

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRINIDAD CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

- Mayor Binnie called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. All council members were in attendance: Bhardwaj, Ratzlaff, Morgan, Binnie, Fulkerson.
- City Staff in attendance: City Manager Steve Albright, City Clerk Gabriel Adams, and City Attorney Paul Hagen, Police Chief Ken Thrailkill.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION – No closed session scheduled.

IV. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion (Fulkerson/Bhardwaj) to approve the agenda as submitted. Passed unanimously.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 11, 2009 cc

Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to approve the minutes as corrected. Passed unanimously.

February 25, 2009 cc2

Motion (Bhardwaj/Ratzlaff) to approve the minutes as corrected. Passed unanimously.

VII. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Binnie: Began by presenting Proclamation 2009-02 in support of the upcoming Trinidad Library fund raiser organized by Darlene Marlow.

- **HCAOG**: Chairman Wheetly is traveling to Washington DC to lobby for funds to develop a regional trail system for Humboldt County. Executive Director Spencer Clifton updated the board on the status of the regional housing plan.
- **Gateway**: Discussions have been primarily focused on artistic elements of the project.

Bhardwaj:

- **Library/Museum**: Power is scheduled to be connected to the Museum site on March 16. The road will be named Janis Court in honor of Janis Saunders.
- **Sales Tax Committee**: 7 applications were received to serve on the committee.

Morgan: Attended the HCAOG meeting along with Mayor Binnie. Also reported that the Fire Department will be submitting an application to the Humboldt County Indian Gaming Committee for the purchase of a new rescue vehicle.

Fulkerson: Nothing to report.

Ratzlaff: There may be a need for a light at the corner of Scenic Drive and Main Street to improve visibility for motorists. Also, the Edwards Street parking issue needs to be addressed.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

City Manager - Albright: Regarding Economic Stimulus – the process is complicated and overwhelming. The Federal Government is trying to funnel money toward existing shovel ready projects. Trinidad will likely see money for 2 Water Treatment related projects, as well as for the paving of Azalea & Pacific Streets.

Police Chief – Thrailkill: Hopes to hire 3 reserve officers within the next 30 days.

IX. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

(Three (3) minute limit per Speaker unless Council approves request for extended time.)

Jim Cuthbertson – Trinidad

1) Thanked Public Works for a great job on recent Van Wycke trail maintenance. 2) Parking on the North side of Edwards Street is a serious problem. 3) A street light is needed on the corner of Scenic & Main.

Robin Bensley – Westhaven resident, Botanist

Teaches a plant identification class at HSU, and requested permission to do a survey sampling of flora on Trinidad Head to be part of the collection of the Herbarium at HSU. Small samples will be collected, and a checklist of species that survive on the Head will be available to the City of Trinidad, as well as entered into an internet database through UC Berkeley.

Casey Van Alten – Local business owner, WindanSea, Trinidad Trading Co.

Requested that the City not proceed with Gateway Project construction on sidewalks in front of his businesses during the busy summer months.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Staff Activities Report through February, 2009
2. Financial Status Reports for January, 2008
3. Council Appointment of Alternates to Boards, Commissions, and Committees.
4. Resolution 2009-08 Authorizing Submittal of Applications for Indian Gaming Funds.
5. Resolution 2009-09 Authorizing the Examination of Transactions (Sales) and Use Tax Records.

Motion (Bhardwaj/Fulkerson) to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Passed unanimously.

XI. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Acceptance of Donation and Approval of Contract with Landscape Designer for Saunders Park.
City Manager Albright explained that the location for the new city park, Saunders Park, was donated by the Saunders Family to the North Coast Land Trust several years ago. In preparation for the Museum and Library projects, a schematic park design was prepared and submitted to the Planning Commission, and that has been the basis for the decisions that have been made to date.

Now that the road construction and the opening of the Museum are getting closer, it is also timely to pursue some needed refinements to the original park design, including details that will lead to construction of the Park later this year using State-approved Park Bond funds.

Glen and Janis Saunders have agreed to donate to the City \$3,000 for an updated Saunders Park plan. A local landscape designer, Design/Work (Mary Gearheart), has been contacted and has submitted a proposal to prepare the updated design. If approved, she will use the original design and incorporate changes that have occurred over the past few years as the Museum Site and the roadway have been finalized.

The Council thanked the Saunders family for their donation.

There was no public comment.

Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to accept a donation of \$3,000 from the Saunders family for the purpose of Saunders Park design, approve a contract agreement with Design/Work for an amount not-to-exceed \$3,000, and send a letter of gratitude to the Saunders family for their donation.

Passed unanimously.

2. Presentation from the Humboldt County Films Commission.
City Manager Albright introduced Mary Cruse, Director of the Humboldt County Films Commission. Cruse requested an opportunity to present to the City Council the accomplishments of the Commission and a summary of its activities planned for 2009.

The Films Commission is a separate entity from the Humboldt County Conventions and Visitors Bureau (HCCVB). The City has supported financially the HCCVB for the past two years and does hold an ex-officio seat on the HCCVB Board.

The presentation included:

- A brief history of the HCCVB & Film Commission
- Featured films and commercials shot in Humboldt County
- Local economic impacts and challenges
- New direction of the Film Commission and Film Tourism

Council comments included:

Binnie: What does Trinidad gain financially from the film industry? Cruse explained that local jobs are created and money is spent in the area.

Fulkerson: It's free advertising for Trinidad. She also thanked Cruse, and expressed hope that Trinidad will continue to contribute to the Film Commission.

Public comment included:

Larry Goldberg – Stagecoach Road resident and Film Commission member

Filming in Humboldt creates jobs in fields such as catering, hotels, landscaping, and rentals. The Commission would like to see Humboldt develop businesses that cater to the film industry. It also hopes to become not only a film location, but also a production mecca.

No decision was made. This was a presentation item only.

3. Council Procedures for Appointing Citizens to Trinidad Commissions and Committees

City Manager Albright explained that during the recent process of appointing members to the Trinidad Planning Commission, it became obvious that the City lacks a clear procedure on how to recruit, interview, and select citizen volunteers. Albright listed examples including the lack of an application, the recruitment process and deadline for submitting an application, who interviews the applicants, the location for conducting interview of applicants, questions to be asked of the applicants, and the actual Council procedure for selecting the new Commissioner or Committee member.

Councilmember Bhardwaj recommended the following list for the Council to consider:

- 1) Develop a simple one-page application to be completed by all individuals interested in being considered for a Commission or Committee vacancy;
- 2) The City Clerk shall post a notice at City Hall and other conspicuous locations (including the City's Web Site), and develop a press release stating the available opening and a time deadline for submitting an application;
- 3) The Mayor would appoint an ad-hoc Interview Committee comprised of two members of the City Council. This would not preclude the other Council members from posing their own questions directly to applicants.
- 4) The ad-hoc Interview Committee would schedule and meet with each of the applicants either in City Hall or at some other location.
- 5) The Committee members shall prepare in advance a basic list of questions to assure that each applicant is questioned in a similar manner, for example, background related to the appointment, interest in being on the Commission or Committee, goals for Trinidad, etc. The Committee members shall summarize their findings in a report to the Council.
- 6) The Mayor makes a recommendation on the appointment(s) to be distributed in advance of the Council meeting, the Council discusses the recommendations, the Council solicits public comments, and then the Council approves or changes the Mayor's recommendations.

Council comments included:

Fulkerson: I find it odd that the Mayor makes appointments that the Council must approve. It's awkward. We should have a policy or procedure for making appointments. The Mayor has no more power than any other Councilmember.

Public comment included:

Sungnome Madrone – Fox Farm Road

Guidelines are great. Is there any procedure listed for recruiting citizens from outside-city limits in case not enough in-city residents apply?

No decision was made. Council will consider this item further at a future meeting.

4. Presentation of the Membrane Treatment Analysis for the Trinidad Water Treatment Facility.

City Manager Albright explained that in February, the City Council authorized the City's Engineer, Winzler & Kelly, to complete an analysis of membrane treatment for the Trinidad Water Treatment Plant. This analysis would complement the Engineering Analysis of the Trinidad Water System completed in 2008. The combined two reports constitute an evaluation of the significant capital improvements needed in the system to meet increasing drinking water standards and to address the ongoing replacement costs of portions of the system.

Albright introduced City Engineers Rebecca Crow and Carlos Diaz. Their presentation included:

- Overview of Membrane Technology.
- The need for the report - 2005 DHS identification of deficiencies in Trinidad's water system including disinfection byproducts and filter overloading.
- June 2008 preferred alternative to improve the existing system at Luffenholtz Creek.
- PER Addendum for Membrane Technology – LT1&2 DHS requirements are getting harder to satisfy and Membrane Treatment could easily meet future regulations.
- Components of a Membrane System – replacement membranes would be required every 10 years.
- Annual system O&M cost of approximately \$2300.
- Require approximately 50KW/day of power to operate – an overall slight increase as compared to current system.
- Funding status of current DHS applications and Economic Recovery timelines.

The City Engineer's recommended actions included:

- Approve membrane system as the preferred alternative
- Authorize the City Manager to negotiate a contract for 10% system design, CEQA notice of exemption, and to evaluate permitting requirements.
- Evaluate loan repayment cost in water rate review.

Public comment included:

Jacque Holsey – Trindiad Rancheria

The Hoopa Tribe had problems with their Membrane Treatment System during a power outage. Residents were out of water for 3-5 days. The City should have a backup power supply plan in place prior to installing the system.

Shirley Laos – Trinidad Rancheria

The Rancheria has a similar membrane system for gray water treatment. It has 2 backup generators in place. We schedule tours of our treatment plant, and will contact you when the next tour is announced.

Jim Cuthbertson – Trinidad

How much does the machine cost? How does it deal with backwashing of both the membranes and filters? **Crow** responded, stating the equipment costs approximately \$300,000-400,000, and that the system sends backwash to the wetwell, not directly into the creek.

Lyle Hurley – American Water Works

Claimed he can provide the City with an affordable alternative to the membrane system proposed by City Engineers. Midway RV Park, Azalea Glen, and Beech Creek Mobile Home Park all use his systems, and they are all remotely operated. Requested that the Council give his company an opportunity to make a proposal at a future meeting before committing to the City Engineer's alternative.

Chi-Wei Lin – Trinidad

Membrane technology is used throughout the world. It is a well established treatment system. He also expressed doubt that American Water Works products would be useful to the city.

Richard Johnson – Scenic Drive

Urged the Council not to proceed without a full lifecycle cost analysis of the membrane alternative.

Sungnome Madrone – Fox Farm Road

The City's wetwell floods every 10 years. There should be protections in place to relocate it. The current backwashing system is illegal, and the membrane system will only produce more sludge. The proposed system, however, seems like a good alternative to meet DHS requirements.

Council comments included:

Fulkerson: I propose we move forward with this tonight. Timing is crucial. Application deadlines are coming up fast, and we can't wait. **Morgan** agreed.

Ratzlaff: We should give American Water Works an opportunity to make a presentation.

Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to authorize spending up to \$20,000 from the Water Fund Reserve and enter into an agreement with the City Engineer to proceed with the next phase of analysis of the Membrane Treatment System.

Passed unanimously.

5. Continuing Discussion of Trinidad City Water Rates.

City Manager Albright explained that the City Council received a draft proposal at its last meeting regarding potential revisions to the Water Rates for customers of the City's Water System. The proposal suggested a number of revisions, or options, to the structure of the water rates:

- A change to the base rate;
- A tiered rate that would result in higher unit rates for greater amounts of monthly consumption;
- Differing rates for winter and summer usage; and
- A change to the difference in the rates paid by customers living inside or outside of the city limits.

After lengthy discussion and numerous public comments, the Council seemed to agree that there should be three primary objectives for any rate changes:

- 1) That the rates charged be equitable for all customers;
- 2) That the revenue generated should satisfy the operational costs of the water system and allow for the ongoing creation of a capital reserve; and
- 3) That the rate structure encourages water conservation.

Albright presented a review of rate structures in other communities.

There was no public comment. This was a presentation item only. Discussion will continue at a future meeting.

XII. COUNCIL REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting ended at 10:15pm.

Submitted by:

Gabriel Adams
City Clerk

Approved by:

Stan Binnie
Mayor