



MEETING SUMMARY – minutes to be adopted at the special July 30 meeting
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 11th, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

Hornig Brawner called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm

Roll Call:

Members Figone, Hornig Brawner, Lehman, Taylor, Kagawa, Gager and Petersen

Absent: Shrem

Also Present: Emily Alter, Staff Liaison

1. **Staff/Council Liaisons Announcements and Reports** Alter reported progress on the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) that the City received to improve station access and place-making at the City's two BART Stations. Taylor inquired if there was any additional information about opportunities to underground the PG&E power stations; there is no additional information at this time, but it has been highlighted as a community concern. Alter announced that Short Term Vacation Rentals would be going to the Planning Commission for a Study Session at their June meeting. Alter announced that, despite the massage moratorium, a massage studio would be opening up near del Norte, because the new business application was submitted prior to the moratorium taking effect.
2. **Comments from the Public on non agenda items-** Shanti Corrigan, Assistant Dean for External Relations of the UC Berkeley Graduate Division, was also in attendance.
3. **Approval of the Minutes** Lehman made a motion to adopt the minutes of the May 28th meeting; Petersen seconded. 5 ayes. Figone abstained due to absence at the May 28th meeting.
4. **Urban Greening Plan Presentation** Alter gave a presentation on the draft Urban Greening Plan. Committee discussed opportunities for the former Portola Middle School site, including potential for urban agriculture or the new library. Figone discussed the possibility of moving the farmer's market, which is run by the Chamber of Commerce, to another site. The Committee discussed potentially relocating it to street ROW on Liberty next to the Plaza BART Parking Lot to improve visibility. Taylor stressed the importance of pairing green space with some small commercial aspect, Taylor discussed partnering with Richmond on Blue to Green Connections, including opportunities to connect to the Berkeley Global Campus. Shanti Corrigan added the opportunities that exist to complete the network to the Campus and whether it would be strategic to have Berkeley's representative come to a meeting. Taylor re-iterated that appropriate commercial uses, including pop-up uses or strategically located commercials along green spaces, woven into the green network is critical for the success of the Plan.

Committee discussed commercial opportunities and matching of business owners to commercial space. Figone discussed that Matt Khadivian, the owner for El Mono Fresh, came to Chamber of Commerce Board Meetings when he was looking for a new commercial space to discuss the difficulties he was having finding larger available rental space in El Cerrito. Kagawa asked what the zoning regulations were for the Masonic building on Stockton Avenue, which recently became available. Hornig Brawner shared the history of the space, including that the previous owner had submitted an application for a mixed-use building on the site.

5. **El Cerrito Restaurant Week: Updates and Actions** Alter reported that the Restaurant Week subcommittee would be meeting on June 22nd. The City has been working with a graphic designer to create a logo for El Cerrito Restaurant Week, with the hope of creating a final logo before the June 22nd meeting, in order to have magnets printed by the 4th of July. Alter handed out flyers to be left with interested

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restaurants summarizing the event and what was required for participation. Subcommittee members were assigned restaurants and had begun outreach to gauge interest.

The Committee discussed the 4th of July Booth, including the interactive activity to gauge interest in different businesses throughout town. Shrem, Lehman, and Gager volunteered to work at the booth. Suzanne Iarla would be running the booth for the City and would help coordinate getting all materials to the event. Taylor said that she would draft language for the EDC blurb. Hornig Brawer said that she'd seen other examples where a map was included and people were directed to show where on the map they'd like to see each business.

6. **El Cerrito Minimum Wage Discussion** Kagawa introduced the issue of a Minimum Wage ordinance to raise El Cerrito's minimum wage, explaining that the issue would likely be brought to City Council and that he felt that the EDC should take a stand on the issue. Lehman wondered whether the Chamber would be surveying business owners on the issue, and whether there was overall support from the idea. Figone said that the Chamber did not currently have any plans to survey the community on the issue, but that he did not think there would be much support for the idea. Alter explained that the issue would likely be handled by the City Manager's office and that they would be responsible for any surveying or engagement of the community on the issue; if the EDC was interested in studying the economic development impacts of the issue that would be relevant and in their purview. Taylor added that the increase in Oakland was causing turmoil among the business community. Lehman wondered if there were examples of other cities who had adopted an increase more than a few months ago, who might be able to discuss their experiences and what they were hearing from the community over a longer period of time. Gager announced that Oscars in Berkeley is closing due to the wage increase and that it will be replaced with a high-end vegan restaurant. Petersen added that a lot of the cost of these ordinances are being past on to the consumer through minimum gratuity requirements ranging from 15-20%. There are additional considerations, such as English second-language business owner outreach to ensure that they are fairly informed about the requirements of such ordinances. Lehman asked about the impact on minimum wage earners in El Cerrito who would benefit from a wage increase and wondered if there is information on what percentage of people employed in El Cerrito make minimum wage.
7. **Committee Member Updates and Discussion of Future Actions and Agenda Items** Lehman shared what happened at the Commissioner's Dinner. Council is still interested in a Vacant Building Registration Fee. Kagawa raised the question of how you define what a vacant space is and how much we actually have in El Cerrito. Taylor is interested in the conversation dovetailing with the pop-up discussion, because there are opportunities for temporary tenancing of these spaces. The Committee was interested in potentially holding a study session with Council to discuss this issue. Alter will follow up to find out how to get a study session on Council's agenda. Kagawa is interested in getting representatives from other cities to present to the EDC before they go to Council.

Hornig Brawer attended the Mayor's Roundtable Luncheon in Richmond, including presentations from a number of entrepreneurs and business owners. Committee's interest in hearing from the broker in charge of Masonic building, from potential developers who would be willing to work with the community, and on what the zoning restrictions are on the property.

Figone announced the Batteries + Bulbs Grand Opening on June 22nd from noon to 5. Figone shared that the El Cerrito Chamber was considering merging with the Albany Chamber, both of which are struggling for membership; there has been conversation about merging with Richmond.

Taylor shared her experience at the Bay Area Book Festival and about scheduling presentations from the people who put on this and other events in neighboring communities. She discussed setting up a meeting with people who have sponsored or put together pop-ups from other communities, as well. Taylor shared that she will be meeting with Ruth Cazden, the chair of the Arts and Culture Commission, to discuss opportunities to work together. Gager added that the Commission is interested in doing a lot more multi-functional events in the coming year.

8. **Adjournment- 9:30**

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Economic Development Committee regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at City Hall - 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito during normal business hours.