



Public Works Commission

**Regular Meeting
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
Minutes**

Thursday, July 5, 2007

North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue

CALL TO ORDER: 7:07 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Francis, Holland, Prevo, Shumer, St. John, Wolfe
Absent: Commissioners Alward, Nelson
Vacant: Councilmember Maio's appointee

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of May 3, 2007 were adopted as submitted (MSC St. John/Wolfe, with a vote of 6-0-0).

CHAIR REPORT: None.

STAFF REPORT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Presentation and Background for the City's Future Undergrounding Policy:

Commissioner St. John presented historical background of the State of California's undergrounding from the late 1800's to the most recent CPUC Rules 20A/20B/20C. The pros and cons of undergrounding were discussed. Aesthetics, environment, and safety are usually considered as primary reasons to underground. The benefits of reliability and maintenance of the undergrounded facilities and any increased property values are somewhat unclear. There may also be financial impacts to the city in terms of staff cost and associated costs like tearing up of the streets and the subsequent repair, although the cost of repairing the streets is normally included in the undergrounding costs, whether under Rule 20A or 20B.

ACCOMMODATIONS PROVIDED UPON REQUEST

To request meeting materials in large print, Braille, or on cassette, or to request a sign language interpreter, assistive listening device, real-time captioning or other accommodation for the meeting, call 981-6406 (voice) or 981-6903 (TDD) as soon as possible. Providing at least five (working) days' notice will help to ensure availability at the meeting.

There were questions on the Undergrounding Map provided by staff regarding areas that appear to be

“holes” (areas not undergrounded) along San Pablo Avenue, which was thought to be complete. Staff was asked to investigate and bring an explanation to the next meeting. Financing options were discussed on whether it is possible for the City to assess the homeowner’s connection cost of future Rule 20A undergrounding as a lien/transfer tax. The Commission feels it is important that a future undergrounding consultant be well versed and experienced in financing options.

Commissioner Shumer presented a preview of the subcommittee’s thinking on the policy direction for future Rule 20A funds, which could be based on a convergence of three major criteria for undergrounding, mainly emergency access and evacuation routes, high density in pedestrian and vehicular counts, and whether it is a major arterial route, as designated in the current Berkeley General Plan..

The Commission requested staff from either Public Works or the Fire Department to provide a list of official evacuation routes and information on vehicular and pedestrian counts.

This Action Item was held over for further discussion.

2. Discussion of the Commission’s Watershed/Stormwater Work Project and Reviewing the Storm Drain Master Plan/Consultant’s Study: Commissioner Francis introduced the consultant’s study for the Storm Drain Master Plan. In May 2007, he met with the author of the original study, Dave Richardson, then with CH2MHill and now with RMC Water and Environment. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 1994 study and learn what elements (if any) Mr. Richardson viewed could be updated and/or expanded upon. Mr. Richardson felt that the study was well developed and that the need for modification and/or update was best left in the hands of City staff more familiar with any physical changes (including drainage improvements) that have occurred since 1994. Mr. Francis then met with RMC staff that worked with other communities in setting up various financing options to fund infrastructure improvements. One option they identified was the possibility to create or form a Stormwater Utility District, which is apparently intended to provide monies for such upgrades as may be needed in Berkeley. Mr. Francis did not know how the City currently finances its stormwater improvements nor whether the City has ever contemplated the creation of a Stormwater Utility District.

Following the above summary, a number of Commissioners were interested in hearing more details about the Stormwater Utility District approach. Mr. Francis committed to providing such information, assuming he could gather it. Also, it was agreed that the workgroup should schedule a meeting with key City staff for their perspective on the 1994 study, as well as on what work (if any) is needed to update and/or expand upon that earlier effort, and accounting for any construction work done in recent years.. City staff could also share with the workgroup their view of what specific infrastructure upgrades and/or stormwater management measures would be of highest priority at this time and what financing options they view are most appropriate for the City to consider. Commissioners viewed that a workgroup report should contain not only a summary of the meeting with RMC, but also the summary of the meeting with City staff. Mr. Francis committed to working with City staff to schedule a time to meet with the workgroup and will wait until after that meeting to craft the summary report.

3. Discussion of Updates to the Council Report on the Five-Year Street Plan: The Commissioners noted that the current five-year Street Plan, which will soon be presented to Council, may have been modified since Commission review of the April draft.. It was debated whether or not the Commission’s prior action is still appropriate. The Commissioners agreed to review the matter further at a future meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Highlights of Adopted Budget FY 2008-2009: The Commission was informed by staff that Lisa Malek-Zadeh had a schedule conflict, and that she will attend the next PWC meeting in September to present the 2008-2009 Adopted Budget Highlights.

2. Discussion – Commissioners Manual: The Commissioners’ Manual section, “Establishing subcommittees” was reviewed. Clearly, the Commission must give clear direction to subcommittees, or work groups, or project groups, in order to meet the directive of “a specific charge or outline of responsibilities shall be established by the parent body” (pg 60).

REPORT ON WORK PROJECTS AND LIAISON WORK:

Commissioner St. John reported that the Disability Commission’s Workplan for this year includes four areas (1) wheelchair access to stores and businesses, (2) lack of availability for the accessible taxis, (3) emergency preparedness, and (4) the warm pool.

FUTURE AGENDAS:

August: No Regular Meeting

September: 2008-2009 Budget, 5-Year Street Plan Update , Undergrounding Proposal,
Storm Water/Watershed

October: Storm Water Infrastructure Update

November: Watershed/Storm Water BMP Report

December: No Regular Meeting (Retreat?)

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 p.m.