

JOHN F. COOK
MAYOR

JOYCE WILSON
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL
ANN MORGAN LILLY, DISTRICT 1
SUSANNAH M. BYRD, DISTRICT 2
EMMA ACOSTA, DISTRICT 3
CARL ROBINSON, DISTRICT 4
MICHEL NOE, DISTRICT 5
EDDIE HOLGUIN JR., DISTRICT 6
STEVE ORTEGA, DISTRICT 7
CORTNEY NILAND, DISTRICT 8

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 18, 2012**

The City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. Mayor John Cook present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Ann Morgan Lilly, Emma Acosta, Carl Robinson, Michiel Noe, Eddie Holguin, Jr. and Steve Ortega. Late arrivals: Susie Byrd at 1:08 p.m. and Cortney Niland at 1:06 p.m.

AGENDA

Presentation, discussion and action on the proposed 2012 Quality of Life Bond election for November 2012:

- Results of citywide Call for Projects and general community Outreach from November 2011 thru March 2012
- Results of polling efforts and processes utilized in other communities undertaking similar efforts per PDNG and DMD Contract - Ric Horrow, Horrow Sports Ventures
- Staff analysis of community priorities
- Preliminary financial recommendations based on bond capacity and debt service limitations
- General direction from City Council on next steps to call for the election in November 2012.
[Deputy City Manager Debbie Hamlyn, Community Services, (915) 541-4686]

The meeting was called to order.

Mr. Tripper Goodman and Ric Horrow of Horrow Sports Ventures were introduced. Mr. Goodman gave a brief biography of Mr. Horrow's professional work including approximately 39 initiatives he has sponsored around the country.

Mr. Ric Horrow gave a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in City Clerk's office) concerning multipurpose sports and entertainment facilities. Baseball and soccer are the only options that depend on major league teams. Another nine options are citizen driven.

Ms. Joyce Wilson, City Manager, summarized for the public the framework of where we are today and what has occurred in the community since 2000. A Quality of Life Bond Election is an investment and recommended that street reconstruction be included as a part of the Quality of Life Bond issue.

Representative Acosta questioned Ms. Wilson on the members of her staff/committee who worked on this project. Fifty one meetings were conducted.

Ms. Debbie Hamlyn, Deputy City Manager acknowledged the staff members who are involved. She stated that there were 51 meetings and over 5,000 comment cards from the public over a three month period; that approximately 400 hours were spent working on this.

Representative Acosta stated that based on the comment cards, a 50 meter swimming pool was the number one item the public was requesting.

Ms. Wilson stated that the swimming pool is factored into the Parks and Recreation improvements, followed by soccer fields.

Representative Acosta questioned what is considered Central El Paso? What is considered Downtown?

Ms. Wilson responded that it would consist of downtown and ½ mile corridor around that area.

Ms. Hamlyn said the area is aligned with the comprehensive planning areas.

Representative Noe asked if all the projects – signature projects - are for the downtown area or for what area? He also asked where community centers and senior citizens would fall? The answer was under Parks and Recreation. Technology classes for Seniors? The answer was those are included with the Library improvements.

Mr. Bill Studer, Deputy City Manager went over bond issuance and financing and potential funding resources.

Mayor Cook stated that for every dollar we spend only up to 27% will be used to retire debt.

Representative Byrd questioned the new debt. Does it include just Quality of Life or street resurfacing also?

Mr. Bill Studer replied that it assumes \$33 million a year.

Ms. Wilson stated street reconstruction is up to \$200 million.

Ric Horrow stated that there are questions regarding oversight, private commitment, specific costs and nature of each public/private partnership. There are trade-offs. Relief for senior citizens is an important component of the bond issue – property taxes.

Mayor Cook complimented the staff on an exciting and encapsulated presentation.

Representative Byrd asked Ms. Wilson what she is seeking in terms of direction.

Mayor Cook responded that if a project has been left out, give direction to include it; if a project is in there that does not belong, ask to remove it.

Ms. Wilson stated that the goal is to come back in the next 30 days with bond issue projects that allow us to draft the language for the ballot.

Representative Ortega expressed excitement and stated we have one foot in an era of greatness. When a strong public sector commitment is married with a strong private sector commitment, we are walking together.

Representative Ortega questioned the Neighborhood Improvement Program.

Ms. Wilson stated that \$1 million dollars per year will be broken out by district. Neighborhood groups would submit applications – calls for projects. There would be ten years of guaranteed funding for the neighborhood improvement programs.

Representative Ortega discussed contingency for the proposed Sports Stadium. Council appears to think if there is a team at hand, we will find a way to fund a stadium. We will need to maximize this account to the very last cent to have the voters authorize it.

Mr. Ric Horrow suggested creating a technique that sends a signal to the major league teams that we have a stadium available. He has begun a dialog in New York with Major League Soccer; baseball requires a specific type of stadium.

Representative Ortega questioned UTEP upgrades at the Sun Bowl. He would like to see increased usage of the Sun Bowl for concerts – an expectation to the University that if we help fund the Sun Bowl, there will need to be more concerts and events held for the public there.

Ms. Wilson stated that if we contribute, we will need greater expectations of community usage as well as enhanced benefits to the Sun Bowl itself.

Representative Ortega is not convinced about adding street reconstruction to the bond Issue. He believes it is nuts and bolts and should be funded through Certificates of Obligation, as has been. Mayor Cook's on-going philosophy.

Mayor Cook stated his philosophy goes back to the 2000 Quality of Life bond issue. We need to make sure that a street repair commitment is made by this administration.

Ms. Wilson stated in that event, we need to take action on the streets before the Quality of Life Bond Issue goes to the voters so they are assured the street repairs will be addressed.

Representative Acosta asked if we are going to put bond issues out individually for projects or just one issue.

Ms. Wilson stated that it would be one issue with categories listed.

Representative Acosta stated that Senior Center/Recreation Center project on Alameda was not listed. She asked if this was the final listing.

Ms. Wilson replied that, "No, it is a preliminary cut to conform to a \$500 Million bond and \$200 Million for streets."

Representative Acosta stated that Delta and Alameda and Yarborough and Alameda are where she wants recreation centers. Also, on the street reconstruction projects she questioned the correct amount. There are two proposals for reconstruction projects; one for \$180 million and one for \$200+ million. Which is correct?

Ms. Wilson explained.

Representative Acosta questioned \$1 billion in debt to be paid off in 30 years? She questioned Bill Studer.

Mr. Studer responded that yes, we could do that with no significant change in the tax rate.

Mayor Cook stated that staff is prohibited from getting involved with the bond issue beyond answering factual questions about projects. They must remain neutral.

Representative Acosta addressed the audience in the City Council chamber and told them they would need to promote the bond issue and its projects if they want them to be passed by the voters.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Mr. Peter Svarzbein, Advocated for a Street Car Corridor
2. Ms. LeeAnn Carr, Coach for El Paso Agua Posse, Wants an Olympic competition size swimming facility
3. Mr. Scott Allard, USA Swimming Official, Wants an Olympic competition size swimming facility
4. Mr. Evan Allard, Desert Sharks Swim Club, Wants an Olympic competition size swimming facility
5. Mr. Colin O'Beirne, Desert Sharks Swim Club, Wants a 50 meter indoor pool
6. Mr. Cesar Tolentino, El Paso Agua Posse
7. Ms. Emma Carr, El Paso Agua Posse
8. Mr. Eddie Chavez, Mt. View Neighborhood Association. Spoke about lighting by Sun Metro and the sidewalk at Teton Drive and Statler Street
9. Ms. Taylor Alicia-Jorgenson, El Paso Agua Posse
10. Mr. Al Soto, spoke about Central Park, and Lincoln Park improvements, Asarco, a Monorail to the VA Hospital and called for a moratorium on street improvements on the West side.
11. Mr. Mike Rooney, spoke about street car and rail options
12. Mr. Marco Raposo, Border Interfaith, EPISO; Mr. Larry Bach, Border Interfaith, EPISO; Ms. Tina Vasquez, Border Interfaith, EPISO; Ms. Eloisa De Avila, Border Interfaith, EPISO addressed the need for street and infrastructure improvements as priorities as well as new quality of life projects.

Representative Niland questioned Ms. Wilson on the Chamizal Neighborhood Community Center and recreational facilities and Community Centers in underserved areas. Ms. Wilson stated that she would need specific project additions so she could figure out the costs of those additional projects.

Motion made by Representative Byrd, seconded by Representative Acosta and unanimously carried to Suspend the Rules of Council to allow for additional speakers.

Representative Holguin stated that he had already sent his additional projects to Debbie Hamlyn but they do not appear on the list presented to the Council.

13. Mr. Robert Skipworth, Vice President of El Paso Zoological Society
14. Ms. Renee Neuert, El Paso Zoological Society
15. Mr. Brook Thyfault, swimming pool advocate
16. Mr. Jose Gutierrez, Mission Trail Association
17. Mr. Douglas Echlin, Vice President, Coronado Neighborhood Association question if the Fiesta Drive pocket park was included.
18. Ms. Nancy Licon, El Paso Border Youth Athletics, wants multiple outdoor baseball and softball fields.
19. Mr. Oscar Carranza, III, Cathedral Swimming
20. Mr. Martin Gutierrez, EPISO

21. Ms. Keesia Flores, Chamizal Neighborhood Association advocates Community Centers and Senior Citizen Centers, streets, sidewalks, and lighting
22. Mr. Pacho Jordon, El Paso Zoological Society

Representative Byrd needs more information on:

1. Infrastructure to support a more robust bike network
2. List of street reconstruction projects – streets that have never been paved.

Representative Ortega questioned Daryl Cole on reconstruction and repavement, what is this difference?

Mr. Daryl Cole stated that resurfacing is 1/10th of the cost of reconstruction.

Representative Byrd questioned if the list includes arterials only or are there some residential streets included.

Mr. Cole stated that are some residential streets.

Representative Byrd questioned the operating budget impact such as that of the pools. It seems that much of the demand for pools has come from the schools.

Representative Byrd asked if we could partner with the schools for the pools.

Ms. Wilson stated the cost to recapture the cost of the pool would be questioned.

Mayor Cook stated that we could propose a joint use of facilities.

Mayor Cook commented on his efforts to discuss this issue with the school district administrators.

Representative Byrd questioned the digital wall issue with the History Museum. She would prefer that the money be spent on the inside of the building – not outside.

Mr. Sean McGlynn explained the project.

Representative Byrd questioned the Arena's business model. She needs more information on other facilities in other places that work as an investment.

Representative Byrd also wants sidewalk funding included as part of street construction on May 24th when the street funding issue comes to City Council.

Representative Lilly explained the facilities that are absent in District 1, responding to Mr. Soto's comments about the Westside.

Representative Byrd questioned the debt for the Quality of Life bond.

Ms. Wilson stated street resurfacing/no public safety.

Mr. Harrow stated there are 11 categories with diverse projects that will grab the future.

Representative Byrd asked what direction do you need from City Council?

Ms. Wilson stated this is a package deal. We will have a goal in the next 30 days for project funding.

Mayor Cook commented on the direction of the project.

Representative Ortega thanked everyone involved and asked about the Sun Bowl commitment.

Ms. Wilson stated it would enhance a better community; that adding streets is the basic obligation of government to provide infrastructure.

Mayor Cook responded that we need street repairs.

Ms. Wilson asked for the priorities of Council members to create the list.

Representative Acosta asked that the landscaping for street repairs to be included. Ms. Wilson commented on the costs, dollar for dollar.

Representative Acosta asked if landscaping for street repair is part of the Quality of Life bond issue.

Ms. Wilson responded dollar for dollar.

Representative Ortega asked if the dollar amounts would be the same for all districts?

Representative Niland questioned the downtown improvements, allocation of funds and downtown tourists.

Ms. Wilson replied that downtown tourist activity will be factored in.

Representative Niland questioned Mr. Harrow about Old Town El Paso. He responded that it was not identified as a priority by the public – that private property owners must invest in that item. He further stated that community support has been shown for the projects listed.

Motion by Representative Niland; seconded by Representative Lilly to take the next step in preparing for a Quality of Life bond issue. The motion passed unanimously

Ms. Wilson reiterated that she needs the districts' list of priority projects.

Representative Robinson asked if they would be voting on this as a package or separately.

Ms. Wilson responded that it would not be broken down by category.

Mayor Cook stated that the 2000 Bond Issue was 6-7 years, a big difference than this bond. We need to move forward with the people of El Paso.

Representative Noe stated he supported the Quality of Life bond, but will not support it at the expense of District 5.

Motion made by Representative Robinson, seconded by Representative Ortega and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 4:04 p.m.

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk