



Public Works Commission

Regular Meeting
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
Minutes
Thursday, November 1, 2007
North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue

CALL TO ORDER: 7:07 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Francis, Holland, Nelson, Prevo, Schueler, Shumer, Wolfe
Absent: Commissioners Alward and Henry (Leaves of Absence)
Vacant: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the October 4, 2007 regular meeting were adopted as submitted (MSC Francis/Nelson with a vote of 7-0-0).

CHAIR REPORT: The cooperation of all Commissioners was requested in order to finish tonight's full agenda on time, since much of the last meeting's agenda was carried forward and since it is the last regular meeting of 2007.

STAFF REPORT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Councilmember Wozniak has appointed a new Commissioner, Larry Henry, effective October 22, 2007. Commissioner Prevo reported that she had attended an ASUC "Walkday" and it was successful.

PRESENTATION: Claudette Ford, Public Works Director, made an annual report on the status of the Department. She indicated a significant state of flux in staffing recently, due primarily to a large number of vacancies (25 – 30 positions) and recruitments in progress. Three critical recruitments are underway: (1) Deputy Director of Operations (fill by 2/01/08?), (2)

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(fill by 6/01/08?), and (3) Parking Supervisor (fill by 3/08?). For the time being, Ms. Ford has been acting in each of those positions herself, although she plans to make a 6-month temporary appointment to Transportation Manager soon. She further noted the good news that all electrician vacancies have finally been filled and that the centralization of the Department's finance/accounting function is almost complete. She noted that the recent annual "All Storm Day" was successful and announced a new pilot program for "speed cushions." Lastly, she announced an upcoming all-day training session for all managers/supervisors, with a focus on bringing up new candidates from the ranks. Then she opened it up for questions, and Commissioners raised storm drain and compost collection issues (the latter being the purview of the Zero Waste Commission).

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Review and Comment on Watershed Resources Specialist Classification: The Secretary was asked for a clarification of the nature of the referral from Council to ask the Commission to review and comment on Councilmember Moore's desire that the watershed position be an engineer. The Commission held considerable discussion on the needs and requirements of the watershed function and the salary requirements if an engineer were specified rather than the generalist water resource position. Questions were raised whether engineers are too specialized and focused rather than having a broad perspective and exceptional communication skills. Commissioner Wolfe then made a motion to recommend that the job classification be approved as written, without modification or adding further commentary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nelson and a vote was taken. The motion failed* by a vote of 4-2-1 (Shumer and Prevo opposed, Holland abstaining). After further discussion, Commissioner Francis proposed a statement that the Commission recommends that the job classification be amended to incorporate language that "engineering experience is highly desirable." This recommendation was adopted (MSC Francis/Schueler, with a vote of 6-1-0, Prevo opposed).

***Important Addendum:** After the meeting, the Chair and the Secretary reviewed the rules on Leaves of Absence in the *Commissioner's Manual*. It was noted that a Leave of Absence, as authorized by the appointing Councilmember, is to count as a vacancy on the Commission for purposes of voting and for a quorum. Since there were two Leaves of Absence at this meeting, a majority would actually be four votes, rather than five, since there were effectively only seven total members. Therefore, as opposed to the ruling at the meeting, the first motion actually passed. Therefore, the recommendation to Council will be that the job classification was approved as written but will further acknowledge that there was considerable discussion that the Commission recommends that engineering experience would be highly desirable.

2. Investigation on paving University Avenue: This item was held over to a future meeting.

3. Retreat: A special meeting to serve as a "retreat" with the main purpose of developing a Work Plan for 2008, was scheduled as follows:

Date: Saturday, December 8, 2007

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Location: Corporation Yard Assembly Room ("Green Room")

The following subjects will be added to the agenda with referenced material included in the

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1. Council action on 5-Year Street Paving Program:** This was passed by Council on September 18, 2007 with commentary by certain Councilmembers that future plans need to consider the condition of arterials to a greater extent.

- 2. Status of PWC Recommendations to Council:** This is deferred to the Retreat.

- 3. Measure G Reports (CEAC, Energy, TC, ZW, CHC, Disaster):** This is deferred to the Retreat.

- 4. Upcoming staff report to Council on Private Sewer Lateral Program:** This is scheduled for the December 18 Council meeting, but a copy of the report will not be available to the PWC until the January 2008 meeting.

FUTURE AGENDAS:

a. Recent public comment: The Commission discussed the following topics but declined to prioritize them at this time.

- Undergrounding
- Sidewalk cleaning downtown
- Water and resources and solar

b. Future:

- 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

There was discussion that recent public comment topics do not need to be agendized, but a final decision was deferred to the retreat. The downtown sidewalk cleaning schedule should be included in the agenda packet. The solar energy/water conservation speaker was already referred to the Energy Commission. The Paving Plan item for March should be taken up by the assigned Work Group with specific focus on policy and procedures, rather than the 5-year output. Further discussion is to be held at the Retreat.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:30 p.m.