



MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL – WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Tuesday, May 7, 2013 – 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Meeting Location

El Cerrito City Hall – City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

Council Members	Board Members
Janet Abelson	Randall Enos
Rebecca Benassini	Todd A. Groves
Jan Bridges	Madeline Kronenberg
Mark Friedman	Elaine R. Merriweather
Greg Lyman	Charles T. Ramsey

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Abelson, Benassini, Bridges, Friedman and Mayor Lyman
West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education Directors
Enos, Groves, Ramsey and President Kronenberg

Absent: Director Merriweather

6:30 p.m.

CONVENE SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL – WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Mayor Lyman convened the Special Joint City Council / West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education meeting at 6:31p.m.

- 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OR OBSERVATION OF A MOMENT OF SILENCE** was led by Mayor Pro Tem Abelson.
- 2. WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING COMMENTS – Mayor Lyman and WCCUSD President Kronenberg**

President Kronenberg expressed her appreciation for the Joint meeting and noted that collaboration with cities has been an important activity this year.

Mayor Lyman thanked the School Board members for attending the meeting this evening, noted that the School District is an important contributor to the community and emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Description of New El Cerrito High School/City of El Cerrito Internship Program

Presenters: Sukari Beshears, Human Resources Manager, City of El Cerrito and Michael Aaronian, College Career Coordinator.

Director Ramsey suggested expanding the program to the City Attorney's Office.

Councilmember Benassini stated that Councilmembers would welcome any questions from students regarding what it is like to be a councilmember.

Director Enos stressed the importance of the role of the internship program in local government.

Mayor Lyman asked if there is a policy in place for returning students and whether the number of student interns could be expanded in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Abelson stressed the importance of both agencies working together for the benefit of the students and providing a link for career development, exploration and an opportunity to succeed.

President Kronenberg expressed appreciation to Mr. Aaronian and Mayor Pro Tem Abelson for their efforts in initiating the internship program and noted the opportunities for collaboration and developing a model for a linked learning academy for public service among other cities within the School District and throughout California.

B. Update on Writer Coach Connection

Presenters: Robert Menzimer, Executive Director, Community Alliance for Education/Writer Coach Connection.

Kathleen Hallam, Portola Site Coordinator, stated that she is impressed with volunteers that the program has recruited and kept.

Matthew Burnham, Principal, Portola Middle School, spoke of the benefits of the Writer Coach Connection program and the importance of working with volunteers.

Ms. Yvette Soto, English Language Development teacher, stated that her students have benefited greatly from the Writer Coach Connection and thanked all of the volunteers that are involved in the program.

[Mayor Lyman recessed the Joint City Council / WCCUSD Board of Education meeting at 6:59 p.m. Mayor Lyman convened the regular City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. and promptly adjourned the City Council meeting to after the adjournment of the Joint City Council/WCCUSD Board meeting. The Joint meeting reconvened at 7:02 p.m.]

Ms. Soto introduced four Portola Middle School students who each offered brief statements regarding the importance of the Writer Coach Connection and how the program has improved their writing.

David Luongo, Principal, El Cerrito High School, described the benefits that accrue from the community building inherent in the Writer Coach Connection program and also noted how the program helps students succeed.

Curt Douglas, El Cerrito High School English Department Chair, expressed his enthusiasm for the Writer Coach Connection program and how coaches serve the

unique needs of each student. Mr. Douglas also reported that the completion of writing assignments and the quality of written work has improved as a result of the program. Mr. Douglas introduced three high school students who each spoke about their own positive experience of the program and its tutors.

Councilmember Bridges asked how one can sign up to be a coach.

Director Groves stated potential coaches can sign up at writercoachconnection.org and encouraged all to become involved.

President Kronenberg applauded Mr. Groves' involvement in the program and stated that the program is a turnkey program in which the coach and student are supported thoroughly.

C. Update on Bond Program in El Cerrito

Fairmont Elementary School

Presenters: Magdy Abdullah, WCCUSD Engineering Officer, introduced Marcus Hibser of HY Architects, who provided an overview and update regarding the Fairmount Elementary School campus.

Director Ramsey confirmed with the District's architect that construction drawings could be out by the summer of 2015.

Mayor Lyman encouraged the School District to coordinate with the City's Tree Ordinance, particularly with respect to the Redwood Grove.

El Cerrito High Stadium Project

Kevin McQuarrie, Principal, WLC Architects, provided an update and overview of the stadium project at El Cerrito High School.

Director Ramsey asked which firm was performing the hazardous material analysis and review, particularly at the El Cerrito field. Director Ramsey also suggested that the light installation and its brightness be sensitive to impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Mayor Pro Tem Abelson confirmed with Mr. Abdullah that the site will be accessible and available to the general community for use and exercise after the school is closed.

Councilmember Benassini said she was happy to see the street view of the design from Ashbury Avenue and envision how the project will look to pedestrians.

Director Ramsey encouraged incorporation of a sustained maintenance agreement of 5-10 years into the contract documents.

Mayor Lyman asked Mr. Abdullah to describe the maintenance program in more detail and asked whether the public or businesses would be allowed to use the concession area and kitchen as a community resource for teaching and production.

Councilmember Bridges asked for clarification regarding the location and availability of restrooms for tennis court users.

Mayor Pro Tem Abelson asked for more clarification regarding use of the kitchen facility and whether it could be used for fundraising events.

Bruce Harter, Ph.D, WCCUSD Superintendent, stated that the community will have full use of the kitchen area just like all of the other high schools.

Future Portola Middle School located at Castro Elementary Campus

Mr. Hibser provided an overview of the future campus.

Director Ramsey asked for an explanation of the public noticing plan and how the residents can file any construction related concerns or complaints with the District and also asked that the public be informed about the construction timeline, process and administration.

Councilmember Benassini confirmed access points to Castro Park during construction.

Mayor Pro Tem Abelson asked about wheelchair access at the Portola site.

Mr. Abdullah identified www.wccusd\bondprogram.com as the public outreach website containing project updates. Mr. Abdullah provided a summary of renovation projects that have recently been completed or that are planned such as Harding Elementary School restrooms and waterproofing. Mr. Abdullah stated that the bond program has contributed \$285,631,200 to El Cerrito schools however this amount does not include the high school stadium or the new Fairmont campus.

Director Ramsey added that plans for Cameron School are underway and have not been ignored.

Steve Collins, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Director, explained that he represented a single district with a specialized local plan area. Mr. Collins updated the Council and Board on special education needs at Cameron School, an early intervention center, including expansion of the building.

D. Report from Portola Disposition Subcommittee

Councilmember Benassini stated that the subcommittee is comprised of Mayor Lyman, herself and Directors Ramsey and Groves. Councilmember Benassini said the subcommittee is discussing the future temporary Portola Middle School campus that will be vacated by the School District once the Fairmont Elementary School kids are moved into their new building in approximately 2018. The Subcommittee met on April 29, 2013 to discuss the sloped part of the campus where demolition has taken place and future uses of the site, including a long term lease of the site by the City. The Subcommittee also discussed use of the lower site where the Portola Middle School is today including the plan to move the schools and children in the future.

Mayor Lyman said that public comment will be incorporated into the decision making process and that the final decision on future uses will determine what type of fundraising is needed.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Al Miller, El Cerrito, expressed how important it is for the two governing bodies to meet together and noted that both bodies are responsible to the same electorate. Mr. Miller also described how the El Cerrito High School site had been used historically and stressed the importance of having public access to the new facilities since the public paid for them through bond measures.

Robert Studdiford, El Cerrito, expressed his views and offered ideas regarding use of and access to the old Portola site and explained how open space benefits everyone in the community.

Tom Panas, El Cerrito, thanked the City and Board for the presentations this evening. Mr. Panas stated that a very large mosaic across from the office at Fairmont School is a treasured resource that is more than fifty years old and asked how it will be integrated into the new campus.

Dr. Harter stated that the District and the City had been meeting and said that both entities had come to a mutual agreement on how they will work together. Dr. Harter stated he was delighted to report about progress being made to make facilities available not only to groups but also individuals.

5. COMMENTS AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION FROM BOARD DIRECTORS AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilmember Friedman said he was encouraged by the history of collaboration between the School District and the City and that he was excited to see the plans for the new and renovated facilities. Councilmember Friedman also emphasized the need to make facilities available for use by the public whenever feasible.

Director Enos emphasized the need to continue to work together toward what students need.

Councilmember Bridges noted that it was helpful to receive an update on all the projects and thanked the speakers for their comments regarding the joint use agreement and described public comments about the history and difficulties of field users that the City's Park and Recreation Commission has received.

Councilmember Benassini echoed the need for a joint use agreement that will allow non-student athletes to value the playfields as much as student athletes and thanked the School District for reporting on all of the programs going on at the schools.

Director Groves thanked President Kronenberg and Mayor Pro Tem Abelson for bringing the Intern Stars program to life and said he is looking forward to seeing the program grow.

Mayor Pro Tem Abelson thanked everyone for the session and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work together and thanked Director Ramsey in particular for requesting the joint meeting. The joint meeting provides an opportunity to work together in a constructive way.

Director Ramsey thanked everyone and stressed the importance of transparency and information sharing. Director Ramsey pointed out that the School Board will be voting to re-institute an elementary music program in El Cerrito through the theater school concept at its next meeting and also noted that El Cerrito had one of the largest parcel tax renewal and bond measure passage rates. Athletics will keep going, counseling services will continue and libraries will remain open. The Ivy League Connection is still vibrant. Director Ramsey congratulated and thanked voters in El Cerrito for all of their support.

Mayor Lyman thanked the Board for meeting with the City Council and stressed the importance of dialogue. Mayor Lyman emphasized the interrelationship between the two jurisdictions and thanked the School District on its follow through on the bond measures. Mayor Lyman stated that he looks forward to continuing a strong and growing relationship. He also thanked the School District for its continued support of school resource officers and the Morehouse Project and for creating a safe environment for youth.

President Kronenberg mentioned the District's strategic plan process and reported that there will be meeting in Pinole tomorrow and Kennedy on May 11. More information is posted at wccusd.net.

The public can provide input by attending meetings, by sending an email directly to any of the school board directors or Dr. Harter or by clicking on a strategic plan link located on the District's website. President Kronenberg noted that El Cerrito is a city that wants to see the success of its schools and promised that the strategic plan will be adhered to.

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Item No. 3(A) Description of New El Cerrito High School/City of El Cerrito Internship Program

1. Powerpoint presentation – *Submitted by Sukari Beshears, Human Resources Manager*

Item No. 3(B) Update on Writer Coach Connection

2. Writer Coach Connection in El Cerrito – *Submitted by Robert Menzimer, Executive Director.*

Item No. 3(C) Update on Bond Program in El Cerrito

3. Community Update on Portola Middle School at Castro Project – *Submitted by Magdy Abdallah, West Contra Costa Unified School District.*
4. Powerpoint presentation – *Submitted by Bruce Harter, Superintendent, West Contra Costa Unified School District.*
5. Comments on Fairmont School Mosaic – *Submitted by Tom Panas, El Cerrito.*

6. ADJOURNED JOINT CITY COUNCIL/WCCUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING at 8:41 p.m.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Joint El Cerrito City Council – West Contra Costa Unified School District Board Of Education Meeting of May 7, 2013 as approved by the El Cerrito City Council.

Cheryl Morse, City Clerk

Gregory B. Lyman, Mayor

<p style="text-align: center;">CTR Approved 6/12/13</p>
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