



Public Works Commission

**Regular Meeting
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
Minutes**

Thursday, April 5, 2012

North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue

CALL TO ORDER: 7:10 pm

Present: Alward, Diaz, Haramati, Henry, Holland, Neal, Schueler, Yep

Absent: Kidd

Vacant: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the regular meeting of February 2, 2012 were approved as submitted (MSC Schueler/Haramati with a vote of 7-0-1, Diaz abstaining). The minutes of the regular meeting of March 1, 2012 were amended to delete “and see if it’s appropriate” at the end of the first paragraph under Discussion of Item #3 of Public Comment. The amended minutes were then adopted (MSC Henry/Schueler with a vote of 7-0-1, Diaz abstaining).

CHAIR REPORT: None

STAFF REPORT: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1. Commission Consolidation:** Mark Numainville, Acting City Clerk, summarized the memorandum contained in the packet. Commissioners responded by making several points as follow:
 - The memorandum contains no data, specifically about \$\$ savings, as a justification for the consolidations
 - In recent years, the PWC has heard numerous times that staff doesn’t have the time nor expertise to research issues, and the Commission has filled in the gaps and has

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Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

- professional experience and expertise that is extremely valuable in augmenting staff
- PW Department is the jurisdiction of 4 different commissions at present; it would make more sense to combine those into one commission
 - Both the Transportation and Public Works Commission agendas are already full; however, many topics are duplicative
 - There are not enough commissions being considered to make a noticeable difference; reducing the number from 35 to 15-20 would make more sense
 - There are other ways to reduce burden on staff and be more efficient
 - The focus should not only be for recent years, but should consider the broader picture over a much longer time frame
 - The decision seems to be already made, and the PWC is simply being informed, rather than asking for input
 - This is the only outside body in the City with purview over “infrastructure”
 - Commissioners are volunteers, who do not cost anything.
 - There was a Council Item this week to consider reorganizing the City to create a “Department of the Environment.” Although this seems to be a direction that is quite contrary to reducing commissions, staff explained that this came unexpectedly from certain council members, while it has been evaluating the status of the large number of commissions for a longer time and is a result of prior requests from Council.

Staff suggested that the Commission consider an Action Item at its next meeting expressing its position that could get to Council by the targeted meeting of May 29, 2012.

A motion was passed to move this agenda item to the Action calendar (MSC Holland/Schueler with a vote of 8-0-0). Then a motion was made to report to the City Council on the “Role of the Public Works Commission and the Proposed Consolidation, with Suggestions for Alternative Means of Saving Staff Time and Costs.” The motion was passed (MSC Schueler/Holland with a vote of 8-0-0). Commissioners Haramati, Holland, Schueler and Yep volunteered to develop a draft report to be placed on the May 3, 2012 commission agenda.

2. Permeable Paver Trial Project: Public Works Director Andrew Clough passed out copies and presented highlights of the US Department of Agriculture’s Report on soil types and conditions throughout Berkeley, which showed that the majority of soil in the city is a low permeability clayey material, with little probability of groundwater recharge. This makes permeable paver installations somewhat more costly and less effective, but does not preclude their effective use in such an environment.

Jeff Egeberg then gave the status of the selection of candidate sites for a permeable paver trial from the last three years of the 5-Year Plan, using the basic criteria of residential or collector streets needing reconstruction. Four sites are being evaluated:

1. Warring, from Dwight to Derby
2. Brookside, from Claremont to Claremont
3. Stanton, from Russell to Ashby
4. Vine, from McGee to Edith

The 5-Year Plan is scheduled to be on the May 3 agenda, along with the final permeable candidates from above. These are then planned to go to Council on June 12, 2012. Meanwhile, staff is doing research and preparing to go out to bid shortly after Council action for a

design/build contract and to do a final evaluation of the staff list of candidates. After that, construction documents could be prepared for the construction of the trial project.

- 3. Recent Changes to Sidewalk Repair Program:** Andrew Clough presented a summary of the enclosed Council report that changed the sidewalk program to a simple 50/50 split with property owners. In comparison, by State law, property owners are responsible for 100% of maintenance and repairs of sidewalks abutting their property. There is no longer a need to differentiate damage due to street trees from other damage. The Commission's main concern is that the change and the Council action were taken without much public process, and the PWC in particular was not even aware of it ahead of time.
- 4. Council Referral on LED Street Lights:** Staff reported that one pilot project is underway at the Marina, which is a park-like setting, and staff is currently engaged in searching for another location for a commercial/urban application, to compare its effects in very different settings. It was noted that the PWC has expressed interest in this subject in the past. It was also noted that an immediate response to the Council referral is not expected until these pilot projects are further along.
- 5. City's Role in UC Diesel Spill Response:** The staff reports provided to Council and enclosed in the packet were noted and discussed. Director Clough indicated that further investigation is underway and more information is yet to come.

FUTURE AGENDAS

Next Meeting:

1. Commission Consolidation
2. 5-Year Paving Plan/Permeable Paver Trial
3. Possible Tour of Corporation Yard

Following Meetings:

1. Rule 20A Undergrounding: Review of Past Recommendations to Council
2. San Pablo Greenspine Project: Staff Update

9:30 pm ADJOURNMENT