

Consent Calendar with corrections to the April 16, 2008 minutes and the removal of item #8 for discussion. Item #8 shall become Business Item #5 on the agenda.

CITY MANAGER'S ORAL REPORT

The City Manager stated staff was trying to schedule a Twin Cities Police Council meeting for Monday, May 12th. The application for 800 Magnolia Avenue is scheduled for the May 27th Planning Commission meeting. She will be attending the Board of Director's Annual Insurance meeting in the East Bay tomorrow. The Planning Commission hearing for the Niven property has been postponed because the applicants are redesigning some changes to the Seniors complex. The City Managers group put together an opinion piece supporting the Next Key Center at Homeward Bound. The City Council allocated some funding for this during the mid-year financial meeting. Larkspur is hosting the MCCMC Meeting on May 28th in the Community Room at Drake's Landing. The guest speaker will be Mr. Will Travis from BCDC and he will be speaking about climate change. There are sixteen applicants for ten available seats on the various Boards and Commissions. Two incumbents have decided not to reapply- one from the Heritage Preservation Board and one from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Interviews will begin at the May 21st Council meeting. The Ecumenical Association for Housing (EAH) will be pulling the building permit for the Drake's Way project next Monday. She asked the Council to add the following emergency item to the agenda: A Closed Session item, Conference with Real Property Negotiator, pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8, regarding 111 Lucky Drive, Corte Madera, AP# 024-041-14 and AP #024-041-15, negotiating parties are Keegan & Coppin Company, and Jean A. Bonander, City of Larkspur, Discussion is Terms, Price or Both. She stated this urgent matter arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda.

M/s, Arlas/Hillmer and approved 5-0 that this closed session item is of an urgent nature and it arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda.

M/s, Arlas/Hillmer and approved 5-0 to add this item to the end of the agenda.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Councilmember Chu reported he attended the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) General Assembly and there would be an increase in the dues of approximately \$93 per year (3.71%).

Councilmember Chu reported the Marin Telecommunications Agency (MTA) would be having discussions in May about a potential increase of 11.6% in their annual budget. This would represent an increase to the City of about \$4,000.

Councilmember Lundstrom suggested the Mayor, who is the City representative to the MCCMC Legislative Committee, write a letter to the Independent Journal and the Twin Cities Times regarding opposition to Proposition 98. She noted this measure is not only about rent control but also would have an effect on local government land use issues.

Councilmember Lundstrom stated the Tiburon City Council is hearing a presentation about Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) at their meeting tonight. Councilmember Hillmer stated he attended a dinner meeting about CCA last week and he was in the minority in terms of opposition to the idea. He explained that Larkspur was a “pay as you go” community and the assumption that residents would like the Council to make this decision for them was counter to existing policy about providing services and avoiding fiscal risk with public funds. The City Manager stated staff is trying to schedule a presentation by CCA and PG&E for an upcoming meeting. She is also trying to contact Berkeley Professor Boornstein who is an expert on utility deregulation. Councilmember Lundstrom stated she was not comfortable deciding for the residents of Larkspur where they would obtain their utilities. She stated the legislation should contain an “opt in” and not an “opt out” provision. Mayor Hartzell stated the Council should take a position on whether or not this should be taken as an advisory vote of the voters.

Councilmember Arlas asked staff to respond to a recent article written by Mr. Dick Spotswood regarding ABAG’s Regional Housing Needs figures. Councilmember Chu stated he would help the City Manager draft a letter since he had quite a few informal discussions with representatives from ABAG.

Mayor Hartzell reported that EAH would be holding the groundbreaking event for the Drake’s Way Project on May 29th. She discussed the enormous amount of excavation that would be taken from the site and the unfortunate delays for the project.

Mayor Hartzell stated there would be a grand opening for “Grocers Landing”, the new deli/market at Larkspur Landing, on May 21st.

Mayor Hartzell announced the Centennial Committee would be selling the tickets for the Rose Bowl Dance on Saturday, May 17th, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Monday from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The tickets would then be available at the Recreation Department office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION ON THE STREETSMARTS PILOT PROGRAM

The City Manager presented the staff report.

Mr. Eric Schatmeier, Planning Manager for the Transportation of Marin (TAM), stated the program is a public education and outreach program targeted toward changing driver, pedestrian and bicyclist behavior in order to address concerns about safety on city streets. TAM purchased the rights to StreetSmarts several years ago and has been designated as the administrator of the \$100,000 Federal grant. The program has been successfully implemented in San Jose and has particular application around school sites. TAM has contracted with Safe Routes to School.

Councilmember Arlas asked what they would do with any excess funds if the program did not work. Mr. Schatmeier stated it would go towards the Non Motorized Pilot Program and other safety programs.

Ms. Deborah Cole, representing Parisi and Associates, made a Powerpoint presentation that discussed the following: 1) The Agenda; 2) The Situation; 3) Causes; 4) StreetSmarts Program Background; 5) Research and Analysis; 6) Creative Process; 7) StreetSmarts Program Objectives; 8) TAM Program Objectives; 9) StreetSmarts Committee Members; 10) Behaviors; 11) A Map; 12) Communication Strategies; 13) TAM Pilot Project Schedule; 14) Creative Strategy; 15) Broad Mixture of Media. She stated they are planning on installing the signage sometime in August when school is back in session.

Twin Cities Police Sergeant Sean Smith discussed the various causes of accidents including speeding, failure to stop at a red light or stop sign, bicycle violations, stress, anxiety, distractions etc. He briefly discussed the "hot spot" locations. He stated this was a great program and the proposed signage would be effective.

Councilmember Chu asked if they had any data, aside from the national statistics, regarding the effectiveness of the program.

Ms. Cole stated she was trying to work with Sergeant Smith on some meaningful statistics and one easy way was to do it with surveys. It is difficult to assess the results and whether or not they were due to the signage, engineering, etc.

Councilmember Hillmer had questions about the development of the campaign approach and the targeted behaviors. He was concerned that the banners and signs might make people angry and make the behaviors worse. He asked if they considered a program of on-line payment for violators that would include links to the educational materials. Ms. Cole stated that was a good idea.

They are looking at handing out some of the educational flyers during traffic stops and when citations are written. Councilmember Hillmer stated the scale of the graphics looked like they were used in San Jose and the message might not be communicated well in a community the size of Larkspur. Ms. Cole stated she had a similar concern and the banners for Larkspur would be smaller. Mr. Schatmeier stated they would be targeting the behaviors in the "hot spots". Councilmember Hillmer stated the "hot spots" have been identified and they could use other appropriate traffic calming measures. Mr. Schatmeier stated this program is a test for whether or not a public information campaign can have an impact on behaviors and it could not fund any capital projects.

The City Manager stated the program was developed in San Jose but has been very successful in communities similar to Larkspur. The "hot spot" areas are common target areas for law enforcement and for capital improvement projects. Traffic data accumulated by the Twin Cities is very good and would provide a good baseline for the measure of efficiency.

Councilmember Lundstrom emphasized that this is a "pilot" program and the "targets" should be community based. She discussed the unique circumstance of having five schools in an approximate one square mile radius. She asked them not to compete with other programs (Get Ready!) and to avoid "overkill". She encouraged them to get feedback from the parent and school groups. She did not want this to be a slick campaign. Ms. Cole agreed and noted that parents were one of the "target" groups.

Councilmember Arlas was concerned that there was already so much signage that people would ignore this campaign. He would rather take the \$100,000 and hire more traffic enforcement officers. He asked how they would measure the effectiveness of the program. Ms. Cole stated they might not be able to do this successfully. Councilmember Arlas stated Larkspur was a thoroughfare for bicyclists and these signs would not have any effect on cyclists running through stop signs, etc. Ms. Cole stated she has spoken to many parents who were ready to put signs in their front yards. Councilmember Arlas stated there has to be a penalty in order to change behaviors.

Councilmember Chu stated he agreed with the comments made by Councilmember Arlas and felt that enforcement was the best form of

education. It is a real challenge to change behavior and people need a reason to change. Mr. Schatmeier stated there are forms of advertising that are effective in changing behavior and this needs to be tested. He stated they need a multi-pronged approach.

Mayor Hartzell stated she was concerned about the scale of the signs and the idea of using children as “messengers”. She encouraged them to use as much e-communication as possible.

Councilmember Lundstrom reiterated that they want a community-based program that does not include a slick campaign. She asked them to report back to the Council in the fall.

The Council thanked Ms. Cole and Mr. Schatmeier for their presentation.

The Council took a 5-minute break at 8:50 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:55 p.m.

2. MAGNOLIA AVENUE CLASS 1 BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY CITY PROJECT NO. 500-2005-010-200-002

The Public Works Director presented the staff report.

Councilmember Hillmer stated a bicyclist traveling northbound on Magnolia Avenue would probably not enter the Class I path after passing Doherty Drive. He stated they should provide a more convenient access to the path. He asked if the “pork chop” island would be relocated. The Public Works Director stated it would be eliminated. Councilmember Hillmer was concerned that the protected area would be eliminated. The Public Works Director stated there was no protection between the sidewalk and the “pork chop” island. Councilmember Hillmer asked if the crossing distance from the new median to the south side of Doherty Drive would be the same. The Public Works Director stated it would be shorter. Councilmember Hillmer stated he was concerned about encouraging cyclists to use the path.

Councilmember Arlas agreed with Councilmember Hillmer and stated cyclists would not use the path and would continue up Magnolia Avenue. He was concerned about the six-foot width of the bike lane along Magnolia Avenue.

Councilmember Lundstrom asked if Parisi and Associates reviewed the plans. The Public Works Director stated “yes”. Councilmember Lundstrom asked about the possibility of a second opening for the bike path. The Public Works Director stated the opening to the bike path was twelve feet wide and was a safe place for access.

Mayor Hartzell asked if there would be signage painted on the street directing cyclists to the bike path. The Public Works Director stated “yes’.

Councilmember Arlas stated the cyclists do not use the existing path and he was very opposed to the proposal. He stated there was no reason to change the intersection and the public outcry would be enormous. He was concerned that cars would back up on Doherty Drive. He stated there was no reason to install an eight-inch high berm. He stated there would be bicycle vs. car problems created with this proposal. The Public Works Director stated the “free right turn” lane has caused many accidents in an area with lots of cyclists and students. He stated the proposal would accommodate safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists.

Councilmember Hillmer asked Ms. Dalene Whitlock, representing Whitlock and Weinberger Transportation Inc., if they considered increased delays on Doherty Drive while reviewing this proposal. Ms. Whitlock stated “yes”. She stated they were asked to take a look at how the existing intersection operates in its current configuration and how it would operate with the proposed configuration under both current volumes as well as projected volumes. She stated the delay would be less under the proposal for both current and projected volumes even when one considers the zero delay with the current “free right turn” lane and an increased delay at the signal. She discussed the change in the intersection at Camino Alto and East Blithedale in Mill Valley.

Councilmember Hillmer stated this was a very significant intersection and he asked if there was a way to set up the situation with bollards, etc. to see how it would work. Ms. Whitlock stated they could stripe the intersection but the important aspect of the change was the implementation of the right turn overlap phasing that would require a lot of equipment to make it function. The signal modifications could not be “mocked up”. Councilmember Hillmer acknowledged that the analysis was probably accurate but he would like to ease into the change if possible. Ms. Whitlock stated this was a horrible intersection, with the “free right turn”, a short merge lane, and a skewed alignment.

Councilmember Lundstrom stated the purpose of the change was to increase safety in the area that has many cyclists and pedestrians. This is a good project and it should go forward. Cyclists would refuse to use the bike paths no matter what they do.

Councilmember Chu agreed that they would not change the behavior of cyclists. He described his understanding of the project and stated the elimination of the “free right turn” was a good idea.

Councilmember Arlas stated this was an unconscionable change and he asked if the surrounding businesses and residents were aware of the project.

The public needs to be informed about this significant change. He liked Councilmember Hillmer's suggestion to create a "mock up" situation prior to going forward with the project. He stated staff should put out some notice and allow the public to comment on the project.

Councilmember Hillmer stated he suggested the "mock up" to see what the elimination of the "free right turn" would do to the traffic heading westbound on Doherty Drive. He was worried about traffic backing up.

The City Manager stated Councilmember Arlas' suggestion about public outreach was a good one. Staff would notice the Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive corridor, along with the schools and invite people to an informal meeting for their comments. She noted there were similarities between this intersection and the Tamalpais/Redwood/Camino Alto intersection in Corte Madera that was recently signalized. It is a much safer intersection due to the change.

Mayor Hartzell asked if the three-foot wide opening for cyclists could be widened. The Public Works Director stated it would be five-feet wide. Mayor Hartzell stated it was a good idea to encourage the cyclists to stay on the bike path. She stated there was support to move ahead with some outreach to the community so they have an opportunity to comment. She asked staff to develop plans for a community meeting.

Councilmember Lundstrom noted there was a deadline for the grant.

Councilmember Chu asked if they could make any minor modifications to the design after the grant proposal was submitted. The Public Works Director stated "yes" and added the design was up to the City. Councilmember Chu stated Councilmember Arlas has raised some good points regarding distances, etc. He could accept the proposal in concept.

Councilmember Hillmer agreed and stated he was concerned about the reduction in the pavement width as one travels northbound along Magnolia Avenue after Doherty Drive. It would be difficult for two accelerating vehicles to merge. Ms. Whitlock stated they were trying to get it down to one lane.

Councilmember Arlas asked staff to put this plan on the City Website.

M/s, Lundstrom/Hillmer and approved 4-1 (Arlas voted no) to authorize the Director of Public Works to complete the construction bid documents and advertise the project for construction.

3. TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT OF VIA HERMOSA, BRETANO WAY AND VIA LA CUMBRE

The Public Works Director presented the staff report.

M/s, Hillmer/Lundstrom and approved 5-0 to approve the staff recommendation to install an all-way stop sign, stop lines and stencils at Via Hermosa and Via La Cumbre and to approve a budget for the development of a citywide traffic calming program.

4. TREE REPLACEMENT AND SIDEWALK REPAIR IN THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

The Public Works Director presented the staff report.

Mayor Hartzell had questions about the timing of the project. The Public Works Director stated “safety before beauty” and he would repair the damaged sidewalks prior to planting the trees. Mayor Hartzell asked if they could happen at the same time. The Public Works Director stated “no” and added he did not want to negatively impact the businesses. The work could be done by the end of June. Mayor Hartzell noted the sidewalks would be repaired prior to the Food and Flower Festival.

Councilmember Hillmer had questions about the spacing of the trees.

M/s, Hillmer/Chu and approved 5-0 to fund the installation of four new trees and the repair of the sidewalk at the seven locations as indicated in the May 7, 2008 staff report.

5. ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 14/08, A RESOLUTION DIRECTING STAFF TO REQUEST A STAFF LEVEL REGIONAL DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL AND PLANNED TRANSPORTATION PROJECT IN LARKSPUR

The City Manager presented the staff report.

Councilmember Lundstrom referred to the resolution, the last “Whereas”, and suggested the following wording: “Whereas, staff representatives.... (GGBHTD) *and other transportation organizations will be asked to meet with the City Manager with the purpose to outline the various proposals and report back to the City of Larkspur*”.

Councilmember Hillmer would like the focus to be on Larkspur Landing and not the Greenbrae Interchange.

M/s, Hillmer/Chu and approved 5-0 to adopt Resolution No. 14/08 as amended.

ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION

The City Council and City Manager adjourned to closed session at 9:55 p.m. to discuss the following items:

CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR- Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8:

Property: 111 Lucky Drive, Corte Madera, AP# 024-041-14 and AP #024-041-15

Negotiating Parties: Keegan & Coppin Company, Matt Storms, Partner
Jean A. Bonander, City of Larkspur, Negotiating Agent
Discussion: Terms, Price or Both

ADJOURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Mayor adjourned to open session at 10:28 p.m. and indicated that no reportable action had been taken.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis
Recording Secretary