



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
October 23, 2003

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 5:06 p.m. by Mayor Esquivel in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Joseph Esquivel
Vice Mayor Todd Rogers
Council Member Wayne Piercy
Council Member Larry Van Nostran
Council Member Robert Wagner

CENTRE CONCESSION AGREEMENT

Assistant City Manager Michael Stover presented an oral report based on the memorandum in the agenda packet and stated the Ad Hoc Centre Concession Committee had completed its work in developing a new agreement with Sycamore Caterers, Inc. for concessionaire services at the Centre at Sycamore Plaza. He briefly reviewed the highlights of the new agreement and advised the Committee had shaped the objectives for the agreement based upon recommendations from a banquet management consultant. It was the Committee's recommendation that the City Council approve the Catering and Concession Services Agreement with Sycamore Caterers, Inc.

Vice Mayor Rogers commended Mr. Stover and the staff for the great work on negotiating this new agreement which would not only provide uninterrupted service at the Centre, but provide the maximum opportunities for success.

Council Member Piercy related that the issues involved were very complex, requiring a step-by-step approach. He noted that an agreement had been reached because of the willingness of all parties to cooperate and work together.

Responding to a question from Mayor Esquivel, Mr. Stover stated that the agreement had been completely negotiated and agreed upon and signed by Sycamore Caterers.

VICE MAYOR ROGERS MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER PIERCY SECONDED TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT WITH SYCAMORE CATERERS.

Rick Blake, attorney for Taeko Szabo and Sycamore Caterers, stated they were happy and proud to serve the City family and were ready to move forward.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Piercy, Rogers, Van Nostran, Wagner and Esquivel
NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

PRESENTATION BY MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC. OF DRAFT ORAL REPORT ON STATUS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Deputy City Manager Sandi Ruyle presented an outline with the alternatives and suggestions contained in Chapter 8 of the report stating that Mr. Hayward would present the resources necessary to accomplish each one.

Gerald C. Hayward, Management, Analysis & Planning, stated the next step would be for a MAP representative and two Council Members to meet individually with each of the school districts and discuss their plans for improving education in Lakewood and to offer any appropriate assistance.

Responding to a question from Mayor Esquivel, Mr. Hayward stated that a two-member delegation would be better than a meeting with the entire City Council because, in his opinion, it would lead to a more frank discussion and more candid responses.

Council Member Wagner determined from Mr. Hayward that following the delegation's meeting with each district's superintendent or board chairman, the delegation would report back to the entire City Council.

Council Member Piercy stated that in order to get the process moving faster, a summit meeting could be held with not only the entire City Council, but the superintendents and board members of all four districts.

The Deputy City Manager noted that since the discussion would include a review of each district's weaknesses as well as their strengths, the districts might be more comfortable with a private meeting.

Council Member Wagner stated that there had not previously been a lot of interest expressed by the school board members. He also stated that with the small number of students served by the Paramount Unified School District, it would be a better use of time to focus on the other three districts and see if those students could be moved to one of the other districts.

Council Member Van Nostran stated he felt the summit format might be too broad an approach to manage well and that any single district might be uncomfortable reviewing findings for their district in front of all the other districts. He stated he had no problem with the entire Council meeting with each board, but questioned the level of interest of the school boards.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated that since there were distinct issues for each district, it might be more appropriate to approach each district individually. He stated it would be important for the City Council to identify what issues to address with each district, to focus on the City Council's priorities and then approach the districts for a meeting.

Responding to a question from Council Member Van Nostran, Mr. Hayward stated that the first contact should be with the superintendent of each district, so they are aware of the information being provided to their board members. He stated that MAP could meet individually with the superintendents.

PRESENTATION BY MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC. OF DRAFT ORAL REPORT ON STATUS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION - Continued

Vice Mayor Rogers stated that he would want to have the City Manager or other senior staff member be in attendance along with a MAP representative in any meetings with the district superintendents.

Council Member Piercy stated that it was important to think about the political aspects of the meetings and that by the entire City Council being in attendance, it would send the message that the Council was unified on the issues. He stated that it was important to communicate to the districts that the City was looking for an opportunity to be involved and expected to cooperate with the districts, not tell them what to do.

Assistant City Manager Michael Stover advised that an inquiry had been made by a local reporter with the *Long Beach Press Telegram* on this issue and had expressed the intent to write a story that would appear in next week's newspaper.

Mr. Hayward stated that the two major objectives should be to get the information revealed by the study out in the open, and to set the stage for discussions with the districts about how to improve public education.

City Manager Howard Chambers suggested transmitting a copy of the report to each of the districts before the article appeared in the newspaper.

Mayor Esquivel suggested that once copies were provided, the City Manager or Deputy City Manager could contact each district and determine how best to meet with them.

The City Manager cautioned that one reaction could be that while a district might accept the report, they could maintain that they had too many other priorities and were not interested in meeting.

Council Member Wagner clarified that the initial meeting with MAP and senior staff would be an information only meeting and that staff could convey that the City Council was flexible about meeting format.

VICE MAYOR ROGERS MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER VAN NOSTRAN SECONDED TO PROVIDE AN ADVANCE COPY OF THE REPORT TO EACH DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT, OFFER A MEETING WITH M.A.P. REPRESENTATIVES AND SENIOR CITY STAFF, AND REQUEST DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE ON BEST MEETING FORMAT TO DISCUSS CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Piercy, Rogers, Van Nostran, Wagner and Esquivel

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

PRESENTATION BY MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC. OF DRAFT ORAL REPORT ON STATUS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION - Continued

Mr. Hayward reviewed the issue of forming a permanent Education Liaison Committee which, as an ongoing educational arm of the City Council, would provide for a regular assessment of the quality of education in Lakewood schools and demonstrate the Council's consistent focus on education. He advised that an Excellence in Education Civic Organization had broader opportunities such as forming partnerships and applying for scholarships, but was much more complicated to set up and establish funding sources.

Council Member Wagner suggested a committee could be formed with two members from each district and representatives from different areas of the City. He stated that the Council should consider inviting representatives from other impacted areas such as Lakewood Village and the portion of Bellflower adjacent to Mayfair High School to monitor since they would be directly impacted by the Committee's actions.

Council Member Van Nostran, noting the difficulties volunteer organizations had experienced in attracting new members, stated it may be a challenge to find good committee members. He stated that the committee could be formed once the City Council had received feedback on the reactions of the districts to the report.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated he had reservations about passing responsibility for such important issues on to a committee.

Council Member Wagner stated that while he understood those reservations, he felt the school issues were of such a detailed and long-term nature that it would not be feasible to add them on to the workload already being carried by the City Council and staff. He agreed with Council Member Van Nostran that it would be vital to find good, committed residents to serve on such a committee.

Council Member Piercy agreed that the committee was a solid suggestion, but should not be implemented until after the initial meetings with the districts and a plan of action had been established.

Mayor Esquivel summarized by stating that the City Council would defer forming either a committee or civic organization to a later time.

Mr. Hayward presented another MAP recommendation which was to increase Lakewood residents' membership on local school boards. He advised that the City Council could encourage good people to run and then endorse them.

Another recommendation of MAP was to persuade either Long Beach or Bellflower Unified School Districts to annex the area of Lakewood currently served by the Paramount Unified School District.

Responding to a question from Council Member Piercy, Mr. Hayward confirmed that the recommendation was intended to include only Lakewood residents in any annexation process.

PRESENTATION BY MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC. OF DRAFT ORAL REPORT ON STATUS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION - Continued

Council Member Wagner suggested that staff check to see if Proposition A Transportation funds could be used to provide transportation for Lakewood residents assigned to academically deficient schools within the Paramount Unified District who want to attend other schools.

Mr. Hayward advised that there was a Federal program called “No Child Left Behind” which was intended to allow students at schools failing to make adequate yearly progress to transfer out to any school in any district. He noted that State education funding would go with the students.

Council Member Wagner stated and Vice Mayor Rogers agreed that educating our residents about their rights under the No Child Left Behind program was a priority.

Mr. Hayward presented the MAP recommendation that the City work with Long Beach Unified to offer more advanced placement classes through Lakewood High School and to explore the possibility of creating a charter school within the school.

City Attorney John S. Todd advised that the City might look into the possibility of State legislation that could allow a local entity, such as the County Office of Education, to sponsor a charter school.

Council Member Piercy noted that there had been a recent article written about Long Beach Unified receiving a \$1 million grant to develop smaller learning communities to boost student achievement at Lakewood and Millikan High Schools.

Mr. Hayward noted the MAP recommendation that further efforts to create a Lakewood district not be pursued at this time.

Council Member Wagner stated it was important to note that Lakewood residents still wanted their own district and that even if it was not to be pursued at this time, the City would retain that option to be reviewed if conditions changed.

The next MAP recommendation was to work with Long Beach Unified for development of new schools within Long Beach to ease bussing into Lakewood schools.

The Deputy City Manager noted that because the schools located in Lakewood were situated on large lots, the District had historically placed additional portable classrooms on the sites, increasing the student populations far beyond what they had been intended to be.

Council Member Van Nostran inquired if the bond measure that Long Beach passed several years ago would increase the possibilities for new schools within Long Beach. Mr. Hayward responded by stating that it would be important to monitor that to be sure it was fairly administered.

Council Member Piercy noted that according to Long Beach Unified there were already 500 fewer students being bussed into Lakewood and that more new schools for Long Beach were in the works, thanks to construction funded from the bond measure.

PRESENTATION BY MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC. OF DRAFT ORAL REPORT ON STATUS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION - Continued

Council Member Van Nostran noted that with the number of portable classrooms being placed on Bellflower Unified campuses, the recommendation should be expanded to include Bellflower Unified.

Council Member Wagner remarked that Bellflower Unified was also using the campuses of the Lakewood schools to absorb their increased enrollment while ignoring the need to improve or build new neighborhood facilities within the City of Bellflower.

Mr. Hayward stated, and the City Council concurred, that there was currently no interest in the community in forming a Lakewood-Bellflower district.

The final recommendation dealt with the ABC Unified schools and the need to improve educational opportunities for Lakewood students. MAP was also recommending the ABC Unified Board be approached about setting up trustee areas and to have a representative from the area south of Del Amo Boulevard on that Board.

Council Member Piercy observed that there were a number of Lakewood students, who would normally go to Artesia High School, that were attending Whitney Middle/High School, a facility for high achieving students. There were also students in the Lakewood High School area that were going to Poly High School for the special programs available there. He stated that Lakewood students should not be limited by having to go outside the City to find advanced educational opportunities.

Mr. Hayward agreed that there was a definite need for increased opportunities locally.

Council Member Piercy noted that middle school problems had not really been addressed, but that there was a need to offer the types of programs that would prepare students for advanced high school programs.

Council Member Wagner commented that each of the districts had several schools with really good programs, but not always enough space for all the students wanting to participate. He stated that it was not satisfactory to have one or two really good schools and allow all of the other students to receive a second-rate education.

Vice Mayor Rogers stated that the overriding theme behind all the recommendations and frustrations expressed by the community was that the standards for education in Lakewood needed to be higher than what was currently being received.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Esquivel adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk