

MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 14, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:02 P.M. on January 14, 2015, in the Council Chambers, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, Chair Emerson presiding.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners:

Gina Biri
Dave Emerson
Thomas Lindsey
Javier Mejia
Daniel Patz
Jason Seaman
James Wilhelm

Absent: Commissioner:

None.

Present: Staff:

Dave Hunt, City Engineer
Community Development/Public Works Director
Steven Mendoza
Bruce McAlpine, Police Captain
Dawn Sallade, Department Secretary

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by City Engineer Dave Hunt.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Emerson opened the meeting for Oral Communications.

Samuel Manning, Parks and Recreation Commissioner issued a challenge to Council Members and Commissioners to participate in the "Race on the Base" event to be held February 28, 2015.

5. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

City Engineer Hunt introduced the two new Traffic Commissioners Thomas Lindsey and Jason Seaman.

6. TRAFFIC COMMISSION REORGANIZATION

This report provides relevant information for the Traffic Commission's annual reorganization by the election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Recommendation: Nominate and elect the following officers:

1. Chair
2. Vice-Chair

Department Secretary Sallade opened the nominations for the office of Chair.

Vice-Chair Patz nominated Chair Emerson for another term of office.

Commissioner Biri nominated Commissioner Mejia for the office of Chair.

There being no further nominations, Ms. Sallade closed the nominations and called for a Roll Call vote in favor of Chair Emerson.

At this time, Commissioner Biri asked if the nominees could speak briefly as to their experience, etc.

Community Development/Public Works Director Mendoza confirmed that the nominees would be allowed to present their statements at this time.

Chair Emerson stated that either he or Commissioner Mejia would be qualified to serve in the position of Chair, but he was previously unaware that Commissioner Mejia was interested in serving in that capacity. He further stated that he is familiar with what is happening within the Commission, as well as the direction it should go. At the same time he was unsure of who would be interested in the position and was ambivalent about the selection, and further, would have no hard feelings if Commissioner Mejia is elected. Chair Emerson stated that there are many items on the docket that he would like to move forward with, but Commissioner Mejia is also familiar with the items, and either of them is capable of filling the position. In conclusion, Chair Emerson stated he wishes to continue moving forward and keeping the Commission working together as a unit, and he and Commissioner Mejia have similar perspectives.

Commissioner Mejia stated that he initially had not envisioned serving in a leadership role, but after giving it some thought, had decided that he is here to serve in any capacity. He further stated that he has served on the Commission for two years; the Commission works well together and Chair Emerson has done a great job. Commissioner Mejia stated that the opportunity to serve as Chair might not come around again and that was his motivation to serve in that capacity. In conclusion, Commissioner Mejia stated that he would be comfortable in supporting Chair Emerson as Chair while serving in the capacity of Vice-Chair of the Commission.

Commissioner Biri stated that it would behoove the Commission to work toward the well founded organizational idea of succession planning, whereby the Vice-Chair moves into the position of Chair.

Unanimously Carried: The Traffic Commission reappointed Chair Emerson as Chair.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Biri	Yes
Chair Emerson	Yes
Commissioner Lindsey	Yes
Commissioner Mejia	Yes
Vice Chair Patz	Yes
Commissioner Seaman	Yes
Commissioner Wilhelm	Yes

Chair Emerson took the gavel and opened the floor to nominations for the office of Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Biri nominated Commissioner Mejia for the position of Vice-Chair.

There being no further nominations, Chair Emerson closed the nominations.

Unanimously Carried: The Traffic Commission appointed Commissioner Mejia as Vice-Chair.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Biri	Yes
Chair Emerson	Yes
Commissioner Lindsey	Yes
Commissioner Mejia	Yes
Vice Chair Patz	Yes
Commissioner Seaman	Yes
Commissioner Wilhelm	Yes

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Reconsider Approval of October 8, 2014, Regular Traffic Commission Meeting minutes with corrections as noted by Vice-Chair Mejia.

Motion/Second: Patz/Lindsey

Carried: 5/0/2 (Commissioners Lindsey and Seaman abstained): The Traffic Commission approved the minutes as corrected of the Regular meeting of October 8, 2014.

B. Reconsider Approval of November 12, 2014, Regular Traffic Commission Meeting minutes with corrections as noted by Commissioner Wilhelm.

Motion/Second: Biri/Patz

Carried: 5/0/2 (Commissioners Lindsey and Seaman abstained): The Traffic Commission approved the minutes as corrected of the Regular meeting of November 12, 2014.

8. STAFF REPORTS

A. TRAFFIC COMMISSIONER GUIDELINES

Powers and Duties of the Traffic Commission and the Duties and Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair will be discussed.

City Engineer Hunt reported that the Staff report and guidelines are presented to update and acquaint the two new Traffic Commissioners of the powers and duties of the Traffic Commission.

Vice-Chair Mejia requested an updated roster with current Commissioner's information.

The Agenda Report was received and filed with no further action taken.

B. INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT TRAFFIC SCHOOL STUDY

City Engineer Hunt introduced John Eclevia, Director of Facilities Maintenance and Operations, Los Alamitos Unified School District (LAUSD). Mr. Hunt stated that the Draft Traffic School Study is a joint study with the School District.

Mr. Hunt reported that traffic circulation around the four schools north of Katella Avenue has been an issue for years, especially in the morning rush hour when students are driving to, or being dropped off at school. Staff has conducted open discussions with the School District about how to improve the traffic flow around the school. Mr. Hunt urged the new Commissioners to observe some of the ongoing traffic issues around the schools, especially in the morning. He requested recommendations of additional items or refinement to the School Traffic Study, and stated that the Study presented at this time is a first draft. Mr. Hunt also stated that Mr. Eclevia will have an opportunity to review the Study, and it will eventually be presented to the School Board for review. The end goal is to come up with recommended improvements and the method by which to fund those improvements. Mr. Hunt briefly discussed the different grant programs available and explained that the recommended improvements will eventually be presented to the City Council for their consideration, as well as to the School Board.

Commissioner Patz questioned if the School Board recognizes that there is an issue with traffic circulation and has a desire to improve the issue.

Mr. Hunt responded that the School District does want improvements, and the issues have been discussed for several years. It is his goal to have a plan that everyone is in agreement with.

Mr. Hunt stated that approximately 30% of the students are from outside the District boundaries, and there is no information available on where these students come from. The Traffic Study was conducted to collect current traffic data counts, and to provide alternatives and cost estimates for the various alternatives. Mr. Hunt stated there are approximately 9,000 students and 600 employees at the schools, with 6,000 students attending the schools north of Katella Avenue. He further discussed the various start times at the schools, and stated that there are crossing guards at various locations who are there to protect the students. The City currently compensates the crossing guards, but has requested the School District to pay for a portion of the costs associated with their employment. Mr. Hunt gave an overview of the draft Traffic Study, and stated that the Study was completed within the last six months. During the PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Hunt discussed traffic congestion issues at various schools, and further discussed the various suggested alternatives and changes. Mr. Hunt requested that the Commission and Mr. Eclevia, the School District representative, read and review the draft Study for future general discussion. Mr. Hunt discussed the congestion issues at the high school and suggested alternatives to assist with the issues.

Discussion ensued regarding an empty lot on the corner which has been for sale for a number of years.

Mr. Hunt indicated that this property is polluted due to being a former gas station.

Community Development/Public Works Director Mendoza stated that the property owner is an oil company who entered into an agreement with the owner of Rossmoor Towing 21 years ago and the property has been in escrow that entire time. It is now for sale again.

Commissioner Patz questioned if it would be of value for the School District to be able to purchase the property to either expand the parking lot or for drop-off options.

Mr. Mendoza stated that the purchase of the property has been discussed by the School District, however, that discussion was in Closed Session and he is not privy to results of the negotiations.

Commissioner Wilhelm asked if there is still no possibility of having an east/west lane to connect with the bulk of student parking out to the Boulevard.

Mr. Hunt stated that all possibilities are up for discussion.

Commissioner Wilhelm stated it is a safety issue.

Further discussion of the draft Study ensued regarding additional alternatives/improvements and cost estimates.

Mr. Hunt stated that the Study will be revised several times and encouraged the Commissioners to read the Study as well as the tables and data. He stated that the Traffic Engineer will be present at the next meeting to discuss the draft Traffic Study in depth. He indicated that questions for the Traffic Engineer may be e-mailed to him who will in turn provide them to the Traffic Engineer so they may be addressed at the next meeting. Mr. Hunt stated that the process of refining the Traffic Study could take several months.

Mr. Mendoza stated that the Study should be approved by the Traffic Commission and not just presented by the consultant.

Commissioner Patz questioned if there is a determination by the School District to see the project through to completion.

Mr. Mendoza asked Mr. Eclevia for his input on the School District's view of the Study.

Mr. Eclevia responded that there is a large amount of information in the Study, and the Board will need time to review the information.

Mr. Mendoza confirmed that the School District has been very cooperative during discussions regarding traffic flow.

Commissioner Patz expressed concern that without the School District's cooperation and support, improvements will not come about.

Mr. Hunt stated that the School Traffic Study must be approved by both parties and the District's representative has been very cooperative. He further stated that there will need to be future discussions on how the improvements will be funded.

Mr. Mendoza stated that improvements will be prioritized collectively, and then funding sources will be prioritized. The project will require involvement by all parties.

Mr. Hunt stated that the biggest stumbling block is funding, but there are grant resources available.

Vice-Chair Mejia questioned the City's role if the School District does not participate.

Mr. Hunt responded that one option could be the School District's response in that they will allow improvements if the City funds them. If the District should say they will not allow any improvements, the City would then need to find a solution within the public right-of-way.

Discussion followed regarding driving habits of the students and where the students are coming from.

Mr. Mendoza stated that it is not possible to plan where the students are coming from or patterns of parents dropping off kids; patterns of how students get to school have noticeably changed.

Chair Emerson stated that traffic flow improvements will benefit everyone, and stressed that the Study should be moved as quickly as possible without rushing it. He expressed concern on how best to assimilate the Study.

Mr. Mendoza stated that the full participation of the Commission is necessary. Discussion followed regarding the review of the Study.

Mr. Hunt stressed that the goal is for the Traffic Commission to read through the Study and come back with questions for the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Mendoza suggested visiting the sites and observing traffic patterns. He asked the Commission to read the entire Study and e-mail questions and concerns to Mr. Hunt. After Mr. Hunt compiles the answers, the Commission can then work on the order of discussion.

C. REQUEST TO MOVE SIDEWALK AT KATELLA AVENUE AND CHERRY STREET

City Engineer Hunt stated that at the June 11, 2014 Traffic Commission meeting, he was asked if the Katella Avenue and Cherry Street intersection crosswalk on the east side of Katella Avenue could be moved to the west side to assist with the flow of traffic. The crosswalk was possibly installed on the east side because it was thought that more people would be walking to the Medical Center on that side. The cost of relocating the crosswalk is \$11,500. If the Commission approves the relocation of the crosswalk, the item can be placed on the 2015/2016 CIP list for the City Council to consider in next year's budget.

Vice-Chair Mejia stated that he had brought the item to the attention of the Commission. He observed that traffic traveling southbound on Cherry Street made more left turns than right turns on Katella Avenue, and pedestrians crossing at the intersection created a back up of vehicles

making the left turn. He further stated that the growth of the hospital will make the situation worse.

Mr. Hunt stated that \$500,000 to \$600,000 is spent on street improvements each year, and the cost for moving the crosswalk is a small percentage of that amount.

Commissioner Patz asked for the time of day that traffic was most impacted.

Vice-Chair Mejia stated he has noticed it more in the afternoon and evening, and traffic backs up at peak hours. He further stated that pedestrians would not be greatly impacted by moving the crosswalk.

During discussion, it was determined that there would be no negative impact on pedestrians and traffic flow would be improved.

Commissioner Lindsey asked if a study has been made to determine the number of pedestrians who use the crosswalk.

Since no study has been made, Commissioner Lindsey volunteered to conduct a count of the pedestrians and bring that information back to the Commission at the next meeting. He suggested that many people do not understand the rules of a divided highway.

Chair Emerson stated that he has observed the intersection and there are frequently pedestrians in the walkway. He further stated that he uses this route at least once a week and often turns right because the traffic is backed up. The Chairman suggested the project might be completed for a lesser amount by not removing the handicapped ramp on the other side.

Mr. Hunt responded that the ramp on the SE corner must be removed if the crosswalk is moved.

Commissioner Wilhelm stated he makes the left turn often, and at least one pedestrian crosses the street during each light cycle. He concurred that moving the crosswalk makes sense.

Chair Emerson asked if there were any further comments.

Commissioner Wilhelm stated that he agreed with Commissioner Lindsey that many people do not understand the rules for crossing on a divided highway by thinking if someone steps off the curb, you are required to stop.

Police Captain McAlpine responded that if a pedestrian is in the crosswalk, the driver cannot proceed, even on a divided highway. The crosswalk is there to protect the pedestrian.

Commissioner Patz stated that moving the crosswalk makes sense.

Commissioner Seaman concurred that moving the crosswalk makes sense, and questioned the priority of where this stands within the City's traffic plan.

Commissioner Biri stated that for the nominal cost, this is a good idea and will improve the flow of traffic.

Vice-Chair Mejia stated that an additional item to discuss is the driveway to private property to the south of Katella Avenue. The driveway is too narrow for vehicles moving in both directions and this creates a problem.

Chair Emerson stated the driveway should be one way, and this should be taken care of at the same time.

Mr. Hunt responded that it is private property, and is beyond the sidewalk area. He further stated that he will discuss this matter with Community Development/Public Works Director Mendoza.

Vice-Chair Mejia confirmed there is a signal coming out of the driveway.

Mr. Hunt stated that the signal was placed there for another street coming downward.

There was further discussion regarding the narrow driveway, during which Vice-Chair Mejia questioned if the width of the street was compliant.

Mr. Hunt responded that it was possibly compliant at the time of construction, and reiterated that he will discuss the matter with Mr. Mendoza.

Motion/Second: Patz/Mejia

Carried: 6/1: (Commissioner Seaman cast the No vote): The Traffic Commission approved moving the Katella Avenue and Cherry Street intersection crosswalk on the east side of Katella Avenue to the west side, per the background as provided in the Staff report.

D. REQUEST TO REMOVE THE LEFT TURN RESTRICTION ON REAGAN STREET AT THE POST OFFICE

City Engineer Hunt reported that at the June 11, 2014, Traffic Commission meeting, it was asked if the left turn restriction could be removed on Reagan Street coming out of the Post Office mail drop driveway.

Commissioner Patz stated that he made the request after being approached by a member of the public.

Mr. Hunt stated that he was unable to find documentation as to why the sign is there. He stated that the City's Traffic Engineer has confirmed that he did not find a section in the California Vehicle Code (CVC) that would mandate that left turns be restricted or prohibited resultant of the alignment onto Reagan Street. The Traffic Engineer further stated that in order to make a left turn, it will be necessary to remove parking spaces but the majority of those parking spaces are already restricted because of an existing fire hydrant.

Commissioner Patz confirmed that the Traffic Engineer has stated in his letter that 27 feet of the area is currently restricted due to the existing fire hydrant, and the removal of 33 feet is required. He asked how many spaces would be lost.

Mr. Hunt responded that one parking space will be lost and said that the Traffic Engineer verified that about one half of the vehicles exiting did so by making a left turn. Mr. Hunt further stated there is no reason not to remove the left turn restriction.

Commissioner Biri asked what reasons were given by the resident in the request for removal of the signage.

Commissioner Patz stated that the resident saw very little traffic and was annoyed that they had to go around instead of being allowed to make a left turn and said that many people now make an illegal left hand turn.

Mr. Hunt reiterated that one parking space would be eliminated, with the possibility that it could be two spaces for very small cars. He further stated that parking at the post office is not typically an issue.

Commissioner Wilhelm questioned if anyone parks in those parking spaces.

Mr. Hunt responded that the parking spaces are utilized during the Christmas season.

Commissioner Wilhelm further commented that the "No Left Turn" restriction may have been in place in order not to lose a parking space.

Commissioner Seaman asked what the parking restriction was on the Reagan Street side just in front of mail boxes.

Mr. Hunt responded that it is a loading zone to prohibit vehicles from parking there.

Motion/Second: Lindsey/Mejia

Unanimously Carried: The Traffic Commission approved removing the "No Left Turn Sign" on Reagan Street at the Post Office as proposed, and add the "No Parking" restriction as proposed on the opposite side.

9. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

City Engineer Hunt stated that at the January 20, 2015 City Council Meeting, Community Development/Public Works Director Mendoza would present a report requesting approval of the Scope of Services for the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the City Engineer, Traffic Engineer, Building and Safety, and Signal Maintenance positions. One of the main changes being implemented is for the City Engineer to spend more time on City engineering services and less time on traffic. The Traffic Engineer will be responsible for conducting the Traffic Commission meetings.

Chair Emerson questioned if Willdan Engineering has Traffic Engineer positions.

Mr. Hunt confirmed that Willdan Engineering does have those positions. He further stated that it is his recommendation that Building and Safety, City and Traffic Engineers be combined.

Chair Emerson suggested that residents with concerns should speak to their Council members or to Mr. Mendoza.

Discussion ensued regarding services provided by various contract employees.

A. Traffic Commission Status Log

Chair Emerson inquired about funding for the Katella/605 Freeway lane addition at the southbound off ramp.

Mr. Hunt confirmed that the item should be placed on the status list. He stated that he had forwarded the Staff report to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and inquired about funding, and was told that the study has not yet been completed. Mr. Hunt further stated that he had received a report from OCTA regarding improvements for the

remainder of Katella Avenue from the Civic Center to Los Alamitos Boulevard. This will be presented at the next Traffic Commission meeting.

10. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS

Chair Emerson

- For the benefit of the new Commissioners, Chair Emerson stated that the Traffic Commission Initiated Business portion of the agenda consists of Commissioners bringing items to the City Engineer's attention and, as time permits, he will bring the items back to the Commission. He further stated that an important job of the Commission is to be the eyes and ears in the community, and to look for good ideas and bring them to the attention of the City Engineer. He urged the Commissioners to inform friends and neighbors that they are on the Commission and to discuss their concerns and bring them to the Commission or send the concern to the City Engineer via e-mail.

Vice-Chair Mejia

- Illuminated street name signs on Katella Avenue, Noel Street and Cherry Street are not functioning.
- Right turn only lane at Katella Avenue and Walnut Street should be uniform with other right turn lanes within the City.

Mr. Hunt responded that a work order had been completed, and he will check on the status of the request.

- Inquired about how many times during the month street sweeping is required.

Mr. Hunt responded that he had asked but did not yet have an answer. He will report back to the Commission with this information.

- Would like to see two Agreements between: 1) Cypress, Cottonwood Church and Los Alamitos; and, 2) Cypress, Cottonwood Church and Arrowhead Products on widening of Lexington Drive north of Katella Avenue.

Mr. Hunt responded that he will e-mail copies of the Agreements to each Traffic Commission member, along with a Staff Report related to traffic on Lexington Drive.

Commissioner Biri

- None

Commissioner Seaman

- What are the top issues of the Police Department that the Traffic Commission can assist with?

Commissioner Patz

- Inquired if the construction on the 405/605 Freeways are completed.

Mr. Hunt responded that construction is complete, with the exception of landscaping.

Commissioner Patz asked if Caltrans can be asked to remove the detour signs.

Mr. Hunt indicated he would inquire into this.

- Inquired if the Police Department can do more enforcement on texting and driving.

Captain McAlpine responded that officers watch out for drivers who text while driving.

Commissioner Wilhelm

- Read about the fatal accident on Katella Avenue and Reagan Street and asked Captain McAlpine if anything should be done in the way of signage or reflective painting, or anything that might have prevented the accident. Commissioner Wilhelm further stated that the driver was traveling west on Katella Avenue and struck the divider. His vehicle then went over the divider into the east bound lanes and was struck, resulting in a fatality and injury to the person who hit him.

Captain McAlpine responded that it is too early to tell if speed was an issue and also too early in the investigation to make a safety recommendation.

- Commission Wilhelm said he had an occasion to turn into the Laurel Park parking lot and observed it is in bad condition, and questioned if it can be paved with slurry seal?

Mr. Hunt responded that neither Measure M, gas tax, nor traffic improvement monies can be used for this purpose. The two funding sources are the General Fund and Parks Department.

Chair Emerson stated that Cottonwood Park has the same issue.

Mr. Hunt stated that the parking lots are in the CIP budget.

Commissioner Wilhelm suggested that one space in the park should be converted to a turnaround space adjacent to the disabled parking spot.

Mr. Hunt stated that this suggestion had previously been presented to the Parks Department and he will forward this to that Department again.

Discussion ensued regarding slurry sealing of streets.

Chair Emerson stated that refuse trucks cause a great deal of damage to streets and suggested that refuse companies could contribute to street paving, as required by the City of Cypress.

Commissioner Lindsey

- There is a delay when crossing Katella Avenue on Walnut Street into Wallingsford Road and he said he has noticed the delay when parents are taking their children to school. If vehicles are not on the traffic loop in the pavement right-of-way, there is not enough time for vehicles to cross. He suggested that extending the detection time of the loop could help.

Mr. Hunt responded that Katella Avenue is synchronized which can affect the traffic on side streets, but he will contact the person responsible for signals in the City and inform him of the delay.

Chair Emerson

- The new freeway car pool lane was not extended far enough; vehicles getting on the freeway at Katella Avenue who want to take advantage of the car pool lane either have to break the law or drive recklessly to get over in time. He suggested this is something that should be attended to.
- There is a possibility the Traffic Commission may need to hold a Special Meeting in two weeks. The meeting may need to be held January 26 – 30. Chair Emerson asked for input regarding the meeting date and time which would work best for the Traffic Commission.

During discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission that 6:00 P.M. would be acceptable for the time of the meeting.

Commissioner Wilhelm stated that Thursday would not work for him.

Commissioner Patz stated he would review his schedule and e-mail the information to Chair Emerson.

Chair Emerson stated that he would inform Mr. Mendoza that any day, other than Thursday, after 6:00 P.M. would work for the Special Meeting.

- Requested an agenda item for discussion at the next Traffic Commission meeting regarding the Parking Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. Hunt stated there is currently an opening on the Committee and this will be discussed at the next City Council meeting. Mr. Hunt stated that the Parking Ad Hoc Committee will tentatively meet before the meeting.

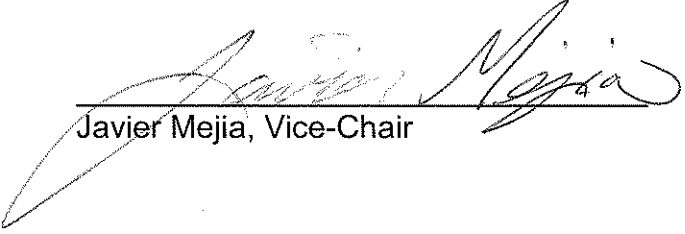
Chair Emerson asked if an additional member can be appointed at this time and was advised that the appointment should be placed on the next meeting agenda.

- Proposed the formation of an Ad Hoc Steering Committee, with the Traffic Commission deciding on the Committee's purpose. Chair Emerson stated that he served on this Committee last year. The Committee consisted of the Commission's Vice-Chair, the Chair, and the previous Chair, and when the need occurred, he discussed matters with the other two members.
- Having had time to consider the earlier selection of Chairman, Chair Emerson stated that he felt it was in the best interest of the Commission for him to resign, which in turn would make Vice-Chair Mejia the Chair. He recommended appointment of Commissioner Patz as Vice-Chair.

Mr. Hunt stated that the appointment must be placed on the Agenda and the decision made at the next Commission meeting.

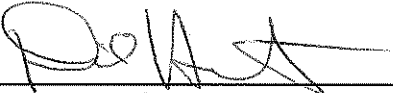
11. ADJOURNMENT

The Traffic Commission adjourned at 9:29 P.M.



Javier Mejia, Vice-Chair

ATTEST:



Dave Hunt, City Engineer