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**LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES
June 22, 2011**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Parris called the Special Joint Meeting to order at 8:46 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council Members: Crist, Marquez, Vice Mayor Smith, Mayor Parris

Absent: Council Member: Mann

Staff

Members: City Manager; Deputy City Manager; Deputy City Attorney; City Clerk; Assistant to the City Manager; Planning Director; Public Works Director; Parks, Recreation & Arts Director; Economic Development Director; Housing Director

INVOCATION

Council Member Marquez

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Mayor Smith

NB 1. STATUS ON CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY - LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The Human Services Administrator with Los Angeles County Adult Protective Services presented a brief update on this matter. He gave a progress report on a pilot program they have with the City of Lancaster. This is a collaboration wherein one of the afterhour's social workers is stationed at the Lancaster Sheriff's Department ready to respond to any reports of elder abuse or dependent adult abuse. Since being placed at the Lancaster Station, the social worker has responded to nineteen reports of abuse. The program has been successful and in the last few months the social worker has not had to report out, as there have not been as many calls.

Mayor Parris inquired as to how this compares to other areas of the County and the Administrator stated that the numbers for Lancaster are quite small in comparison.

NB 1. STATUS ON CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY - LOS ANGELES COUNTY (continued)

Mayor Parris stated that the neighborhood impact homes would be used for family visitation and for children that have been removed before reunification. This is an incredible partnership between the City and the County because the City is able to be right in the neighborhoods now, which eases transportation difficulties.

Additional County representatives gave an update on the neighborhood impact homes and specifically the Piute House which provides full visitation for the families and speeds the progress towards reunification of the families.

NB 2. STATUS ON SECTION 8 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County Housing Authority Representatives and Los Angeles County Counsel presented information to the City Council and Supervisor Antonovich regarding the administration of the Section 8 program. There have been concentrated efforts to improve; moving the program from a troubled status to a high performance status. The Housing Authority provides a full range of services to assist people to move from Section 8 to self-efficiency.

Council Member Crist thanked Supervisor Antonovich for his stance regarding the issue of the three terminated inspectors. He inquired as to how many complaints are received in a year by the Housing Authority; number of households on the Section 8 program in Los Angeles County; Lancaster and Palmdale. Stated his concerns pertaining to the lack of protection from fraud in some of these cases. Inquired as to the funding source of the inspectors; funding received per voucher; how often the Authority follows through on proactive compliant checks. Discussed Los Angeles rents and people who move to the Antelope Valley based on the fair market value rents.

County Representatives stated that approximately 20,000 people hold Section 8 vouchers in Los Angeles County; 2,094 in Lancaster; 1,336 in Palmdale. On average, the Authority receives between five and six hundred complaints per year, county wide. In 2010, complaints were down to approximately 379. Discussed the funding per voucher and the potential for these funds to help pay for inspectors. The Authority is driven on a complaint basis, not proactive compliant checks.

Vice Mayor Smith discussed payment standards under HUD; federal regulations; why the County has not separated out the fair market value for the Antelope Valley, from the entire Los Angeles County; time frame for people waiting to receive Section 8 vouchers.

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NB 2. STATUS ON SECTION 8 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY (continued)

County Representatives further discussed fair market values and stated that currently there are 170,000 on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers and the wait time frame is approximately 10 years.

Council Member Crist inquired as to financial incentives to have participants move to Lancaster; does the County offer incentives.

County Representatives stated that people look at affordability and have chosen to move to Lancaster based on housing rent levels, therefore this is an incentive. People get more value for their dollar by moving to Lancaster/Antelope Valley.

Council Member Marquez inquired as to a grant recently received by the Authority to provide for new positions.

County Representatives stated that a grant was received to provide for self-efficiency coordinator positions.

Council Member Marquez stated that possibly those eight positions would be better served as investigators/inspectors but understood that the grant monies are specific.

Council Member Marquez requested preparation of a PowerPoint for the next Lancaster Neighborhood Vitalization Commission meeting regarding the fair market values and stated that Commissioner Harris had provided some information for this.

County Representatives stated that they do have some interns that are working locally to prepare a survey regarding the rent values to make sure they are in line with the fair market values and confirmed that Commissioner Harris has volunteered to be a part of that study.

Further discussion took place regarding compliance; investigations; complaints and the moratorium on field investigations for the next 90 days.

Vice Mayor Smith inquired as to the number of complaints that come in and the process for handling the complaints.

The City Manager stated that the City funds two investigators, shared with Supervisor Antonovich's office and gave estimated statistics on the number of complaints.

County Representatives provided further statistics regarding the terminations of vouchers; hearings regarding those terminations and clarification of what is deemed a crime within defrauding the Housing Authority.

NB 2. STATUS ON SECTION 8 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY (continued)

Mayor Parris inquired as to how many people were prosecuted for fraud; how many were turned over to the District Attorney's office.

County Representatives had no data pertaining to this inquiry.

Mayor Parris requested clarification regarding compliance checks; fraudulent checks; discussed the \$2 million a year that is provided to Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, which is one of several firms representing the plaintiffs in a lawsuit against Lancaster.

Further discussion took place between Mayor Parris and County Counsel regarding conflicts of interests; violations of the code of ethics; concerns that the City has regarding this firm biting the hand that feeds it.

At this point County Counsel declined to answer several questions pertaining to the lawsuit and Neighborhood Legal Services.

The Deputy City Attorney stated that some serious ethical concerns have been raised; some conflict issues, at least the appearance of potential conflict issues.

Mayor Parris requested that Council discuss and consider hiring separate ethics counsel and the possibility of retaining counsel on a contingency basis in order to considering prosecuting a claim against the County based on an apparent or actual conflict of interest as a result of the County's funding to the firm representing the plaintiffs in the Section 8 litigation.

Mayor Parris requested clarification about the self sufficiency program; percentage of people who have risen to self sufficiency; statistics on complaints filed; process for handling complaints.

County Representatives stated that they did not have this data with them but that many individuals have risen to self sufficiency.

Further discussion took place regarding self sufficiency; complaints; process with the fraud hotline; validity of complaints; process for investigation of fraud complaints; process for tracking the number of complaints.

Mayor Parris inquired of the Housing Authority whether they feel Lancaster has ever engaged in racist policies in regards to the Section 8 program; whether or not Lancaster is empowered to do anything regarding this program.

NB 2. STATUS ON SECTION 8 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY (continued)

County Representatives chose not to answer these questions and Mayor Parris and the City Manager stated that it was completely irresponsible of the Housing Authority to not answer questions regarding Lancaster's empowerment over this program; irresponsible of them to not answer basic questions under the guise of a lawsuit.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Addressing the City Council on this matter:

David Paul – stated that all fraud should be considered significant, no matter what and this affects the public's trust and suggested volunteer investigators.

David Abber – stated that the Council should work with the Board rather than against them.

David Grajeda – stated that he personally does not believe in the Section 8 program and that the City is tough on crime and individuals.

Mayor Parris inquired of the County whether they had any information that shows the racial makeup for people applying for or on Section 8; inquired as to whether the City of Lancaster has access to these kind of documents; inquired as to whether there was any way for the City to know this information or these statistics.

County Representatives stated that there was no way for Lancaster to have access to these documents or to the statistics or information on terminations of individuals in the program.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barbara Nunn – stated that she lives in a senior apartment complex that has several Section 8 individuals; sees a lot of fraud; stated that a fear factor is involved – people fear filing complaints due to intimidation by these individuals. Believes Section 8 is good for those people that truly need it and will not abuse the system.

Lyle Talbot – complimented law enforcement and agency enforcement on this issue.

Val Holt – stated that there are four Section 8 homes in her housing tract; much activity taking place in these homes; it has impacted the neighborhoods in a negative way; individuals use pit bulls to intimidate neighbors while drug activities are transpiring.

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NB 2. STATUS ON SECTION 8 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY (continued)

Supervisor Antonovich stated that he hoped the investigation will be expedient; all the facts will come out so everyone can move forward to institute the MOU once again between the two cities in the Antelope Valley and the two cities of Paramount and Bellflower.

Mayor Parris requested the issue of whether or not to hire special ethics counsel on the next agenda and/or consideration of a possible lawsuit.

Vice Mayor Smith stated that everyone needs to be clear on who is paying for this Section 8 program. Every taxpayer is paying for this program; the two cities pay and now three investigators are gone. County Representatives stated that over 170,000 people are currently waiting for vouchers; many on the waiting list for five to ten years. The fact that individuals on the program are defrauding the system and they are dope dealers; gang bangers and are allowed to stay on the program - this is unconscionable.

At this time Supervisor Antonovich and Council Member Marquez were excused from the remainder of the meeting.

RECESS Mayor Parris requested a brief recess at 10:21 a.m.

RECONVENE Mayor Parris reconvened the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Sitting in for Supervisor Antonovich – Field Representative, Norm Hickling

NB 3. STATUS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Lancaster Sheriff's Captain Bob Jonsen stated that his department will continue to and will always look into any complaints people may file regarding Section 8 fraud. Captain Jonsen reviewed current crime rates; City is well on its way to reaching their goals; tremendous reduction in crime; presented statistics; much credit is due to involvement by the community. Discussed law enforcement program through the Antelope Valley University – great partnership with the university. Discussed how the community can help with identifying people who are tagging – program is called tag the tagger. Discussed the new crime mapping component that allows the community to go online and view statistics and mapping areas.

NB 4. REPORT ON FIRE SERVICE DAY

Los Angeles County Assistant Fire Chief Jim Kross discussed the success of the recent Fire Service Day; gave a brief history on how Fire Service Day came about. There was a tremendous turnout; people of all ages attended and had a great time; discussed all the equipment and demonstrations that went on. This is a great way to showcase what the Fire Department provides; over 12,000 people attended and it is the firefighters that pull this all together.

NB 5. REPORT ON LANCASTER DEVELOPER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Public Works Director discussed this very successful program in reducing fees; how it has helped neighborhoods; regardless of the current economic downturn, this program has brought business into the City. There was an increase in construction by 34 percent in 2010, while surrounding communities saw a decrease. Discussed the partnership with KB Home and their success in the rehab of a vandalized property; making it a premier home. In the future would like to see a partnership with the County regarding this type of partnership.

Field Representative Hickling inquired as to whether County agencies have been cooperative, are they open to the idea of a partnership with the City

The Public Works Director stated that there is an openness and a willingness to see what the City has to offer.

Tom DiPrima, representing KB Home stated that he works with a lot of agencies and cities and it is easy to see why the City of Lancaster was selected as the most business friendly city; discussed the current costs of construction; situation with banks taking homes back; discussed a project on the east side of Lancaster involving 18 abandoned homes and the rehab of these homes. Currently working with staff on how to create signage visibility to get customers to the location – thanked the City Council and staff for their openness; cooperation and partnership.

NB 6. STATUS ON HIGH SPEED RAIL, METROLINK, AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

County Representatives discussed the future improvements on the AV line in regards to Metrolink; discussed the 76 mile corridor which will be straightened out and improved; plan has been very well received and is more realistic than high speed rail. Time schedules for Metrolink will change to the advantage of the residents and this will give more incentive for people to use the train to commute.

Further discussion took place regarding the area for improvement; receiving a cost benefit analysis; discussion of the High Desert Corridor; 14 freeway; green technology; solar technology; securing Federal funding; the closure of a portion of the 405 freeway in July.

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NB 7. STATUS ON MULTI-AMBULATORY CARE CENTER (MACC) – LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Field Representative Hickling stated that this is a great success story; incredible partnership working with the City of Lancaster and with several agencies; acquiring the land for the MACC which will replace the current facility; final agreement will be before the Board of Supervisors next week; presented details on the facility; this will be a world class health care center; this center will make the community proud and will be a huge benefit to the people of the Antelope Valley.

NB 8. SUPERVISOR ANTONOVICH AND LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS COMMENTS

None

NB 9. OTHER ITEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

None

PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR - NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

Addressing the City Council at this time:

David Grajeda – discussed the possibility of a green gym; collect all the waste from people using the gyms; Section 8 is a terrible program.

David Abber – discussed the lack of follow through by the District Attorney's office regarding an alleged offense toward him.

COUNCIL / COUNTY COMMENTS

Mayor Parris unveiled the City's Summer Banner Program to Honor Local Military Heroes.

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ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Parris thanked everyone for attending the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m. He stated that the next regular meeting of the City Council would take place on June 28, 2011 at 5:00 p.m.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this _____day of _____, 2011, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

GERI K. BRYAN, CMC
CITY CLERK/AGENCY SECRETARY
Lancaster, CA

R. REX PARRIS
MAYOR/CHAIRMAN
Lancaster, CA

**CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

I, _____, _____ of the City of Lancaster, CA, do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the original City Council/Redevelopment Agency minutes, for which the original is on file in my office.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, CA on this _____ day of _____, _____.

(seal)
