

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Oakley City Council
Held Tuesday, April 16, 2019
5:30 PM
Oakley Recreation Center
1250 O'Hara Avenue
Oakley, California 94561

1. Welcome, Roll Call & Review of the Agenda

Mayor Claire Alaura called the special meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. at the Oakley Recreation Center located at 1250 O'Hara Avenue, Oakley, California. She welcomed everyone.

Attendees included Mayor Claire Alaura, Vice Mayor Doug Hardcastle, City Councilmembers Sue Higgins, Randy Pope and Kevin Romick, as well as City staff, including Bryan Montgomery, City Manager, Nancy Marquez, Assistant to the City Manager/HR Manager, Eric Christensen, Chief of Police, Deborah Sultan, Finance Director, Kevin Rohani, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, Troy Edgell, Code Enforcement Manager, Joshua McMurray, Planning Manager, Lindsey Bruno, Recreation Manager, and Libby Vreonis, City Clerk / Paralegal.

City Manager Bryan Montgomery provided an overview of the agenda.

2. Public Comments

Public Comments followed the discussion of Well-planned and Well-maintained Community, infra.

3. General Overview of City's General Fund Budget for FY 2019-20

Finance Director Deborah Sultan provided a general overview of the City's General Fund Budget for the upcoming fiscal year including operating revenues and expenditures, net operating revenues, transfers to capital and net. She shared building revenue is at a lull, the new Recreation and Entrepreneur Centers have provided additional costs not seen in previous years, the policy for a fund balance reserve is 20% and the City has projected over the next 5 years approximately 26-28% for reserves which is good if the economy changes and the City has an even, sustainable budget.

City Manager Bryan Montgomery mentioned there are no significant staff changes, some staff will be relocating to the Recreation Center and former Ace Hardware building and some safety upgrades will be made at City Hall as well as renovations in the Police Department. He commented that conservative spending by staff and the City Council allows things like the construction of the Recreation Center. He provided an overview of Oakley's General Fund Budget with its comparable cities and shared Oakley has among the lowest revenue of all comparable cities (property taxes, gas and sales tax), it operates on a very lean budget and conservatively, and does a lot with very little.

Ms. Sultan mentioned online sales tax could grow.

Mr. Montgomery added that new laws regarding online sales tax could help Oakley.

Councilmember Romick commented it is important for residents to know the impact certain business (i.e., gas) has on Oakley.

Mr. Montgomery responded that staff can continue to spread the word.

Ms. Sultan commented that an interesting fact with some of the comparable cities is that 70-80% of their costs are personnel due to the number of employees.

Councilmember Pope responded it is key for Oakley to have a core team with strength and flexibility to sustain times when the economy is not so good. He suggested hiring out when needed.

Mr. Montgomery commented that contractors or temporary staff could be utilized to get out of the maximum "RPM zone".

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kevin Rohani commented that there are still challenges when hiring contractors because City employees still have to oversee their work to ensure the work stays within budget and performance is completed properly.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned the goal of staff is to present a budget that matches the goals and priorities of the City Council.

4. *Dinner-Strategic Planning Discussion: Review of City Council priorities, strategies and direction for the FY 2019-20 Budget*

City Manager Bryan Montgomery mentioned he and department managers met with Councilmembers individually to discuss goals and priorities for the upcoming budget. He shared that the following goals were highlighted during the discussions: safety, preserving a small-town feel, well-planned and well-maintained community, increasingly vibrant Downtown, financially sound/stable City, professional leadership by the City Council and staff and more shopping opportunities.

Councilmember Pope commented he would like to see more improvements west of the Downtown to provide a connection.

Safety

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to safety that Councilmembers expressed they want a strong, active Police Department, quality roads (i.e., increase investment in roads and keep a high Pavement Condition Index), utilize neighborhood traffic management (i.e., Jamar boxes, speed trailers, other technology and enforcement to reduce speeding), maintain a strong relationship with East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, increase disaster preparedness, develop CERT program, and encourage residents to register security cameras.

Councilmember Pope commented that roads are very important and within the City's control, they are the first impression when entering the City, and well-maintained roads sets a tone that the City cares.

Mr. Montgomery shared that street overlay projects, i.e., slurry seal, can prolong the life of roads.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kevin Rohani commented staff is fully engaged regarding which roads are in need of repair, staff is stretching available funding to surface streets, and staff is requesting additional funds for street maintenance in the upcoming budget. He mentioned Laurel Road will receive an overlay over the next two years.

Councilmember Higgins inquired if all of Laurel Road will be four lanes, two lanes in each direction.

Mr. Rohani responded it will be except east bound near the Laurel ball fields.

Councilmember Higgins inquired if any portion of the Safeway property could be used to widen the road.

Councilmember Romick commented it could chase Safeway away if the City takes any of its property.

Mr. Rohani explained that the power pole impedes expansion of the road as Laurel gets closer to O'Hara Avenue and the property owner was not cooperative with the placement of the pole elsewhere.

Mr. Montgomery added that if the City were to condemn the property, it would use funds that could go toward the road.

Councilmember Pope inquired where Laurel Road will widen out.

Mr. Rohani responded it will open up approximately where the current entrance is to the Laurel ball fields.

Chief of Police Eric Christensen shared that Police is increasing its communication with technology changes, it now has a shared email address that allows information to be shared with all officers at the same time. He also shared that Police plans to bring more volunteers in to help with the front counter and events and it is building relationships with CERT participants, its mentorship program and with the schools. He mentioned residents need to be aware what type of crime is happening in their neighborhood so they can provide additional partnership with Police.

Mayor Alaura thanked Chief Christensen. She commented that schools are cities within the City of Oakley and the partnership between Police and school districts is important so parents are aware and prepared. She requested Police continue to maintain relationships with the schools and suggested updates could be provided at PTA meetings.

Chief Christensen responded that through Police's partnership with the schools, it has been able to assess projects such as placing cones to prohibit parking in no parking zones on Neroly Road in front of Freedom High School with the intent to change existing behavior that is impeding safety.

Mr. Montgomery commented that the Police Department has also been able to implement the Oakley CERT program as suggested by Councilmember Pope.

Chief Christensen added that he has 36 active CERT participants, 23 whom are graduates.

Small Town Feel

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to a small town feel that Councilmembers expressed they want to continue quality and maintained parks, expand Recreation programs and classes, maintain open space, provide Delta access for recreational activities, continue quality community events, promote walking and biking on trails, focus on small business in the Downtown, maintain strong relationships with the school districts, continue the Leadership Academy and engage graduates, continue providing personal customer service and responses from the City Council and staff, continue to provide information to residents (what is happening and why), build strong relationships with community partners (i.e., clergy, leagues and seniors), and provide housing that is affordable and available.

Councilmember Pope identified a challenge is striking a balance with maintaining open space with housing that is higher density so it is more affordable.

Councilmember Romick commented developments on East Cypress have already been approved, but he does not want to see more sound walls and does not want to make more accommodations. He suggested no additional smaller houses. He mentioned the Downtown provides a small town feel which will be maintained even when housing growth occurs.

Councilmember Pope commented there is a State definition of affordable housing, but it is not the same as housing that is affordable.

Councilmember Romick commented housing that is affordable is housing that someone will purchase.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned would likely have to reduce impact fees and/or provide other incentives if the City Council requires larger lots.

Councilmember Romick recommended no more deals for smaller housing; leave zoning as is. He shared that economic forecasts anticipate growth until 2021; therefore, there is no impending doom. He mentioned the City will have to deal with location for commercial.

Planning Manager Joshua McMurray mentioned he is receiving a lot of requests from people who desire to develop commercial property or change existing property, the City needs balanced growth, no one is inquiring about larger lots, and housing that is affordable in East County is not the same as the State definition of affordable housing; it is not low-income.

Mr. Montgomery shared that Mr. McMurray and his team are working hard on design review of homes.

Mr. McMurray commented that he and his team are paying great attention to the details of design and are pushing 360 degree architecture to provide high-quality architecture.

Mr. Montgomery suggested more HOA's can help with the cost of landscape maintenance.

Councilmember Romick suggested knowing what is planned for future retail before approval would be helpful as the City needs to have some gain for sales tax.

Mr. McMurray responded that the City received many inquiries from businesses but there is no existing space for new businesses.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned a mixed-use project could be proposed near AutoZone. He also mentioned the post office could use a new location.

Councilmember Romick commented that he does not think the post office will move because the City tried to get it to relocate when it incorporated and another location has been offered without any traction.

Well-planned and Well-maintained Community

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to a well-planned and well-maintained community, Councilmembers expressed they want to support best practices land use policies to enhance quality, complete the update to the General Plan, continue Code Enforcement focus, apply zoning standards to continue quality development, continue to upgrade and

enhance the quality of Park infrastructure, and only build new things if recurring revenue exists to maintain it.

Councilmember Pope suggested a schedule to maintain roads.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kevin Rohani responded that City staff has a system in which it can view the condition of roads and bundle roads for maintenance for cost efficiency.

Councilmember Pope inquired if there is a mechanism to pay for new streets.

Mr. Rohani explained that developers build new streets and the City maintains existing streets and there is a 7-year cycle for slurry seal; therefore it is important to have sustainable annual funding. He mentioned there are guidelines for roads, each road behaves differently and staff provides the best value for the community with available funds. He shared the pavement condition of Oakley roads is very good at 77 PCI.

Councilmember Pope inquired if the City could collect money for specific roads to maintain those roads once the City accepts them or if the money goes into a general pool account.

Mr. Montgomery explained there is different funding for different roads.

Councilmember Romick commented that would involve a new fee per home.

Councilmember Pope commented the City accepts the obligation but lacks the funding source.

Councilmember Romick commented Oakley already has some of the highest fees in the County.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned a street assessment could be a possibility, much like a lighting and landscape district assessment, but it would have to be agreed to by the property owners.

Mr. Rohani mentioned in other cities, sometimes the local garbage company will assess such fees.

Councilmember Pope responded that Oakley's contract garbage company does assess such fees.

Councilmember Romick expressed concern with large trucks that may travel more often on levee roads with future construction of homes in the East Cypress corridor near Bethel Island and inquired if there is a way to impose fees on the developer.

Mr. Montgomery responded that it is already established that the homes to be built will pay for the bridge and roads.

Mr. McMurray added that the City already asked the developer to voluntarily join the community facilities district for fire.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned in that area roughly 13% of the 1% will go to the Fire District.

Councilmember Romick clarified that homes will only pay 1%, but 13% will be allocated to fire.

Vibrant Downtown

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to a vibrant Downtown, Councilmembers expressed they want to continue improvements east, actively work with regional railroad representatives to develop the train platform, provide street parking and a parking lot to

support the train platform, develop more mom and pop businesses, support a stand-alone library in the Downtown, and continue to expand the Entrepreneur center training programs and enhance its facility.

Mayor Alaura suggested continuing a farmers market and to have a “makers market” which would provide “hand to home” business opportunities and tie into the small town feel. She suggested the events not compete with markets in neighboring cities.

Councilmember Higgins suggested the City support the Chamber of Commerce by providing funding to help with its website to promote Oakley businesses.

Mr. Montgomery commented the money would have to be well invested.

Councilmember Romick commented that the City has tried to help the Chamber in the past and he was involved when it was the biggest thing in town and hosted the Almond Festival; however, it experienced problems and currently has volunteer leadership; it may not see more engagement until the business community is larger.

Vice Mayor Hardcastle commented that the Almond Festival dissolved when rides were not reserved for the event.

Recreation Manager Lindsey Bruno shared that her department organizes the Shop Oakley coupon book and most Oakley businesses do not have logos so there may be some lack of time or business savvy to invest. She also shared that the Chamber received a website makeover by a former member; however, it may lack the capacity to maintain the website.

Mr. Montgomery suggested a tenant at the Entrepreneur Center could possibly help with the website.

Councilmember Romick shared that website creation and maintenance are extremely user-friendly now and if someone knows how to type, they can handle a website.

Councilmember Pope requested an update on the DuPont property.

Mr. McMurray shared that a project was submitted, staff is gathering information, the EIR should be finished by May, there is a 45-day review period which follows, many people are interested in this project, and after responses are prepared, staff will bring it to the City Council, likely in August. He mentioned there is a closing date of July 1 and there are some issues to be resolved with the State.

Mr. Montgomery asked Mayor Alaura if she might want to share details about the makers market.

Mayor Alaura mentioned the products provided are unique and are unavailable through commercial or nationwide vendors.

Councilmember Romick inquired who runs it.

Mayor Alaura responded there are brokers who organize the market and the City would be in partnership with them.

Mr. Montgomery commented the packing sheds could provide a unique location for this type of market.

Councilmember Romick commented parking lots may be needed for the train platform.

Ms. Bruno shared she has seen some fairs where items are required to be hand-made.

Public Comments

No online comment forms were submitted for the meeting.

Oakley Community Library Manager Andrea Freyler commented she would like to form a non-City hosted group of community partners to meet once a month at the Library to share information and stay connected.

Mayor Alaura and City Manager Bryan Montgomery offered to help.

Mr. Montgomery asked the City Council if they could identify 5-10 leaders to help with City projects.

Councilmember Pope suggested the sports leagues (ECLL, flag football and soccer).

Councilmember Romick commented attendance at City Council meetings is low.

Mayor Alaura suggested that people may be more willing to participate and be a community partner if it is not ran by the City. She shared she supports it and suggested the City could help with outreach. She also shared Supervisor Diane Burgis has been very successful in forming a similar roundtable involving non-profit organizations.

Councilmember Pope suggested the City tell the Chamber this is something it would like them to do in exchange for the \$1 rent they pay.

Mr. Montgomery mentioned the idea of the group would be to create a core leadership team, not fractured.

Financially Sound / Stable City

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to a financially sound/stable City, Councilmembers expressed they want to adhere to budget policies, have a 10-year plan, continue to receive distinguished Finance awards and assess budget priorities, not in isolation.

Councilmember Romick commented there are restrictions on how the City can spend money.

Finance Director Deborah Sultan commented that the General Fund is like a pie, there is a set amount and it just depends on how you slice it.

Professional Leadership by the City Council and Staff

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to professional leadership by the City Council and Staff, Councilmembers expressed the City Council and staff should continue to provide 3P's (polite, professional and progressive) service in its interactions, maintain open communication and a strong culture, recruit and retain dedicated and professional staff, and understand that staff is almost always running at a high RPM.

Assistant to the City Manager Nancy Marquez mentioned that the City provides an annual employee appreciation day and has a committee to explore employee engagement to provide intangibles that help with retention.

Mr. Montgomery added that the department managers are discussing having stay interviews with staff to determine what things help retain employees.

Councilmember Higgins mentioned she would like to see a policy in place that City staff cannot be treated in extremely negative ways by the public.

Councilmember Pope commented he understands the City has a tight budget and the Council wants employees to know they are appreciated, wants them to love working here to stay here, and they are always looking for creative ways to help.

Ms. Marquez shared that the City is looking into providing a monthly wellness activity and to host brown bag lunch topics of interest to employees (i.e., financial planning).

Recreation Manager Lindsey Bruno added that another idea shared by the committee is to offer residential or discounted rates for employees who sign up for classes, camps, or who wish to reserve facilities.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kevin Rohani mentioned that it is important to staff to know that it has the overall support of the City Council and that the City Council trusts that staff is taking care of business; this relationship is priceless.

More Shopping Opportunities

Mr. Montgomery shared in regard to more shopping opportunities, Councilmembers shared they would like hand-to-home and farm-to-table businesses, have a regional effort to attract businesses to East County, develop the DuPont property, and provide an employment opportunity website link for Oakley businesses.

Councilmember Pope suggested the website link could be like *OpportunityOakley*. He inquired how to walk the line when the community is indicating it does not want additional gas stations or storage units.

Councilmember Romick responded that he and Mr. Montgomery counted the number of gas stations in neighboring cities and Oakley doesn't have any more than neighboring cities per capita; the problem is they are built around the same time.

Planning Manager Joshua McMurray commented that his department still receives calls from people interested in building more storage units. He suggested a stricter stance is an option for City Council which could limit building them only in light-industrial areas which would require a zoning text amendment.

Mayor Alaura commented that there is a perception that there is a small amount of land available.

Councilmember Pope commented that they are placed in higher profile areas; an idea may be to have them constructed like the business on Laurel Road which has retail in front and storage units in back.

Councilmember Higgins mentioned there is a proposal to have a mixed-use project on 5th Street with sea storage containers on bottom and residential upstairs.

Mr. Montgomery commented that gas stations generate a large amount of sales tax, the market should equalize and the price of land in Oakley is less expensive.

Councilmember Pope inquired if Rotten Robbie is locating to Oakley.

Mr. McMurray responded it opened in Brentwood.

5. Closing Comments

Mayor Alaura thanked everyone for attending and for their work.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Libby Vreonis
City Clerk