EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Saturday, September 22, 2012 – 9:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers

Meeting Location
El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

Bill Jones – Mayor

Mayor Pro Tem Greg Lyman
Councilmember Rebecca Benassini
Councilmember Ann Cheng
Councilmember Janet Abelson

9:30 a.m. ROLL CALL
Councilmember Abelson, Benassini, Cheng, Lyman and Mayor Jones all present.

CONVENE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Mayor Jones convened the Special City Council meeting at 9:36 a.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
Susanna Marshland, El Cerrito, expressed support for development of bike trails in the City.

Tom Panas, El Cerrito, stated that El Cerrito needs to differentiate itself from other communities, cater to the next generation of families and be a place where people want to live and raise a family. It would be great to have a new library that is not just a place for information transactions but is also a destination for people of all ages with a modest performance venue, a café, an atrium, and meeting rooms.

Dave Weinstein, El Cerrito, stated that the City should focus on what is here now to attract people. There are buildings with true history such as the Mabuchi Building, Camp Herms, the former Windrush School/Chung Mei Orphanage, and many beautiful neighborhoods. Mr. Weinstein said it is important for the City to do a cultural resources survey and also pay attention to wildlife and open space and noted the work that has been done by the Environmental Quality Committee with sustainability and beekeeping. The Hillside Natural Area contains a variety of native plants. Mr. Weinstein advocated for a network of trails that are way-markers to historic buildings, open space and other features. The City needs to protect what it has and enhance it.

Gary Hill, El Cerrito, asked the City Council to think about how trails can be an asset for El Cerrito. There are a number of people that can be reached to make it a priority. There is great potential for a centralized bike park. A bike park would reach a lot of users and offer features that reach different abilities and skill sets across all ages. Cerrito Vista Park and Portola Middle School offer sites that could create a centralized park with a bike component. Mr. Hill
encouraged the City Council to authorize a feasibility study for the City. A centralized park would be a great asset and would not be too expensive. The project would attract a huge volunteer network, donations and sponsorships and would make El Cerrito a destination. It would be the first in the Bay Area and would attract a lot of people. Mr. Hill stated that he would like to see the centralized park put into the General Plan.

Xan Marshland, El Cerrito, said he is involved in mountain biking. He explained that he has to drive over to Marin to train and ride on the trails. It would be really wonderful to have a nice trail and bike network in the City. A member of the El Cerrito High School Mountain Biking Team placed second in the state last year and was able to achieve this designation without a place to train in the City. Mr. Marshland stated that Mountain Bike trails would be very popular here.

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The City Council will discuss the City’s Mission Statement, vision and values within the context of developing a Strategic Plan.

Mayor Jones explained that the current City Councilmembers and the City Council that will be elected in November will provide input into the Strategic Plan Process. Mayor Jones stated that the City Council wants to go forward as fast as possible with the strategic plan and wants to make sure there is enough time for public and professional comment. The Strategic Plan will ultimately weave into the General Plan. Funding for the Strategic Plan will be provided over three fiscal years.

Presenter: Nancy Hetrick and Emily Lohr, Management Partners.

Action: Presentation received. Discussion held.

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Comments regarding where El Cerrito should be headed Submitted by Tess Taylor, El Cerrito.

2. Written Statement regarding attraction of new residents Submitted by Tom Panas, El Cerrito.

3. Please support a Bike Park in El Cerrito & Ride-able Trail Development in the Hillside Area Submitted by Gary Hill, El Cerrito.

ADJOURNED SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING at 12:58 p.m.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special City Council meeting of September 22, 2012 as approved by the El Cerrito City Council.

Cheryl Morse, City Clerk

William C. Jones III, Mayor

Version: 10/3/2012