

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Shoals called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 154 South Eighth Street, Grover Beach, California.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL**

City Council: Council Members Bright, Peterson, Mayor Pro Tem Nicolls, and Mayor Shoals were present.

City Staff: City Manager Perrault, City Attorney Koczanowicz, Administrative Secretary Toles, Interim Community Development Director Beck, Police Chief Copsey, Economic Development Specialist Buckingham, and Public Works Superintendent Ford were also present.

Also present were City Engineer Jim Garing, Bob Mack from Garing Taylor & Associates, Martin Inouye from Omni-Means, and Executive Director Ron DeCarli from the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG).

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor opened the floor to any member of the public for comment on any items described in this agenda, stating there would also be opportunities to receive public comments during the workshop after each item was presented. No comments were received at this time.

**WORKSHOP**

1. **Public Workshop to Discuss the Traffic Studies Conducted by Omni-Means for the Following Areas:**
  - **Angled Parking on West Grand Avenue (between 6<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Streets);**
  - **Traffic Calming on Margarita Avenue (between Charles Street & North 12<sup>th</sup> Street); &**
  - **Pedestrian Crossing at the Intersection of Brighton Avenue & Oak Park Boulevard.**

City Manager Perrault stated that the purpose of the workshop was to provide general information to the Council and members of the public regarding two issues: 1) special traffic studies conducted by the firm Omni-Means, and 2) the City's draft Storm Water Management Program prepared by Garing Taylor & Associates. He stated that, following the presentations, there would be an opportunity for the Council and members of the public to comment, and then Council would be requested to provide direction, as necessary, for action to be taken at a later date.

Economic Development Specialist Buckingham reviewed the three areas which were the focus of the traffic studies and introduced Marty Inouye from the traffic engineering firm Omni-Means.

**Consideration of Angled Parking on West Grand Avenue (between 6<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Streets)**

Mr. Inouye summarized traffic issues identified in the downtown area and stated that the goal for a traffic redesign would be to reduce traffic speeds, provide more parking, and create a more pedestrian-friendly downtown area. He reviewed previous studies conducted concerning the downtown area, beautification and traffic safety enhancements completed, and the General Plan Circulation Element adopted in 2005, which incorporated policies related to the downtown area. He then reviewed "Level of Service" criteria contained in the Circulation Element, which concluded that the City should maintain four traffic lanes in order to meet future traffic projections and maintain good traffic flow to serve the downtown area, as well as to enable through-traffic to reach the beach.

Mr. Inouye presented alternative design concepts for angled parking. He then noted each concept's negative impacts relative to traffic service levels, traffic volume capacity, bike lanes, and potential transportation funding opportunities. He reviewed a recent traffic speed survey conducted that reaffirmed the posted speed limit of 35 mph and indicated that traffic speeds dropped to 25 mph in the downtown landscaped median area between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets.

He then compared the angled parking design concept completed in the downtown area of Pismo Beach which successfully reduced travel speeds and created a pedestrian- and business-friendly environment to the angled parking concept proposed for Grover Beach. He observed that Pismo Beach had less than half the through-traffic volume of West Grand Avenue. He then summarized the recommendation to maintain four traffic lanes and complete enhancements along West Grand Avenue, consistent with the Downtown Project adopted in 2000.

Mr. Inouye, City Engineer Garing, and staff responded to Council questions regarding the traffic surveys, sidewalk and street widths, drainage requirements, and the next phase of West Grand Avenue street enhancements to be constructed.

At this time, Mayor Shoals invited comments from the public.

The following persons *objected* to design concepts for angled parking:

- Sue Hartman, Grover Beach, citing safety concerns for pedestrians;
- Ralph Wright, Grover Beach; and
- Ben Naeini, downtown business owner, Grover Beach.

Vants Anseth, downtown business owner, Grover Beach, expressed concerns regarding high traffic speeds and suggested replacing existing traffic signals with stop signs. He also suggested creating one-way streets and angled parking along side streets for the areas located one block north and south of West Grand Avenue.

Ron DeCarli, Executive Director for the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), generally concurred with Omni-Means' analysis, with the exception that the study was not conducted during peak travel periods, nor did it address traffic volume during the summer months. He expressed concerns regarding the possible elimination of bike lanes, cautioning that there was the potential for losing regional transportation funds in the future. He reaffirmed SLOCOG's support of the City's current downtown project and next phase of street enhancements, and their willingness to assist the City in applying for additional federal funds. Mr. DeCarli then suggested the City consider alternative traffic calming measures such as "smart crosswalks" with flashing lights embedded in the roadway, "speed tables" which were wider than "speed bumps", or eliminating some left-hand turn lanes. Upon question, he reviewed upcoming federal funding opportunities for infrastructure projects.

Gene Bello, Grover Beach, expressed concerns regarding the concept of a bulb out at the northeast corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and West Grand Avenue without sufficient storm drainage.

Upon request, City Manager Perrault provided an update of the West Grand Avenue Storm Drain Project currently under construction at West Grand Avenue and the railroad right-of-way, and funding constraints that might delay completion of the next phase of the project through 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

There were no further public comments received.

Brief Council discussion was held regarding West Grand Avenue, including:

- eliminating the concept of angled parking, due to the potential negative impacts;
- maintaining bike lanes;
- maintaining a downtown corridor traffic plan that remained competitive with other agencies applying for regional transportation funds;
- continuing progress on downtown street enhancements, as previously designed;
- exploring design concepts to provide for additional parking on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets; and
- developing a master plan for the area between 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, with an initial focus on developing enhancements from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Streets.

**Action:** Upon consensus, staff was directed to complete downtown improvements along West Grand Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, maintaining four traffic lanes and eliminating the design concept for angled parking, as recommended by Omni-Means.

**Traffic Calming on Margarita Avenue (between Charles Street & North 12<sup>th</sup> Street)**

At this time City Attorney Koczanowicz clarified that Council Member Peterson, whose residence was located on Margarita Avenue, had no conflict of interest regarding this item and therefore was not precluded from participating in the workshop discussion.

Mr. Inoyue reviewed the issue of travel speeds along the residential street of Margarita Avenue, which was narrower than most streets in the City and included curvilinear alignment, rolling terrain, and a steep vertical curve. He reviewed relevant General Plan Circulation Element policies and traffic studies recently conducted that did not indicate high traffic speeds, instead showing an average travel speed of 23 mph, and confirmed that traffic counts were within the acceptable threshold for a neighborhood street. He stated that installing speed bumps and undulations could lower traffic speeds, but would create problems for emergency vehicles. He also stated that improving sight distance might have the negative effect of increasing traffic speeds. He then summarized that, from a traffic engineering point, no improvements were being recommended at this time.

Mayor Shoals invited public comments regarding this portion of the traffic study.

The following residents of Margarita Avenue expressed concerns regarding excessive traffic speeds observed, with some speaking in support of installing traffic calming measures such as speed bumps or traffic cameras to issue citations:

- Tom Georgie;
- Zack (minor child);
- Jack Kean, former Council Member;
- Johnny (minor child);
- Alan Dick;
- Robert Mires, who objected to installing speed bumps;
- Amanda and Mark Olson;
- Joe and Kristin Brittingham;
- Maalaea Quirk;
- Bobbie Diamond, who objected to installing speed bumps;
- Doug Tuthill, who stated that he estimated 15 percent of vehicles traveling above the posted speed limit equaled approximately 47 cars per day; and
- Tanner (minor child).

Mr. Inoyue acknowledged the concerns raised by residents of Margarita Avenue and provided further details regarding the process of conducting speed surveys and daily traffic counts that would not capture all instances of excessive vehicle speeds. He then provided information regarding traffic camera citations that were challenged in other jurisdictions, as well as the estimated costs to install undulations.

Brief Council discussion was held regarding potential options to reduce vehicle speeds on Margarita Avenue:

- installing a "speed table", which would be a wider, flat-topped speed hump;
- installing signage that cautioned drivers to reduce vehicle speeds;
- placing the Police Department's radar trailer on Margarita Avenue on a more frequent basis;
- whether installing speed bumps was warranted due to the street's unique design, or whether installing speed bumps might establish a precedent for other residential streets;
- whether to limit on-street parking to evening hours only; and
- researching whether installation of traffic calming measures could be funded through the Safe Routes to School Program.

Anita Showers, Grover Beach, suggested installing signs similar to those located on North 12<sup>th</sup> Street. It was noted, however, that Margarita Avenue was not a private street.

There were no further public comments received.

City Manager Perrault suggested having staff review all options for traffic calming measures that were presented, schedule a meeting between residents of Margarita Avenue and staff to review each option, and return to the Council with recommendations at a future meeting.

**Action:** Upon consensus, staff was directed to review traffic calming options for Margarita Avenue with neighborhood residents and then return to the Council with recommendations.

**Pedestrian Crossing at the Intersection of Brighton Avenue & Oak Park Boulevard**

Mr. Inoyue reviewed the concept of a pedestrian crossing at Oak Park Boulevard and Brighton Avenue to accommodate pedestrians crossing a four-lane major arterial street, which included a left-turn lane pocket. He summarized street widening improvements completed on Oak Park Boulevard that resulted in increased traffic capacity and vehicle speeds, and reviewed the relevant General Plan Circulation Element policies used to analyze the proposal for a crosswalk.

Mr. Inoyue presented findings from traffic counts and radar surveys conducted that revealed an average speed of 34 mph on Oak Park Boulevard, which exceeded the posted speed limit of 30 mph along that northern street segment. He also stated that the level of service was generally acceptable, but dropped significantly in the afternoon/evening hours for traffic heading eastbound on Brighton Avenue, making a left turn northbound onto Oak Park Boulevard. He also stated that traffic warrants for signalization at that intersection were not met. Mr. Inoyue recommended that no improvements be immediately installed and to continue monitoring travel conditions.

Brief discussion was held regarding liability issues if a traffic signal was installed if warrants were not met, and eliminating on-street parking if a center median or pedestrian refuge was installed.

Mayor Shoals invited public comments regarding this portion of the traffic study.

Ralph Wright, Grover Beach, commented on restrictions for enforcement of speed limits.

The following persons spoke in support of a pedestrian crosswalk:

- Gifford Lawson, Grover Beach, suggested installing turn pockets and conducting traffic surveys during weekends to capture more pedestrian activity;
- Diane Lawson, Grover Beach; and
- John Wysong, Grover Beach, who also expressed concerns regarding trucks traveling on Brighton Avenue and the resulting deterioration in the road condition.

There were no further public comments received.

Brief Council discussion was held regarding reducing vehicle speeds and improving safety for pedestrians crossing Oak Park Boulevard by:

- installing medians or a pedestrian refuge;
- narrowing traffic lanes;
- eliminating parking at some intersections;
- installing left-turn pockets; and
- developing an Oak Park Boulevard Streetscape Master Plan to create landscaped medians similar to those already located on the southern portion of Oak Park Boulevard.

Additional Council discussion was held regarding a previous traffic survey conducted on the northern portion of Oak Park Boulevard that also confirmed traffic warrants were not met and so did not provide for a traffic signal to be installed at Brighton Avenue.

Upon question, Police Chief Copsey commented on traffic enforcement efforts and vehicle accident history on Oak Park Boulevard. He confirmed that the posted radar signs reduced vehicle speeds on the northern section of Oak Park Boulevard and also collected speed survey data which verified the information in the Omni-Means traffic study.

**Action:** Upon consensus, staff was directed to prepare a Master Streetscape Plan for Oak Park Boulevard, including a review of the possibility of narrowing travel lanes and eliminating parking at some intersections on North Oak Park Boulevard, and creating a pedestrian refuge at Brighton Avenue and Atlantic City Avenue.

Recess: Upon consensus of the City Council, the workshop recessed at 9:36 p.m.

Reconvene: At 9:44 p.m., the workshop reconvened with all Council Members present.

## 2. Discussion Regarding the Draft Storm Water Management Program.

City Manager Perrault reviewed components of the City's Draft Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) to meet state and federal requirements for reducing the degradation of streams and oceans resulting from urban development and runoff. He reviewed estimated annual costs of \$100,000 to \$150,000 to implement Best Management Practices contained in the SWMP to reduce the discharge of pollutants and gauge compliance with minimum control measures, and discussed the time frame for Program approval by the Regional Water Quality Control Board by February 2009. He also stated that the City had submitted a request for a four-month extension in order to further assess program impacts and work with other agencies in developing a more cost-effective and collaborative approach for Program compliance. He then introduced City Engineer Garing and Bob Mack of Garing Taylor Associates, acknowledging Mr. Mack as the person who prepared a majority of the draft SWMP document.

Brief Council discussion was held regarding:

- unfunded state mandates;
- the problem of establishing a baseline for Meadow Creek when the source of runoff was located further north and beyond the City limits;
- whether to re-examine storm water retention requirements for commercial developments on West Grand Avenue;
- whether the City could incorporate utilizing rights of way, extra wide medians, extra wide streets, or low impact developments in the Best Management Practices for collecting runoff;
- whether the City could receive a credit or reduced SWMP requirement for the City's sandy soil conditions or as a result of the long-standing requirement for developments to install storm water retention basins; and
- coordinating efforts with other governmental agencies to partner with SLO Green Build or another non-profit agency to take the lead on public education efforts.

Upon request, City Manager Perrault and staff reviewed discussion held at a recent meeting of City Managers, City Engineers, and Planning staff with staff members from the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the challenge of meeting storm water management requirements with current budget constraints among the cities. City Manager Perrault then stated that, if the request for a time extension was denied, he would bring a recommendation to the Council to request a hearing before the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Shoals adjourned the meeting at 10:22 p.m.

/s/ JOHN P. SHOALS, MAYOR

Attest:

/s/ DONNA L. McMAHON, CITY CLERK  
(Approved at CC Mtg 4/06/09)

Respectfully Submitted:

/s/ LORRIE TOLES, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY