

**MINUTES
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Shoals called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Ramona Garden Park Center, 993 Ramona Avenue, Grover Beach, California.

ROLL CALL

City Council: Council Members Karen Bright, Barbara Nicolls, Mariam Shah, Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lee, and Mayor John Shoals were present.

City Staff: City Manager Robert Perrault, City Attorney Martin Koczanowicz, City Clerk Donna McMahon, and Police Chief John Peters were also present.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor opened the floor to any member of the public for comments on any item described in this agenda. No public comments were received at this time.

WORKSHOP

1. Transient Population Impacts on Businesses.

Mayor Shoals provided introductory remarks and described the workshop format to encourage a dialogue between the Council, members of the business community, and residents. He noted the Council was interested in receiving suggestions, as well as feedback regarding the City's actions over the past year to address transient issues.

City Manager Perrault outlined regulations adopted by the City Council over the past year to address transient issues along the business corridor and at City parks, noting the Council had also authorized additional Police Department personnel. He then described public safety programs implemented, such as foot and bike patrols along the business corridor and the installation of security cameras at key locations. Additionally, brighter lighting and improved visibility were anticipated once PG&E completed its streetlight upgrade project. He also noted a multi-jurisdiction effort to address an illegal homeless encampment south of the Grover Beach Train Station. Once secured, the next focus would be partnering with other agencies to address the illegal encampment located by North 4th Street on property owned by the City of Pismo Beach and State Parks, and located near the northern limits of Grover Beach.

Police Chief Peters provided additional information regarding the grant-funded security camera program and noted plans were to partner with the City of Arroyo Grande and extend coverage along the entire length of Grand Avenue.

Mayor Shoals then invited comments from those in the audience.

The following persons spoke regarding security measures implemented at their business; incidents of transient activity impacting employees and patrons; illegal drug activity, panhandling, loitering, dumpster diving, and smoking at City parks; negative impacts to surrounding homes and businesses from free food distribution programs; an increasing number of homeless individuals in the community; safety and security concerns; starting a Neighborhood Watch Group for businesses; the need for homeless shelters; the number of students enrolled in the school district without a permanent place of residence:

- Tom Rehder, business owner, Grover Beach;
- Dr. Daniel Bronstein, business owner, Grover Beach;
- Janna Nichols, Executive Director, Five Cities Homeless Coalition, described the organization's efforts to connect interested individuals with available social service programs and housing. She also distributed business cards with her contact information and noted the availability of a County-wide resource brochure;
- Duke Sterling, Grover Beach business owner;
- Dee Santos, former Mayor, Grover Beach business owner, and Lucia Mar Unified School District Board Member;
- Ed Longstreth, Grover Beach business owner;
- Debbie Peterson, former Mayor, Grover Beach business owner;
- Stacy Korsgaden, Grover Beach business owner;
- Jody Ramirez, Grover Beach business owner;
- "Will" (no last name provided), a local bus driver;
- Sharon Brown, Grover Beach resident;

- Marsha Bolyanatz, Grover Beach resident;
- unidentified female speakers; and
- unidentified male speakers.

Discussion was held regarding the need for homeless shelters, transitional housing, youth facilities, and drug and alcohol treatment facilities within the County; initiating a day labor program in the South County; restrictions against overnight camping on City streets; zoning restrictions and permitting requirements for property owners interested in conducting an intensified use, such as a free food distribution program; and preliminary discussions with the Chamber of Commerce for an increased presence and involvement in Grover Beach.

Suggestions were offered for businesses to install signage that discouraged loitering and trespassing, and to install signage that promoted social service programs rather than direct monetary or food donations to panhandlers. Other suggestions were for the City to install signage that alerted individuals to the presence of security cameras, and to post “no smoking” signs at Ramona Garden Park.

City Attorney Koczanowicz described legal requirements for addressing homeless encampments and loitering. He cautioned against taking more assertive actions that might adversely impact the City and cited a recent judgment against the City of Fresno for clearing out an illegal encampment.

Chief Peters responded to questions and comments regarding enforcement efforts related to drug and alcohol abuse. He encouraged residents and business owners to contact the Police Department whenever illegal activity was observed in City parks. He also confirmed that officers have been issuing citations at the parks.

City Manager Perrault outlined the multi-jurisdictional effort to address an illegal encampment south of the Train Station that included social service organizations offering services to the occupants and distributing information on available programs. He noted a cleanup effort would remove trash and debris left behind at the encampment and, once cleaned up, the area would be fenced and monitored to secure it from trespassers. Additionally, the City had offered to assist neighboring agencies to address the illegal encampment located near North 4th Street. He then described future expansion plans for the Grover Beach Train Station.

Further discussion was held regarding resources available for the homeless and transients, encouraging individuals to contact the Five Cities Homeless Coalition for further information; pending changes to City regulations pertaining to special events; and conducting ongoing workshops/meetings with community members to continue the dialogue regarding transient population impacts on local businesses.

At this time Mayor Shoals acknowledged Fire Chief Steve Lieberman of the Five Cities Fire Authority, who was also in the audience.

The Council thanked all those present for attending the workshop, providing comments, exchanging ideas, and offering suggestions for potential solutions. Businesses and residents were encouraged to partner with the City to address transient population impacts on the community, to be the “eyes on the street”, and to contact the Police Department to report illegal activity.

Action: Upon consensus of the City Council, future workshops/meetings would be scheduled to further discuss this issue and to provide feedback on the effectiveness of actions taken and/or programs implemented by business owners, social service agencies, and the City.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Shoals adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

/s/ JOHN P. SHOALS, MAYOR

Attest:

/s/ DONNA L. McMAHON, CITY CLERK
(Approved at CC Mtg 02/16/2016)