



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Special Meeting held
February 12, 2013

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor DuBois in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Diane DuBois
Vice Mayor Steve Croft
Council Member Ron Piazza
Council Member Todd Rogers
Council Member Jeff Wood

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ON HAWAIIAN GARDENS CASINO REDEVELOPMENT

Community Development Director Sonia Southwell made a presentation on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared and distributed by the City of Hawaiian Gardens for the proposed expansion of the Hawaiian Gardens Casino. She briefly reviewed the EIR process and deadlines and noted that the location of the proposed new building was much closer to the corner of Carson Street and Pioneer Boulevard and would be triple the size of the existing casino. She noted that it was difficult to calculate the necessary parking as there was no floor plan included in the EIR.

Captain Merrill Ladenheim, Commander of the Lakewood Sheriff's Station, addressed potential law enforcement concerns regarding the expanded casino. He stated that although there had been limited complaints with the existing casino operation, Station personnel were prepared to monitor the surrounding area for traffic accidents to determine if they were connected with the casino, and, if so, those accidents would be credited to Hawaiian Gardens, even if occurring outside the City boundaries. He stated that they would be in favor of a solid wall or fence around the parking area, security cameras monitored by security, and limited time parking.

Responding to a question from Mayor DuBois, the Captain stated that his recommendations would be contained in a unit order which would remain on file at the Station and be reviewed annually. He stated that the greatest concern at this point was for problems caused by people searching for parking in adjacent neighborhoods.

Council Member Wood inquired about establishing a separate reporting district for the casino, similar to the one existing for the Lakewood Center Mall. The Captain stated that the issues with the casino did not warrant a separate district at this time.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Croft about a safety plan, the Captain stated that the casino already had a robust camera and on-site security force.

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ON HAWAIIAN GARDENS CASINO REDEVELOPMENT - Continued

Ms. Southwell responded to a question from Council Member Wood by stating that the second floor of the new casino building would be dedicated to poker tables and that when completed and open in 2018, could be large enough to host large poker tournaments.

Council Member Rogers inquired if there was a mechanism for Lakewood to be reimbursed for Sheriff's time in Lakewood, but directly related to the casino. Captain Ladenheim stated that a reimbursement contract could be negotiated with Hawaiian Gardens, similar to the agreement between Lakewood and Long Beach for the opening of the LB Town Center.

Public Works Director Lisa Rapp introduced traffic engineer Lew Gluesing. Mr. Gluesing provided a review of the Traffic Impact Analysis by stating that only 2 of the 11 additional impacted intersections requested by Lakewood had been included in the traffic study. He noted that the trip generation rate used for the study should have been based on samples from similar uses and not the existing casino. He also noted that for intersections with significant impacts, the recommendation had included implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program as a mitigation measure.

Council Member Rogers inquired about the mechanics of a TDM program. Mr. Gluesing stated it was a voluntary program where the casino could offer van pools or bus passes to employees or guests to reduce the number of vehicle trips. Mr. Gluesing agreed with Council Member Rogers that such a TDM did not have a high probability of success and an actual physical mitigation measure should be required.

Council Member Wood expressed concern about the intersection of Carson Street and Los Coyotes Diagonal since the Long Beach Unified School District school located just southeast of the intersection, which was currently closed, would be reopening soon as a new high school and thereby bringing student drivers into the intersection. Ms. Rapp noted that the new school was not listed in the EIR's area construction projects and stated that staff would make sure to include that information in the responses to the EIR. City Manager Howard Chambers stated that staff would contact the Superintendent for LBUSD to see if they also had concerns about traffic at that intersection.

Ms. Rapp stated that although staff and Mr. Gluesing felt that all of the other 9 intersections need to be studied, even just the top 3 would be helpful in determining the actual traffic impacts. She also expressed concern about U-turn access to the Lakewood businesses on the north side of Carson Street.

Council Member Piazza noted that with the additional traffic and parking issues, restricting U-turn access would be a significant impact on those businesses.

Ms. Southwell reviewed the proposed off-site parking locations with shuttle service. She responded to a question from Vice Mayor Croft by stating that staff had requested information regarding whether the off-site parking was intended to be for employee parking only.

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ON HAWAIIAN GARDENS CASINO REDEVELOPMENT - Continued

Mayor DuBois noted that the projected number of new employees did not seem proportionate to the number of new customers expected.

Ms. Rapp stated there was concern about pedestrian safety on 215th Street and that employee or customer parking in adjacent neighborhoods should be studied now to establish a base for study of future impacts.

City Attorney Steve Skolnik stated that the standard that was used to determine the parking specifications had generated a number considerably lower than casino uses in other cities. He noted that without an on-site parking structure, they would have difficulty meeting the project need, much less the actual parking needs, which could be much higher.

Recreation and Community Services Director Lisa Litzinger presented concerns about the impacts on Bloomfield Park directly adjacent to the casino site. She stated there was concern that the proximity to the Park's parking lot would attract casino customers to leave their vehicles there, eliminating parking availability for park patrons. She presented an option to make the lot a one-way entry and exit, with an entry gate at the south end and exit spikes at the north end, which would also require modification of the center median on Pioneer Boulevard. It was also proposed that the parking lot be limited to 3-hour parking, with special passes issued to parties with event permits. Additionally, increased security lighting and security cameras were recommended, as well as completely fencing in the casino parking lot to decrease pedestrian traffic across 215th Street and through the park.

The City Attorney advised that the EIR was likely to be approved and that the possibility of a parking structure being added to the project was unlikely due to the cost. He stated that administrative process rights would be maintained and, if warranted, possible litigation could be discussed at a later date.

Vice Mayor Croft stated that it was his understanding of the EIR process that a response would be required to all of the concerns expressed by Lakewood.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor DuBois adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk