

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2007**

Mayor Simonian called the meeting to order at 7:16 p. m.

Councilmembers present: Simonian, Shaw, Aguayo, & Cardenas

City staff present: City Manager Elias, City Clerk Davis, Finance Director Wong, Police Chief Jamgochian, City Attorney Wolfe, Community Development Director Deaver, Public Works Superintendent Weisser, Code Enforcement Officer Navarrette, Senior/Recreation Director Monis

The Flag Salute and the Pledge of Allegiance were followed by an invocation given by Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Bill Cowings asked the Council if they would present a proclamation to his mother, Mrs. L. V. Margaret Cowings, who will celebrate her 90th birthday on March 30, 2007. She has been a resident of Fowler for over 70 years, and the Cowings family has been in Fowler since 1903. Councilmember Aguayo suggested having a reception when the proclamation is presented. Mayor Simonian and City Manager Elias also suggested that the pocket park across from Mrs. Cowing's home on 9th Street be named after her, in her honor. The item will be placed on the agenda at the March 20, 2007 meeting.

PRESENTATION BY: CONNECT-CTY REGARDING EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

City Manager Elias introduced Chad Castruita of Connect-CTY, a company that provides emergency warning/notification services for cities. Mr. Castruita explained that the service allows a city to create personalized voice warnings or important messages by telephone to the residents, to inform them of emergencies or other events that affect them. The cities of Selma, Parlier, Reedley and Dinuba presently use this system. Connect CTY also offers multilingual and text messaging capabilities. Mr. Castruita gave a live demonstration on how the system works. In the event of an emergency, the system will attempt to contact each resident three times. The cost of the program for a city the size of Fowler would be approximately \$3.00 per address. The consensus was to bring an agreement back for approval at a future meeting.

STAFF REPORTS

- A) DISCUSSION: ENFORCEMENT OF THE FOWLER MUNICIPAL CODE PERTAINING TO THE PARKING AND STORAGE OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLES/TRAILERS/BOATS**

City Manager Elias stated that there have been concerns from citizens regarding problems with recreational vehicle (RV) parking in town. He wanted the Council's direction regarding enforcement of Fowler's current regulations as compared to those of surrounding communities. City Attorney Wolfe noted that the zoning ordinance regarding RV parking had been in place since 1978. Code Enforcement Officer Navarrette stated that he placed an article in the Fowler Ensign about non-compliance with the municipal code on RV parking, along with a deadline for violators to prepare for enforcement. He said that he usually talks to the owner and makes them aware of the ordinance, but has had a difficult time achieving compliance. He contacted the cities of Selma, Parlier, Clovis, and Sanger and found that all of their ordinances are similar to Fowler's.

Bob Fitzgerald, a Fowler resident, recommended enforcement of the municipal code to keep the community looking nice. He circulated a list of areas that had RV's that he believed were not in compliance. He said that RV parking must comply with State codes, and that violations pose a major safety issue and decrease property values.

Walter Barsam, of Fowler, stated that the City's ordinance is out of date and there are many more people that now own RV's, particularly luxury units. He disagreed that RV's cause blight or decrease property values. He said that as an owner of an RV he would have to alter his landscaping to store it behind a fence, or pay a sizeable amount to store it elsewhere, which would also be an inconvenience.

Henry Fernandez, of Fowler, said that he owns an RV that is parked next to his garage that does not obstruct the sidewalk, and felt that it did not detract from property values. He said that enforcement of the municipal code on property violations should be done consistently.

Larry Phillips, of Fowler, noted that as an RV owner it was safer to keep it at home than at a storage facility, where they are often vandalized.

A discussion ensued, and it was suggested that City staff develop some criteria for enforcement. City Manager Elias stated that the main problem is with RV's that block the public right-of-way. Chief Jamgochian stated that he had received complaints about visibility being blocked by RV's for drivers backing out of driveways and parking spaces. Community Development Director Deaver said that staff needed clear and concise direction on the matter rather than having to make judgement calls. The consensus was to review the ordinance and conduct a study, and bring it back for discussion at a future meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

◆ Approve Purchase of New John Deere 4-Wheel Drive Backhoe

City Manager Elias stated that USDA, who provided the loan for the City's new water wells, has recommended that the City expend the remaining funds from the loan proceeds as soon as possible. He recommended purchasing a new backhoe for the Water Department as there is not enough funding left for infrastructure projects. He also asked that a portion of these funds be

used to purchase the dump truck previously approved by the Council at the February 6, 2007 meeting.

Councilmember Aguayo made a motion to approve purchase of a new John Deere 4-wheel drive backhoe for the Water Department using remaining funds from the USDA Water Well Loan, and also authorize using these funds for purchase of the dump truck previously approved by the Council at the February 6, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Cardenas, and carried on a 4-0-0 roll call vote.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Community Development Director Deaver reported that the La Quinta Hotel plans have been approved, and the plans for RPN Transport have also been approved. The Valley Ice Company project plans are complete and they are about ready to begin the project. The Union 76 expansion plans are complete.

PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Public Works Supervisor Weisser reported that new picnic tables for the gazebo area were being assembled and will be installed shortly, and the new playground equipment had been installed. It will take 6 to 8 weeks for the rubber ground cover to arrive, and in the meantime wood chip ground cover will be installed. Barbeques will be installed on the north and south side of the gazebo.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Finance Director Wong presented the financial summary for July through January 2007. Consideration and approval of the City of Fowler purchasing policy was tabled for a future meeting.

POLICE AND FIRE REPORT

Chief Jamgochian presented the year-end Police and Fire reports. He mentioned that he and City Manager Elias would be checking on some used 2002-2003 Crown Victoria police vehicles that were available. The City planned to contact other agencies that may be interested in the City's used vehicles once the replacement vehicles are purchased.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Wolfe stated that with the growing concern regarding global warming, it may effect future CEQA documentation requirements.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - February 20, 2007; B) approve Minutes of the Regular and Special City Council Meeting - February 6, 2007; and C) Treasurer's Report.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw stated that he had a conflict of interest on a warrant for work on a ponding basin near his home, and made a motion to pull item A from the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Aguayo and carried by unanimous voice vote. Councilmember Aguayo made a motion to approve items B and C of the Consent Calendar, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote. Councilmember Aguayo made a motion to approve item A of the Consent Calendar, the warrants list, seconded by Councilmember Cardenas. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote, with Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw not participating.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw commented favorably on the recent Community Awards Banquet and noted that one of the recipients praised City staff for their hard work, especially City Manager Elias, Police Chief Jamgochian and Community Development Director Deaver.

Councilmember Aguayo attended the Valley Blueprint Steering Committee meeting and reported that the San Joaquin Valley Partnership had accepted the Metro Rural Loop as a grant that could be funded for a multi-transit, multi-rural, multi-modal transit-oriented expressway. He recently traveled with the "One Voice" group to Washington, D. C. and circulated information on the projects they presented to the legislators.

Councilmember Cardenas reported that S.K.F. will have a consultant's study completed in a few months regarding sewer capacity, restrictions to the sewer system and how to repair the bottlenecks. It is estimated that it may take up two years to bring the sewer capacity up to 6 million gallons per day. Once the facilities are up to capacity, they will discuss how it should be apportioned to the three cities. He also attended a Five Cities meeting where the budget was approved, and a report was given on the status of the Enterprise Zone. He attended a Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Mayor Pro-Tem Shaw made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Aguayo, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p. m.