PORTERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
ADJOURNED MEETING - OCTOBER 20, 2006
PORTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM
41 W. THURMAN AVENUE, PORTERVILLE
1:00 P.M.

Roll Call: Council Member McCracken, Council Member P. Martinez, Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez (came in three minutes late), Mayor Hamilton

Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Pedro Martinez
Invocation: Moment of Silence

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS
Larry Long, 192 West School Avenue, addressed the Council on sidewalks. He stated that he had met with the City Manager and Public Works Director regarding the fact that he wanted to add onto his house and the City required sidewalks to be installed. He stated that the City had looked at this issue before and decided not to put in sidewalks. He stated that there was a misunderstanding about the sidewalks, and he wanted a waiver for the sidewalks so that he would not lose his trees. Mr. Long stated that if the City did require the sidewalk, the City should be responsible, because they were in the project originally to have the sidewalks installed. He stated that he would have to address the Council at the November 21 meeting.

The City Manager stated that Mr. Long should submit a written request for a waiver and it would be brought back to Council with a recommendation and information.

Mr. Long stated that this was not a precedent, just the trees were an issue, and there were trees throughout the City that were in the sidewalk line and the City chose to go around, and he would present that evidence with his formal request.

The City Manager stated that it was needed next week.

SCHEDULED MATTER
1. City Goals and Project Priorities

The City Manager stated that Council met a month or so ago at Sierra View District Hospital and had a general discussion of macro-issues, trends and driving forces relative to the community. Out of the meeting there was a request for a specific project priority meeting so the staff could become well oriented to the Council’s specific goals and priorities, which was the purpose for this meeting. He stated that there were a number of intervening factors. Council set visions to find direction, and they were there to embrace those directions and move projects along. In the process there were many projects that had been formulated over time that were now being completed. He stated that some project’s life could be nine years, such as the Heritage Center, or shorter such as street projects. The purpose of this meeting was to provide the Council with specific projects and commitments they have in terms of their efforts today, which was represented by the blue dots. The
blue dots did not represent recommendations by the Directors of priorities within the Department, so much as where their investment was today and where they were putting their priority resources to complete projects. Mr. Longley stated that he would be asking the Directors to each get up and go through their list of projects and explain them to the Council. He stated that the Directors would be direct and specific in terms of how they saw project development over the next few years—what they saw in terms of their resource base, their ability to implement projects, and the kinds of things they saw as priorities. These may be different from the blue dots. The City Manager stated that the way the game was formulated, each Council member was given one green dot and nine red dots and they were requested to use the green dot to indicate which project the Council person felt was the most important project in the City. He stated that they were trying to winnow things down to a limited list that could be accomplished. The request on the green dot was to indicate which project was the most important in the City. The nine red dots were for the most important project in the nine departments. The City Manager stated that there would be a lot of dots on the paper, and they would then interpret those dots in terms of red, green and blue. The blue being where they were invested now and what was the momentum of their effort. The green being the super priority, and the red in terms of departmental. Staff would then interpret those and provide the Council the raw data back, and try to see where the trends, interests and emphases are. This will be written up in a report and brought back to Council, and then based on that report, the request will be to define the priority projects and move ahead on them. Mr. Longley stated that his goal was to have that report by the first meeting in December. He stated that the next item on the agenda was for the Council to discuss it and decide if there was buy-in to this game, and then go from there, and the next step was to have each of the Directors get up and address their project sheets.

Mayor Hamilton stated that the Directors chose what they felt was the most important, but he needed to know correlation on how the projects were inter tied to each other and how they affected other departments,

The City Manager stated that the blue dots weren’t important except to the extent they were the projects they were doing now. The Directors may not think they were important projects, but because of the Council’s or Manager’s direction, that was where they were invested. It was also requested that the Directors address the completion schedules of the blue dots.

Council Member McCracken suggested that the Directors also have a dot for what they think is important. The City Manager stated that the Directors could use yellow dots.

Baldo Rodriguez, Public Works Director, came up and addressed his list of projects. He stated that they had ten projects:
1. Jaye St. Widening
2. WDR - Effluent Pipeline and Land Leveling on 100 Acres at Airport
3. Percolation Ponds on 40 acres east of Hunsaker Property
4. Airport Water Inter-Tie Project
5. Well No. 29 (1100 gpm well)
6. Olive Avenue & Mathew Street Traffic Signal
7. Indiana Street Project, Phase 2
8. Date Avenue Reconstruction Project (Plano to Casas Buena Vista)
9. Well No. 30 (Airport - conversion of ag well to domestic well)
10. Land Development (Subdivision work)

Mr. Rodriguez stated that there were other projects just as important and time sensitive as they were grants:
- Plano Bridge Widening
- CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) Facility (Fueling Station at 555 N. Prospect)
- Newcomb Street Corridor Shoulder Stabilization (Morton to Olive)
- Traffic Signal at Newcomb Street and Westfield
- Plano Bridge

Mr. Rodriguez spoke on the interconnection between engineering and community development on the projects, and the environmental work that is required before the final design. He also spoke on the constraints they faced in dealing with other agencies in getting authorizations and permits. Mr. Rodriguez spoke regarding personnel needs within his department. He then placed his yellow dots: Jaye street Widening, Effluent Pipeline Project, and the CNG Facility. He stated that they hoped to have the CNG Facility designed to Council by August 2007.

The City Manager stated that they would also have to address phasing. In response to the Mayor’s question, Mr. Rodriguez clarified that his Department could complete, at the most, ten of the listed 29 projects.

Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez asked about losing grant funds if they were not used in the allotted time. He asked how the Council would know when time was running out on the grant.

Mr. Rodriguez explained that all the grants had time limits, but some projects were just more important than others. In that instance, they attempted to get an extension on the project in order to keep the funding, but if it was not done, the grant would be taken, and it would be difficult to get it back.

Mayor Hamilton asked if hiring another engineer would allow them to get more projects done, and Mr. Rodriguez stated that it would allow them to accomplish the ten projects. He stated that they were a smaller division than in 1986.

Brad Dunlap, Community Development Director, stated that if some of Mr. Rodriguez’s projects didn’t happen, then some of his couldn’t happen, and this went for Mr. Perrine and the other departments also. If the effluent projects don’t happen, then growth might as well stop. Mr. Dunlap then presented his top five projects list:
1. Hillside Development Ordinance
2. General Plan Update (very critical right now) (most important long-term)
3. Porterville Hotel
4. Property Negotiation from the Economic Development Standpoint (most important short-term)
5. Bella Lago Planned Development (huge development)
Mr. Dunlap spoke about the staff time involved in the General Plan and the need for seasoned, journey level staff, which he doesn’t have in the Planning Division. He spoke on the staff shortage impact in the various Departments, which affected the interrelated projects in all the departments, especially large projects such as Bella Lago, which affects all the departments. Mr. Dunlap also spoke on the quality of life issues that are being addressed by Council. Mr. Dunlap stated that his department also has less staff than four years ago. He stated that he would rather have two journey level planners than one journey level with two or three entry level personnel because it creates a bottleneck.

Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez asked about the interconnectivity between the departments and the projects. He asked about the low water crossing at Indiana and whether that would affect future projects.

Mr. Dunlap addressed the low water crossing at Indiana and pushing Gibbons through to Main Street that would really open up that area. He stated that they don’t have the funds to do those projects now.

The City Manager stated that the Directors could vote their yellow dots outside their departments.

Council took a break from 2:25 to 2:34 p.m.

John Lollis, Administrative Services Director, came forward and presented his project list. He stated that his was a support service, and one of his rolls that was critical was finding new ways to develop and hire professions. His list was as follows:
1. Energy Audit - Johnson Controls (upgrading facilities through energy use)
3. Budget Analysis for Meet and Confer (process to begin in Spring)
4. Police Officer Recruitment (with the implementation of Measure H, to obtain the best personnel)
5. GASB 34 - Infrastructure (requirement that come June 2007, the City must evaluate its infrastructure and place a value on it. Must have in the 2007/08 audit)

Mr. Lollis addressed the divisions of Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology, and to a degree, Risk Management. He stated that HR was focusing on recruitment at this time. In Finance itself, they were somewhat treading water as they recruited for a Chief Financial Officer. He stated that one of the biggest issues on the technology side was that they needed to look toward replacement of much of the equipment, such as servers, and where technology was heading. He stated that they had to address where the future of technology lies, as relates to the needs of the community, and how they build to that capacity. Mr. Lollis stated that the GIS System is now becoming a City-wide tool.

Council Member P. Martinez stated that he didn’t see the ‘hire up to’ numbers for the safety officers.
Mr. Lollis stated that they needed nine police officers, and backgrounds were being done on several now, which was a very time consuming process. He clarified that three officers would be hired on November 1, and four more were in the process.

Council Member P. Martinez stated that he appreciated that the standards were not lowered, even though they really needed the officers. He asked about the timeline on the GASB 34 requirement and whether the City was behind the curve.

Mr. Lollis stated that some of the work was already done, but the details on every piece of material the City owns—every tree, every light pole, etc. would need to be valued and reported. He stated that there wasn’t internal capacity to do this project, so did they bite the bullet and do the work themselves, or did they spend $40,000 to have a group come in and do it. Mr. Lollis also discussed the possibility of having the level four classes required for police officers here in Porterville in connection with Kern Community College.

The Police Chief stated that if the COS Bond measure passes in November, then they would be moving the Police Academy from Visalia to Hanford. That meant the cadets here would be going to Kern County.

Council Member P. Martinez asked Mr. Lollis if there was anything they could take away from his department. Mr. Lollis spoke about having conversations with Porterville College, and looking at the capacities here in the City to provide more opportunities. He also stated that there were more ways to become more efficient through technology such as online permits and applications. He stated that on the technology side it was where they best used their money. He stated that he didn’t see anything to pull off the charts, it was more a way to better refine and become more efficient.

In answer to Council Member P. Martinez, Mr. Guyton also explained the Employee Badge Administrative Policy project and the employee identification card system, for which they got a grant.

Council asked about resources Mr. Lollis was lacking, and he stated that there was the Chief Financial Officer in Finance, and in HR there was a lot of experience and memory that they were looking at replacing due to retirements in the next two years that they had to begin to replace. In IT they were looking at the possibility of entry level personnel to do lower level work.

Mayor Hamilton asked who was next.

The City Manager stated that they needed a place to add projects to the lists. He stated that he would like to add the Courthouse Project to the City Manager’s list. He then reviewed the City Clerk Division and the Airport Division lists.

Frank Guyton, Deputy City Manager and Fire Chief, reviewed his department list. He stated that he needed three firefighters, and he added Plan Review and Code Enforcement to his list. Mr. Guyton put all his yellow dots on the General Plan Update because that would guide everything.
He stated that they needed to plan the future and not react to it, and do their budgetary planning at budget time and anything that comes along should be done midyear. He stated that where they were going crazy on all the different projects was that they were being interrupted, and they didn’t have a clear vision on where the Council wanted them to go. He stated that it was great that the City Manager was doing this because it would give them direction on how to proceed forward. Mr. Guyton stated that airport went along with the general plan, if they built it, they would come–they had to have the vision at the airport, which they had, but it was dependent on private industry or other government entities having needs, and they had to stay on top of those needs and position themselves to take the best advantage of those opportunities when they come along. Mr. Guyton stated that it all keyed back to economic development, which was planning. Mr. Guyton stated that he wanted to see it grow as best they could with as few interruptions as they could. He stated that all the departments had needs but for each need there was an economic factor tied into it. Each time they added additional engineers, planners or officers, the money only went so far. He stated that perhaps the question for Baldo on his work load was how many open cases could they carry at a time, and then work on those top ten. He stated that was the direction he needed in order to get the first ten done.

Mayor Hamilton stated that if they got some things accomplished like Riverwalk, they would have more resources.

Chuck McMillan, Police Chief, reviewed his list and the top five were:
1. Gangs (just did biggest task force operation in his eighteen years)
2. Graffiti (looking at installation of cameras)
3. Stolen Vehicles (most costly to the City)
4. Conducting background checks/fill newly allocated positions (biggest thing right now; looking at Cadet Program)
5. Establish Volunteer Policing Program

Chief McMillan spoke on their employee workshops and the continuing development of their goals. He stated that gangs, graffiti and stolen vehicles were still their focus internally. He stated that it was very important to get qualified people and he depended on HR. He stated that they were also looking at a satellite office at the airport now for their traffic team, and they wanted to put something west and east. He stated that it would be open during the day so people would not have to come downtown, and he agreed that it should be public safety with both police and fire combined, and if fire built a facility, it should contain offices for police. Chief McMillan stated that the Police facility was built in 1989, and it was maxed out, and in a year or two they would to look at making changes. He stated that they would have to look at quality of life issues also. The Chief spoke on the recruitment process and the Explorer Program.

Council Member P. Martinez questioned training for officers.

Chief McMillan went over the P.O.S.T. standards. He stated that he was an impact weapon’s instructor and they were going to try and certify their own program so that they didn’t have to go somewhere else. He stated that his budget for training was very high, and any programs they could do themselves would help. Chief McMillan stated that they were now certifying an emergency
vehicle operations program where they were teaching them high speed driving and accident avoidance, and he hoped to offer it to other agencies. He stated that he had four canine officers, having just added another dog, three on the street and one in the gang unit. He stated that they also have one school resource officer, and he would be looking at the possibility of sharing the costs with the schools.

When asked what equipment he might need, Chief McMillan stated that the biggest impact on his department was information technology. They need a data base for information City-wide that all departments could share and use in the field.

Jim Perrine, Parks and Leisure Services Director, spoke on multi project management and the need to move into more modern times. He stated that sometimes things didn’t follow procedure, or totally logical sequence, in compliance in new regulations and procedures as things evolved. He stated that when they have multiple projects it was more of a program, with program management, which commonly referred to multiple projects activities, but doing them in a programmatic fashion they got a bigger benefit than doing them independently. He stated that programs were a collective of different events, a logical sequence of actions that make a greater whole possible. Strategic planning, master planning, planning for funding, budgetary issues, and then implementation ultimately of the project, through design and actual construction was the most common as the sequence of events come form together into a program. Mr. Perrine stated that each department had been asked to identify where they individually allocated their efforts, but they haven’t come together to figure out as an organization what efforts should be recommended to formulate more of a program, and that was partly because they didn’t have good criteria for what is the program, and the goals they were trying to achieve, what were the priorities, the criteria, by which they the projects should all be evaluated. He stated that often his projects were reactionary to what the problems and perceptions were today, and what they had to deal with now, and not looking forward as the General Plan does, and setting a vision as to what they were trying to move toward, so they were constantly reacting and not being proactive, they were being reactive. He stated that he had twenty-eight projects but they were not organized or fashioned in any manner that they had any hopes of necessary ever getting all twenty-eight ever completed, but they worked on them incrementally, independently trying to make advances and do the best they could. He reviewed his list of top five projects and spoke on his dependence on other departments for assistance with his projects. His projects were:

1. Skate Park
2. Community Center
3. Library RFID System (budgeted this year; should be up and running by the end of December)
4. Library Floor covering (closing Library last two weeks of December for replacement)
5. Reroof City Hall Annex (almost complete)

Mr. Perrine then reviewed the remainder of his projects. He added three additional items:
1. Recruitment: nine vacant positions (six are now provisionally filled; 3 vacant; 2 vacant, unfunded; three ½ positions are Measure H; no new journey level positions since 1981)
2. New Library (part of Measure H)
3. New Golf Course Project
Council Member P. Martinez asked about the departments getting grants without the staffing to complete the process and staff the facility if built.

Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez stated that one common theme was staffing, and he asked the City Manager whether the staff issue was due to the hiring freeze, qualified individuals, lack of guidance in that aspect of it (didn’t think it was important), or budget constraint.

The City Manager stated that it was not budget constraint. It had something to do with the hiring freeze, but currently it was the capacity of the Personnel Department to process lots of recruitments, and the additional police and fire have added to that significantly. He stated that in some positions it was a matter of available, qualified individuals, and the life cycle of recruitments themselves.

Council Member P. Martinez asked how many hours the Council was taking up with the staff if they wanted to make these projects happen. He stated that every Friday he had meetings and he saw staff there, and maybe they were taking up staff’s time with meetings that Council should handle.

The City Manager stated that the two issues were accomplishment and accountability, and he thought that to the extent that projects were not added regularly, and priorities moved around, was essential for continuity and project completion. He stated that the Council expects, and pays good money, for them to accomplish projects, so these kinds of sessions like today should happen a couple of times a year. There should be a sense to keep the things they have started going to completion, but they would have to justify where they were in the process and how they have moved along reasonably and deliberately. He stated that those two elements would be beneficial, and the extent to which just how regularly new projects are added, or if they are added, just exactly as the Council did last time when they were going to look at the BMX Track, and add it at some milestone. He stated that would facilitate the coordination and completion of projects.

Mayor Hamilton stated that what Council Member P. Martinez was really saying was that they get ideas or hear from the community and immediately come down and put something in action—it wasn’t where they were planning these things, it was all of a sudden they were changing direction because a citizen said something to them.

The City Manager stated that the Council had to be able to get into the process, they were the governing body, but it would be best to add things at certain times, perhaps midyear but mostly at budget time.

Mayor Hamilton stated that they had been told that sometimes they change a project as a whole because it was political, and he thought that frustrates everyone.

Council Member P. Martinez stated that items such as the Planning Commission came up where it will take a lot of staff time to do, should they look at that or wait until later in the year so they could get some of these things done. He stated that he didn’t know the capacity of the staff. He stated that be wanted to be responsive, and Mayor Hamilton added that if staff didn’t speak up
they would think they had unlimited capacity and they would keep on filling. Council Member P. Martinez stated that they were good at responding to their constituents, but would they be taking away things such as the General Plan getting done, and if he was doing that, then it was wrong, because it was important to him.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that his major complaint was that there was no right or wrong answer, such as truck parking. He stated that at a point they should be able to say there is not a good answer, but this is the answer, and be done with it. He stated that they meet with the truckers over and over and give them a sense that there may be another answer that he hasn’t thought of, so give him enough time and he will come up with it, and he can’t. Mr. Rodriguez stated that another issue was where people complain about cars speeding, and they do a traffic study, and the numbers presented support the traffic speed, but because the people don’t get what they want, it results in another study. When the facts do not support the complaint, then it should be a dead issue, as opposed to continuing to do something several different ways. Instead of things being “here’s what the reality is–it’s dead” or “you know what, you guys were right you deserve a stop sign,” a decision should be made and not one that keeps on going, because it takes up time. Mr. Rodriguez stated that it was frustrating because he could not come up with solutions for the truck thing, but they though he could. He stated that all he was saying was that when the study was done, the study was done. It would not always be the way staff wants, but once the answer was done, go with it. Mr. Perrine clarified that they have the criteria, they should understand the criterial and set the priorities. Mr. Rodriguez and the City Engineer then addressed warrants for traffic signals and the cost of traffic signals.

Mayor Hamilton asked if the Directors had any other comments.

Mr. Perrine stated that it was just understanding that these are the projects they were supposed to be working on, or what the criteria was to establish priorities. He stated that his staff would be more comfortable looking forward, that these would be the criteria, and these would be the priorities, so they could feel good about saying that these would be the type of things they would be working on in the future. He stated that many things they were asked to do were good for the community, but where did the idea come from, and maybe the item should have a higher priority, but maybe they should go back and communicate that better to the department so that other similar items could also be reevaluated and prioritized, and not just added.

Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez stated that if they received a request and came to staff on items like traffic signals or signs, perhaps they could just be provided the study so Council could go back to the individual with the answer.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he didn’t mean to imply that they shouldn’t be bothered by Council, because as stated by the City Manager, they were the ones in charge. He stated that the Council and Manager have the right to do those things, but it shouldn’t languish and become more than what it was. He invited Council to come to Public Works where they had binders since 1993 with the traffic counts. If Council were to call about a traffic intersection, they would pull the reports.
Council concurred that it would be helpful to have the traffic information so they could give informed answers.

Mr. Rodriguez invited the Council to the November 11 truck meeting.

Mayor Hamilton asked Bryan Styles about Field Services.

Bryan Styles, Field Services Manager, stated that his division was in the same position as the other departments, with staffing being an issue. They were getting new people but it was taking time to get the qualified people they needed. That was the sentiment from the working staff—not enough people. He stated that he didn’t see being hindered by the Council, but if a decision was made, stay with that decision and don’t ask for another study. If research was done and the information given to Council, then don’t ask for another study, and another.

Mayor Hamilton stated that it was like they didn’t trust what staff told them in the first place.

Mr. Styles stated that meetings like these, and study sessions, were very beneficial.

Council Member P. Martinez stated that it was important that all things go through the City Manager, who would take it, and that was setting direction. Where he was worried, where it was affecting the goals that the Council set. They would set their goals today and say these where the things they want done, and the things they came up with from this day forward, he wasn’t sure they would take priority unless they met a certain criteria, i.e., economic development, state mandates. Council Member P. Martinez stated that other than that, it should be handled as the City Manager did at the last meeting, saying they would look at the item at budget time.

Mayor Hamilton stated that he would like to see that a little more, as the City Manager was so responsive. Mayor Pro Tem F. Martinez concurred, and stated that items should be held until budget time.

Mr. Perrine stated that the Council has three advisory bodies—Library Board, Parks and Leisure Services Commission, and Zalud House Funding Revenue Enhancement Committee. He stated that these are advisors and their input would be valuable. He stated that what was frustrating to him was the Public Works Department doesn’t have their engineering slots filled and that affected him getting his work done.

Mayor Hamilton stated that it was time to loosen the purses and get the job done.

Mike Reed stated that he was also frustrated that they couldn’t get the projects done.

Susan Duke, Project Manager, stated that a lot of the problem was timing, and the Mayor clarified that the discussion on the planning commission had been postponed six months.

Mr. Lollis spoke about the difference between cultures at the City and the School District.
Chief McMillan stated that it was about developing relationships between the Council and the Police Department and between staff.

Mayor Hamilton and Council congratulated Janet Enquist on taking the Analyst II test.

Mr. Guyton stated that the current sitting Council was easier to work with than others in the past 29 years. He stated that going through the City Manager’s office sometimes allowed them to get the information needed without taking the Director’s time. He stated that there were things on the board that would enhance the City, and he would like to see more projects come to fruition without interruption.

The City Manager stated that the Council should put up their dots with one green for the most important and one red for the most important in the department.

Mayor Hamilton stated that if the Council didn’t tell the staff that they appreciated them enough, they wanted them to know that did, and they thought they were all experts.

Council then went around the room and place their dots on the lists.

The City Manager stated that he would take the pages back and interpret them, and bring it back for Council for a final decision.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Council adjourned at 4:50 p.m. to the Council Meeting of October 26, 2006 at 6:30 p.m..

Georgia Hawley, Chief Deputy City Clerk

ATTEST:

Cameron Hamilton, Mayor