

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRINIDAD CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

- Mayor Lin called the meeting to order at 7:02PM. Council members in attendance: Lin, Binnie, Ratzlaff, Bhardwaj, Fulkerson.
- City Staff in attendance: City Manager Steve Albright, Assistant City Clerk Robin Fraser.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION – No closed session.

IV. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Resolution 2008-08 put forward for addition. The CA Coastal Conservancy needs the Seabring Easement for access and drainage approved for consideration of a \$30,000 grant this month. An emergency item needs a 4/5 vote. The draft resolution was read.

*Motion (Fulkerson/Binnie) to approve the agenda with this addition. **Passed unanimously.***

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – No minutes to approve.

VII. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

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

Glenn Saunders – Trinidad

The recent election cost about \$4,000. It wasn't clear why that election was separate from the February election, which would have cost only \$1,200. Gabe also spent about a week's worth of time preparing for the election. The City should watch its dollars. Also, the budget is seriously over in many items - particularly the Police Department. The City needs to follow its budget and cut spending. **Councilmember Bhardwaj** responded, stating that consolidating Trinidad's election with the county election causes a long delay in receiving the certified results.

Erik Winterhelm – Solar Guy

He would like to put on a seminar in town about solar hot water and its application to Trinidad for residential use. He is asking for the Council's blessing. CM Albright agreed and encouraged

Brad Twoomey – Trinidad

Real Estate directional and sold signs at the off ramp, Main St., Trinity St., the State Beach and Edwards St. do not make the sale. The real estate agencies are not in a unique position to post signs however they please. These "off premises" signs require a permit, which isn't happening. No action item was presented, but a suggestion made for the Clerk or Manager to write letters requesting the removal of the signs. Twoomey submitted photos for Council review.

CM Albright explained that the City may not be authorized to simply remove the signs even if they are illegal. He will write letters to the agencies requesting sign removal and warning the agencies not to repeat the action.

Councilmember Fulkerson: The Police Department has been over budget for several years. This was the first financial report received this year. She took responsibility as Police Commissioner for not better overseeing the budget. She thanked Twoomey for his vigilance and background information.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Financial Status Report through February, 2008

2. City Council Proclamation 2008-02 Declaring May, 2008 as "Bike Month"
3. City Council Resolution 2008-07 Supporting Humboldt County Dispatch Agreement with the CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
4. Knapp parcel map approval: Application #2006-12

Motion (Fulkerson, Binnie) Passed unanimously.

IX. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Acceptance of Parker Creek Road Easement
City Manager Albright explained that Glenn Saunders had attempted to give the easement to the City in the past. Now things are in order to give Parker Creek Road, which is not an official road, to the City. Easements from two other property owners are needed for the Parker Creek Trail area. He stated that there is no record of an acceptance of this easement by resolution in the past, but that a resolution is the proper action to be taken.

Public comment included:

Glenn Saunders - Trinidad

Thanked the Council and offered to help with the other easements.

Councilmember comments included:

Binnie: Clarified the area of the easement on the map provided, and that the City is now responsible for the maintenance of the road.

Bhardwaj: Expressed gladness that the easement is being completed formally and legally.

CM Albright: Read Resolution 2008-09.

Motion (Binnie/Fulkerson) to accept the easement document and authorize the Mayor to execute the documents and have the easement recorded on behalf of the City of Trinidad. Passed unanimously.

2. Presentation of the "Open City Hall" Business Proposal
Robert Vogel presented the "Open City Hall" Business Proposal. Proposed a two month pilot project, free of charge, after which the fee would be \$50 per agenda item. Council would determine which items would be included. The trial period would be an opportunity to work out that decision making process. The comments would remain accessible on the website after the issue had closed, and could be downloaded in .pdf form. Each participant would be required to register with a name and address, even if posting anonymously, so that each participant could post only once for each agenda item, and for identification of the posting as by a resident of the City or a neighbor. The burden on City Staff should be only about an hour for orientation to the program, and no further time.

Public comment included:

Jim Cuthbertson – Trinidad

What about residents outside of City Limits? Vogel explained that participants must register as registered City voters or not. Viewers can choose to see all posts or only those of registered voters.

Brad Twoomey - Trinidad

Asked if the program is being used in the Bay Area for Planning Commission items? Vogel explained that the Bay Area is using a prototype, not for specific agenda items. Twoomey clarified that this prototype in Berkeley, Alameda, Santa Clara, and Oakland is a different program. No City is using "Open City Hall" at this point.

Richard Johnson - Scenic Dr.

This is an interesting and exciting plan to be considered. Suggested taking time to prepare, giving lead time for a critical mass to take full advantage of the program. Publicity and education are needed. Suggested a small subscription fee to offset cost. Vogel explained that using the pilot program would make it easy to track costs. All participants can see all posts. The pilot can also be used to evaluate the process for deciding which items to post and which not.

Troy Ivie- Public Works: Clarified that cost for this meeting at \$50 per item would be \$400.

Councilmember comments included:

Fulkerson: Expressed concern about financing. There is good potential for fresh input. In Berkeley there is 10-20 times the participation. Council would not be obligated to respond to each posting, but to read them. Participants can subscribe to have announcement from Councilmembers sent for no extra charge. The tally posted on the website would not represent an election for each item, but a total of opinions to be considered. This program would inform, not dictate, Council action.

Bhardwaj: Often input is needed prior to the writing of the agenda item. The narrative is more important than the tally. Another option would be to post the whole packet online, send it to a contact list, and have Gabe record comments and forward them to the Council.

Ratzlaff: Does the agenda item posted for comment include all background information? **Vogel** explained that the trial period is an opportunity for the City to test the program and for the program to be revised to accommodate community need. It would be a mutually beneficial trial period.

Lin: Estimated that at 2 meetings per month and 4 items per meeting, the cost per year would be approximately \$5000.

Binnie: The Council needs better interfacing with the community. The advantage of this program would be improved communication between City residents and the Council. How do we proceed?

CM Albright: Agreed with Cuthbertson about the delicacy of choosing agenda items to be posted. Suggested waiting until the new budget year to make a decision. Asked if comments would be made an official part of public record, and what the ramifications would be.

Ratzlaff: Asked about the possibility of publicizing the comments prior to the meeting, perhaps in a newspaper?

Fulkerson: Agreed that it might be good to do more preparation before deciding. It takes courage to invite more input, as non-face-to-face interactions can have a different tone. The Council will be criticized regardless of the action it takes. It is easier for all concerned to listen to comments outside the heat of the moment. Increased input is a good thing, as this is a democratic process.

Vogel explained that the comments can be printed in .pdf form to be included in the packet. Suggested starting the trial on his own website to work out the legal issues of having the program on the official City website, and to avoid the presumption of the program being continued past the trial period. Proposed beginning the trial period immediately.

Bhardwaj: After the trial we will have a better idea of which items to include. The number of items may need to be limited depending on the budget. The City may decide to do some form of this on its own. The concept is worthy of investigation.

Lin: It's free to try, to get through some of the guess work. They're also using the City to test the program. There is no obligation.

Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to endorse pilot project with no out-of-pocket expenses, to take all Council input and evaluate the program at the end of the trial. For the trial the program should be on Peak Democracy's website, with a link from the City's website. Moved for a start date of the first meeting in May. Passed unanimously.

3. **Council Authorization to Submit Conceptual Applications to the CA Water Resources Control board Under Prop 84 ASBS Grant Program.**

Jonas Savage, the Trinidad Rancheria representative explained that the pier is to be replaced. Some current posts are Douglas Fir saturated with creosote, which with the runoff from the pier flows into the ASBS. The cost for pier replacement is roughly \$8 million, so this grant is only one part of the cost. They are also involved in a Clean Beaches Initiative for the restroom, fish cleaning station, and storm water runoff. They are working with engineers on bio-filtration for stormwater.

CM Albright: Expressed amazement that one State grant can be used as matching funds for another. Winzler and Kelly are involved in the application, and Trinidad Rancheria is involved in the application for their grant, but the City is the Applicant for all four grants. The Rancheria has additional matching funds. The preapplication is due in May. There is no guarantee we would receive all four. We would receive a response at a later date to be invited to apply around the same time next year. At that point the City would contract with the Rancheria.

Binnie: In this case it is to the City's benefit to be small.

Lin: San Francisco and Los Angeles are looking at Trinidad as an example, as our grant application received a perfect score.

Jacque Hostler - Trinidad Rancheria

Thanked the City on behalf of the Rancheria for applying on their behalf. They would like to continue this partnership. The fish cleaning station has already been removed. They are committing staff to the work of this grant.

Richard Johnson- Scenic Dr.

As a result of the success of this grant application some work is already in progress. He looks forward to the resolution regarding the OWTS, as "everything flows downhill." The Auxiliary Dwelling Unit resolution should also be regarded in light of watershed and OWTS concepts.

CM Albright: The City attorney is reviewing both resolutions. They will probably come before the Council in September.

Motion (Lin/Ratzlaff) to authorize the submittal of four conceptual ASBS grant pre-applications and for the Mayor to sign the required documents, as there may not be time to confer with the Council over the details, up to and including a resolution. Passed unanimously

Fulkerson: Thanked the Rancheria for their partnership. Thanked Lin for his work and success. Wished there were greater attendance to hear the good news.

4. Public Hearing on Unmet Transit Needs

Sungnome Madrone – Westhaven

He has commented on this for 18 years. The bus system is improved but still inadequate. The trip needs a couple of hours each way. There are no runs midday. The bus company says the lack of runs is due to low ridership, which creates a downward spiral. McKinleyville should have its own bus system. A smaller bus should access Trinidad and Orick more frequently. HSU students get a free bus pass, which increases ridership.

Kim Binnie - Trinidad

It is very difficult to work a schedule around the bus runs. The HSU class schedule and bus runs are badly coordinated. Crescent City has an express bus through the Redwood Coast Transit. Could that supplement Humboldt Transit? An inadequate system means that people are more likely to drive. I have written to HTA for a 9:05 departure rather than 9:18 to make a 10am class at HSU, and it was changed by only a fraction of that difference. Could we work with the Rancheria to get to McKinleyville, where there is more frequent service?

Jacque Hostler - Trinidad Rancheria

Used to ride public transit, when the runs did not fit her schedule. She had to leave at 6:15 to be at work on time at 8am. As soon as she got a car she drove. The same problem still exists today.

Councilmember comments included:

Fulkerson: The cost of driving is about equal to one hour of labor. Bus runs should be scheduled to accommodate real life schedules. These surveys seem to get filed, so a big push is needed to make changes.

Binnie: I sit on the Humboldt Transit Authority Board, which holds monthly meetings and invites public comment. The next meeting is May 21 at 9am at the HTA on V Street in Eureka. Representation in person is best.

X. COUNCIL REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

CM Albright: Requested the adoption by resolution of Watershed Management Plan for the May 14th agenda.

Lin: Council is trying not to have a second meeting in May due to Memorial Day.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

- **Council meeting ended at 9:30pm.**

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Gabriel Adams
City Clerk

Chi-Wei Lin
Mayor