



Public Works Commission

**Regular Meeting
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
Minutes**

Thursday, October 4, 2007

North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue

CALL TO ORDER: 7:05 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Alward, Francis, Holland, Nelson, Prevo, Schueler, Shumer, St. John, Wolfe

Absent: None

Vacant: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: Harvey Sherback spoke about water being a valuable commodity and about initiatives that state and local government can and should take to conserve fresh water, such as encouraging and developing the use of solar power. Commissioner Francis mentioned, as an example, the existence of state grants to promote energy and water projects.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The following corrections were made to the minutes of September 6, 2007: (1) Under Public Comment, in the future, the exact address of speakers should no longer be recorded, and these minutes should instead read "...of the Prince Street neighborhood..." (2) Under Action Item 3, "...and Commissioners indicated an interest..." should read "...The Public Right-of-Way (PROW) workgroup shall review and investigate..." (3) Under Action Item 4, add "approval of" after "The staff recommendation for..." The amended minutes were adopted (MSC Schueler/Francis, with a vote of 8-0-1, Wolfe abstaining).

CHAIR REPORT: It is the last meeting for Commissioner St. John after having served on the Public Works Commission for eight years, and her service was duly acknowledged and commended. A replacement has not yet been announced.

STAFF REPORTS: (1) The position of Watershed Coordinator has been reclassified as Watershed Resources Specialist, and the job classification is being sent to Council for approval in October 2007. (2) Staff intends to submit an Information Report to Council in December 2007 on the results of the first year of implementation of the Private Sewer Lateral Program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

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.

PRESENTATION: None.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Undergrounding Policy: Commissioner Shumer presented a revision to the recommendation adopted at the last meeting. After discussion, the Commission decided to reaffirm the (unmodified) version adopted at the last meeting (MSC St. John/Alward, with a vote of 9-0-0). The secretary will restructure the recommendation into Council report format with additional required language.

Commissioner St. John submitted a history of undergrounding in Berkeley, which is attached and made a part of these minutes.

2. Work group interim report on stormwater/watershed infrastructure: Commissioner Francis provided an oral summary of his Work Group's written report in the packet. It was concluded that the major issue is the lack of funding for repairs and improvements to the storm drainage system. Recommendations on financing alternatives will be the focus of a joint effort by the stormwater/watershed Work Groups for discussion at future commission meetings.

The remainder of the agenda, as follows, was held over to the next meeting:

3. Work group interim report on stormwater/watershed best management practices

4. Retreat:

a. Shall a retreat be scheduled in December?

b. Focus: possibilities –

i. Overview of all DPW work/subjects?

ii. Review of 2007 workplan and creation of 2008 workplan therefrom?

iii. Another process?

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Council action on 5-Year Street Paving Program

2. Status of PWC Recommendations to Council

3. Measure G Reports: CEAC, Energy, TC, ZW, CHC, Disaster

4. Updated workgroup and liaison list

FUTURE AGENDAS:

November: Director's Annual Report

December: No regular meeting (Retreat?)

January: Staff sewer replacement report

Paving workgroup interim report

February: Elect officers

March: 5-Year Paving Report

ADJOURNMENT: 9:30 p.m.

Undergrounding History & Outlook for Residential Neighborhoods

Carlene St. John, Public Works Commissioner – Sept 20, 2007

Overview of CPUC Rule 20

Requires utilities statewide to set aside specified amounts of money for undergrounding projects

Rule 20A (Property owner responsible for parcel conversion costs only)

1. the area has an unusually heavy concentration of overhead electric facilities, or
2. the area is extensively used by the general public and carries a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or
3. the area adjoins or passes through a civic area or public recreation area or an area of unusual scenic interest to the general public.

Rule 20B

Property owners elect to fund total cost of undergrounding utilities. Minimum requirement is one block (both sides of the

street) or 600 feet, whichever is less.

Rule 20C

Ensures new developments include costs of undergrounding utilities.

History of Rule 20A Districts in Berkeley

Berkeley and Oakland were two cities who aggressively went after Rule 20A funds and formed a long queue of assessment districts in their areas. They convinced PG&E to bend the guidelines and use Rule 20A monies in residential neighborhoods where residents were more willing to pay for private connection costs (\$2000+ per parcel).

When PG&E started to face their own problems (rapid demand caused by internet server farms & bankruptcy hearings) they began to refuse to deviate from the original criteria established by the CPUC under Rule 20. The first instance was PG&E's outright rejection of a proposed Rule 20A district in Oakland's Piedmont Pines neighborhood.

At that point, Berkeley still had a number residential districts approved by PG&E in queue and their Rule 20A monies committed years into the future. As a result the City Council issued a moratorium on Rule 20A districts until a new policy for future Rule 20A monies could be developed.

Today there are still three residential districts which have paid their connection and street light costs, but are still waiting for PG&E to schedule construction.

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| 1. Miller/Stevenson/Grizzly | Estimated construction 2007-2008 |
| 2. Grizzly Peak/Summit | To be scheduled |

3. Vistamont (Woodmont) To be scheduled

Most Residential Neighborhoods – Rule 20B

In December 2000, the City rolled out guidelines for neighborhoods interested in forming Rule 20B districts.

Although many neighborhoods have expressed interest and continue to do so, only one neighborhood (Thousand Oaks Heights) actually formed a district which is now complete.

Although cost estimates are being updated based on the experience of Thousand Oaks Heights, the estimates from August 2005 give you some indication.. At that time the range was \$25-\$30k per household, not including the conversion costs on each parcel or \$2.5k-\$5K. In broad terms this translated into approximately \$2000 annual costs added to county property tax bills. Of course, these costs would probably be a little higher today.

The City is currently not accepting applications, although some District Operating Committees have received unofficial guidance.

If you are interested, you should contact Kenneth Emeziem, Supervising Civil Engineer, Public Works Department and ask that your group be added to the list of interested neighborhoods so you will be notified when this program is open again.

Contact info: 981-6444 or KEmeziem@ci.berkeley.ca.us