns.

Discussion ensued regarding advantages and costs of pre-paid postage on customer comment postcards for mailing.

Mr. Coleman recommended updating the general plan. He said with the exception of the housing element, the general plan is considerably out of date. He said numerous changes have occurred in State law since the general plan was updated in 1991. He mentioned that the housing element must be adopted by the end of June, 2008.

Mr. Coleman said there are many inconsistencies in the zoning code. He recommended updating the zoning code to be consistent with the general plan.

Mayor Morris commented that staff did not have the resources to do anything more than keep the immediate projects moving forward.

Mr. Coleman recommended providing DRPB plans to the decision maker and he mentioned areas of improvement included: streamlining the process by providing the resolution to the Planning Commission; providing conditions of approval to the DPRB agenda packet, which provides the applicant an opportunity to review them; reformat standard conditions of approval grouped by department; reduce plan check turn around by using outside plan check consultants; set up permit system in Building and Safety; and route plan checks through RKA.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Mr. Coleman stated that changes were made to address complaints previously received that the outside plan checker did not return phone calls.

In response to Council, Mr. Coleman said there are two different systems and San Dimas typically red lines plans. He stated he relies on written comments and could email corrections to architects to add notes.

John Sorcinelli said it is a good idea to red line drawings for faster turn around, and add information to make it clear why it was done. He said to do both would be adding to the workload.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Mr. Coleman said the digital capability is available, but few cities do plan check electronically because the files are enormous.

Mr. Coleman stated that to eliminate arguments, staff is requiring conditions of approval be put on drawings; an inspection list has been created; and EIR procedures will be reviewed for updating and presented to the Planning Commission for approval; discussed providing initial study to environment with agenda packet; he said a procedure was created and implemented pursuant to CEQA requirements that an applicant must agree on and sign the mitigation measures.

Mr. Coleman stated that although funds are available for training, staff is reluctant to take the time. Staff is encouraged to attend training sessions.

Mr. Coleman said there is a need to enhance records management system and microfilm files need to be converted to Laserfiche. He has gotten a quote for \$50,000 for conversion and a KIP is available to scan blueprint plans. He mentioned the lobby computer is available to the public to view old records on Laserfiche.

Director Patel stated that over the years, most documents have been converted to Laserfiche.

Mr. Coleman recommended expanding permits and tracking; staff has created and maintains operation of tracking log and flip chart. He said San Dimas has done a wonderful job of posting online the municipal code and various documents.

Mayor Morris stated it was important to get the agenda and agenda packet online, particularly presentation summaries; the EIR for Vista Verde.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Director Coleman stated that staff posts online.

In response to Councilmember Ebner, Assistant Manager Duran stated that a rehab to the website is proposed in the budget to facilitate updating.

Director Coleman addressed two critical needs for the expansion of city hall - adequate staff and adequate storage. He compared standing at the counter for quick customer service vs. appropriate desk seating.

City Manager Michaelis reported that only one tenant remains on the Costco site and the goal is to open before Christmas.

Mayor Pro Tem Templeman thought city hall expansion should be a priority and inquired if action is needed to provide direction to the architect to move forward.

Assistant Manager Duran replied that staff was leaning toward continuing with the current architect for the preliminary plan and cost estimate.

To keep up with inflation, Director Coleman recommended increasing engineering and planning fees. He said a comprehensive fee study is not necessary to adopt a cpi adjustment.

In response to Council, City Attorney Brown replied that the courts are allowing a lot of latitude since the request is in line with what other cities are charging.

Director Coleman said there is a need to explore hiring a hearing officer for code enforcement as an interim step before going to the prosecutor; expanding code enforcement program - transition from reactive to proactive takes additional staff.

Councilmember Ebner would like the DPRB process streamlined without sacrificing design quality. He left the conference at 10:06 a.m.

Director Coleman said the computer tracking system is on line; a review will be conducted on business license procedures; and regular staff meetings are being held to increase productivity through communication.

Mayor Morris felt recordkeeping was imperative and Council needs feedback from staff whether unrealistic expectations are placed on limited staff members.

Mayor Pro Tem Templeman stated that counter, tables and staff become critical to the next phase of the building space needs and money must be spent to accommodate needs.

RECESS

Mayor Morris recessed at 10:19 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

The Council discussed streamlining the DPRB without sacrificing design quality. Staff said the DPRB was serving their function well and felt there was no need for change.

In response to Councilmember Badar, Mayor Morris stated that the Councilmember representative is a member of the Review Board, and does not abstain at the City Council meeting if there is a conflict.

Mayor Morris felt there was no valid reason for changing the DPRB other than hiring an independent design professional/architect. He mentioned that if the DPRB did not have John Sorcinelli, they would probably have to pay an outside design architect.

John Sorcinelli said it is important that an architect/design professional sits on the Board to make presentations and decisions based on the cohesive architectural design. He said the City Council representative brings another level of clarity and leadership to the Committee and it does not matter whether or not they vote at the Review Board.

In response to Council, Mr. Coleman replied that conflicts of interest under the policy would automatically be referred to the City Council. He said the code would be changed to eliminate the interim step.

After further discussion regarding the DPRB, Mr. Sorcinelli suggested limiting the number of items placed on the agenda or imposing a time limit for each item.

The consensus was that the DRPB is working well and there is no reason to change it, with the exception of changing policy to include conflicts of interest be referred to the City Council and eliminate the interim step on the appeal.

c. Report and Council direction regarding Open Space program, update and direction regarding possible open space projects and objectives. Timed discussion to begin at 10:00 a.m.

This item will be discussed at a future meeting.

d. Policy regarding fencing and decking on slope area adjacent to the Via Verde Country Club Golf Course.

Director Coleman reported that the subject policy has been in use by the DPRB since 1979. He felt it was not appropriate to allow into the slope area encroachment of fencing/decks surrounding the Golf Course and requested modification to the policy.

Mr. Coleman responded to Council's questions regarding fencing and eight-foot deck encroachments.

In response to Mayor Morris, Mr. Coleman said the policy would be applied universally and would allow a maximum eight-foot deck encroachment.

The consensus of the Council was to apply the policy city-wide, including the Via Verde Golf Course, and direct staff to prepare a code amendment.

e. City Council Commission/Committee/Board Assignments - including 50th Anniversary event; and City Beautification Committee

Councilmembers discussed assignments as delegates and alternates to the various organizations and committees. It was the consensus of the Council to appoint Councilmember Badar as delegate to the California Contact Cities Association and to appoint all members as alternates with voting authority. Mayor Pro Tem Templeman suggested appointing Councilmembers Badar and Ebner as delegates to the Foothill Transit Authority.

It was the consensus of the Council to encourage Councilmembers to attend any conference.

50th Anniversary:

City Manager Michaelis suggested setting up an exploratory committee for the 50th year anniversary in August 2010.

Mayor Morris said the Committee should have as many representatives as want to be on the Committee and should appoint a Chair.

Mayor Pro Tem Templeman suggested an announcement go out to recruit members to form a group, and that staff be directed to bring back this item in six months.

Director Bruns said an article could be advertised in the Frontier and city staff could start formulating an interest group to meet. By the end of year, they could have ideas and concepts.

Mayor Morris said the leadership would be Director Theresa Bruns.

Beautification Committee:

Mayor Pro Tem Templeman suggested co-sponsoring cleanup week on a specified day at Horsethief Canyon Park and provide containers for residents' use. This item was moved to the next Retreat.

Director Patel stated that Debbie Figoni is coordinating with San Dimas High School to co-host a citywide household hazardous and e-waste round up in August, at San Dimas High School.

President/CEO Ted Powl mentioned that income could be generated from e-waste, and Deborah Day is looking to include landscaping as well.

Mayor Morris suggested revisiting this item at the next Retreat.

F Discussion - Brown Act overview summary with the Planning Commission at a future time

City Manager Michaelis suggested setting a date in September to discuss the Brown Act provisions with the City Council and Planning Commission.

Mayor Morris stated that he would also like an update on state housing laws, and said development laws adopted the last 4-5 years have severely limited local government.

Councilmember Bertone inquired if interviews for Planning Commission are subject to the Brown Act and open to the public.

City Attorney Brown stated this is an open meeting with open discussion, the agenda identifies the scheduled candidates, and the public is entitled to attend and comment.

Mayor Morris stated the City Council could meet at 4:45 p.m. to discuss questions for the interviews.

g. Oral Communications - Members of the audience. Anyone wishing to address the City Council on an item on the agenda. No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda. Speakers shall be subject to a three minute time limit, as may be determined by the chair.

1) Lieutenant Gary Kimble, San Dimas Sheriff's Station, provided an overview of the Board of Supervisors executive departmental schedules and said the Board approved a cost model percent charge of approximately 7.5% to contract fees. He said at the Station level, the Captain met numerous times with City officials to discuss staffing and believes the proper staff level was met.

In response to Mayor Morris, Lt. Kimble stated that a suspect was arrested for involvement in stolen vehicles and several vehicle burglaries. He said the case would be presented to the District Attorney for filing.

Lt. Kimble said Captain Curtis is being assigned to the Homicide Bureau and the replacement process has begun. Lt. Kimble addressed concern about brush fires and said he and Captain Curtis came up with a task force to respond to a call for service as a result of illegal firework use. He mentioned he had not yet discussed fireworks with the Fire Department.

Mayor Pro Tem Templeman suggested a press release reminding citizens that fireworks are prohibited in the city.

In response to Councilmember Bertone, Lt. Kimble stated that after an explanation, many people voluntarily relinquish their fireworks. He said if the Sheriff's get a return call, the violators are cited.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Templeman, Lt. Kimble stated that the assigned team's sole response is to firework related calls.

2) Director Bruns pointed out that Maurice Cuellar is planning to have a farmer's market on Wednesday, July 4, 2007.

3) Mayor Pro Tem Templeman said it could be helpful if the Parking Control Officers had cameras to document graffiti during the midnight hours.

4) City Manager Michaelis said Director Stevens met for 2.5 hours with Sid Maksoudian regarding his perception of unfair treatment. Council stated they too met with Mr. Maksoudian.

5) City Manager Michaelis reminded Council that the item on Open Space would be continued to Tuesday.

- 6) Mayor Morris requested 25 minute interviews for Planning Commissioner candidates.
- 9) Councilmember Badar mentioned that employees are happy about deferred compensation, potential training, and employee benefits.
- 10) Mayor Pro Tem Templeman conveyed Maria Barbosa's fear of fire with brush piled up against a wall in the Creek area.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Morris adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m. The next meeting of the City Council is 4:45 p.m., Monday, May 15, 2007, for Planning Commission interviews.

Curtis W. Morris, Mayor of the City of San Dimas

ATTEST:

Ina Rios, CMC, City Clerk