



City of Commerce

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 8, 2023 - 5:00 PM

**CONCURRENT JOINT MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
COMMERCE, JOINT POWERS FINANCING AUTHORITY AND THE GOVERNING BODY
OF THE SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO THE COMMERCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

5:00 P.M. CLOSED SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Argumedo called meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor Argumedo
Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano
Councilmember Garcia
Councilmember Lainez
Councilmember Rebollo

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

There were no individuals wishing to address the City Council on any Closed Session items.

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

City Council/Successor Agency recessed to Closed Session at 5:05 p.m.

1. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6 the City Council will confer with its labor negotiator, Edgar P. Cisneros, with respect to labor negotiations pertaining to:

A. The Memoranda of Understanding between the City and the City of Commerce Employees Association on behalf of the part-time employees.

B. The Memoranda of Understanding between the City and the City of Commerce Employees Association on behalf of the mid-management and non-management full-time employees.

C. Compensation and benefits for the unrepresented full-time executive management employees.

Employee Title: Human Resources Director, Transportation Director, Parks &

Recreation Director, Public Works Director, Administrative Services Director, Library Director, Planning and Economic Development Director, Finance Director (Vacant), Safety & Community Services Director (Vacant), Deputy Director of Operations (Vacant), Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, Assistant City Manager, City Manager

2. Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation - Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1). One (1) case: *From the Earth LLC v. City of Commerce et al.* - Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles, Case No. 20STCV36221.
3. Pursuant to Government Code §54956.8, the City Council will confer with its real property negotiator, Vilko Domic, with respect to real estate negotiations pertaining to 6364 Zindell Street, Commerce, CA (APN: 6357-015-900 and 6357-019-304) and 7316 E. Gage Ave. (APN: 6357-018-005)

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

City Council/Successor Agency reconvened to Open Session at 6:05 p.m.

ORAL CLOSED SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

City Attorney Tapia reported on Closed Session items:

Item #1A and #1.B were no discussion.

Items #1C and #3 - Staff delivered a presentation, received feedback, and no reportable action was taken on this item.

Item #2 -On June 27, 2023, during the City Council meeting, the matter was thoroughly discussed, resulting in a unanimous vote to grant authorization to the staff. This authorization pertains to entering into a settlement agreement with From the Earth LLC. The settlement agreement has been executed and the final version is accessible for viewing at the City Clerk's office.

6:00 P.M. - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Argumedo called regular meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor Argumedo
Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano
Councilmember Garcia
Councilmember Lainez
Councilmember Rebollo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director of Human Resources Pappo let the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Councilmember Garcia offered the invocation.

APPEARANCES AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation Related to the Detrimental Effects of SB549 by Joy Harn,
Commerce Casino General Counsel

Juan Garsa, the Executive Director of the California Cities for Self Reliance Joint Powers Authority, discussed the advantages that card clubs bring to cities. However, he expressed concerns about SB 549, a bill introduced and supported by tribal nations, which could potentially put these benefits at risk.

Joy Harn, General Counsel of Commerce Casino, extended gratitude for the backing of the JPIA. In June, they became aware of SB 549, which had initially been conceived as an educational bill but had evolved into a card club-related legislation. This bill is being sponsored by a tribal coalition, and there is a need to rectify the way the narrative around it has been shaped.

Harn emphasized that, should the bill pass and go to court, the court would deliberate without considering the historical context, potentially impacting the legality of these card games. SB 549 remains active and is currently with the rules committee. Harn stressed the importance of a collaborative effort to raise awareness and potentially halt the advancement of this bill.

2. Presentation by Street Racing Kills Regarding their Past Events and
Outreach Conducted

Mayor Argumedo expressed gratitude to Lili Trujillo, Lori Argumedo, and all participants for their dedicated efforts in tackling the issue of street racing. He emphasized the significance of their work, raising awareness, and presenting alternatives.

Lili Trujillo and Lori Argumedo delivered an overview of the Street Racing Kills initiative and the programs they offer. They then introduced Raul Contreras, who shared his personal experience to educate young individuals about avoiding choices that could lead to long prison sentences and tragic loss of lives.

The Mayor expressed a desire to explore ongoing collaboration and support from the City to further these efforts. Council members acknowledged the collective commitment and determination to drive positive change.

Councilmember Lainez put forth a request for the staff to examine the recently enacted Pico Rivera ordinance addressing street racing. The aim is to determine the feasibility of implementing similar measures within the City of Commerce.

3. Presentation on 2023 Summer Reading Program “Read Around the World”

Library Director Bautista made a presentation about the summer reading program.

4. Commendation Honoring Mary Gibson for her Volunteerism, Contributions and Community Involvement

Mayor Argumedo and Councilmembers recognized Mary Gibson for all her contributions to the City.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no individuals wishing to address the City Council.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilmember Lainez put forth a request to withdraw item #8, while Councilmember Garcia pulled item #10 for discussion.

Item #8, Councilmember Lainez raised questions about decomposed granite and its durability/longevity. Councilmember Rebollo inquired whether mural designs would be subject to a separate approval process, receiving an affirmative response. Mayor Argumedo suggested that mural designs be routed through the Arts in Public Places subcommittee before being presented to the City Council.

Responding to Councilmember Garcia's inquiry about costs, Nila, Acting Director of Public Works, clarified that the expenses would be covered by Caltrans.

Councilmember Lainez made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Rebollo, to adopt a Resolution approving Amendment No. 1 to Professional Services Agreement with RJM Design Group, Inc. for design services for the Pathways for Hope Commerce Connectivity Improvement Project and allocation of \$80,000 (which are reimbursable) in approved Measure AA funds allocated for the project

design phase to cover Amendment No. 1. The motion received approval through the following vote.

AYES: Councilmembers Garcia, Lainez, Rebollo, Vice Mayor Altamirano, and Mayor Argumedo (5).

As for item #10, in response to Councilmember Garcia's question regarding whether only the technological aspect was under consideration by the City Council, Greg Guzman confirmed this.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Altamirano, to approve the Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Roll Out and Implementation Plan for the City of Commerce's Fixed-route Transit System. This endorsement was in line with the Innovative Clean Transit Regulation. The motion was carried by the following vote.

AYES: Councilmembers Garcia, Lainez, Rebollo, Vice Mayor Altamirano, and Mayor Argumedo (5)

Councilmember Lainez moved, seconded by Councilmember Rebollo, to approve the Consent Calendar minus item #8 and #10. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

5. Approval of Warrant Register Nos. 22A, 22B, 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 23A and 23B
6. Approval of Minutes
7. State of Good Repair Funding Allocation for Fiscal Year 2023-2024
8. Amendment No. 1 to Professional Services Agreement with RJM Design Group, Inc. for the Design Services for the Pathways for Hope Commerce Connectivity Improvement Project
9. Professional Services Agreement with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. for the Traffic Safety Improvements at Various Signalized Intersections Project
10. Zero-Emission Bus Rollout and Implementation Plan for the City of Commerce's Fixed-Route Transit System

SCHEDULED MATTERS**11. Presentation/Update from the Sheriff's Department Regarding Public Safety in the City of Commerce**

Sergeant Duarte delivered an update for the past month, focusing on the ongoing efforts to address homelessness across various locations. Sergeant Duarte emphasized the challenges associated with homeless encampments, noting that recurrently, the same individuals relocate and establish new encampments in different areas. Additionally, Sergeant Duarte expressed gratitude to all participants for their involvement in the successful National Night Out event.

During the update, Sergeant Duarte also reported on a carjacking incident and the subsequent recovery of the stolen vehicle. Furthermore, the update included information regarding a tragic collision that occurred on Atlantic Boulevard.

Council members, along with the Mayor, extended their appreciation to Sergeant Duarte and all the deputies for their contributions to the National Night Out event.

Council member Rebollo raised a request for increased traffic information pertaining to specific intersections.

Responding to Council member Garcia's inquiry about addressing homelessness, Sergeant Duarte explained that homeless individuals in public right-of-way areas could be removed, and resources are offered to them.

Council member Lainez expressed gratitude to Sergeant Duarte for the commendable work in cleaning up homeless encampments. Councilmember Lainez also inquired about whether railroad companies have their own police force, to which Sergeant Duarte responded affirmatively, although she noted the slow response times involved. It was mentioned that it typically takes 3-4 months before the railroad police become involved. Concerns were raised about the upcoming Olympics in Los Angeles, with a potential influx of homeless individuals into surrounding communities. Council member Lainez asked about preparations to address this issue.

Council member Lainez also sought updates on the implementation of safety plans following a previous presentation. Assistant City Manager Domic indicated that additional items would be brought forward for Council approval. Furthermore, it

was revealed that the city is in the process of hiring a Public Safety Manager, with an offer already extended to one candidate.

12. Approval of City of Commerce Parks and Open Space Master Plan Project

Parks and Recreation Director Alaniz introduced RJM Consultants. Kristen Schnell, representing RJM Consultants, provided insights into their extensive community outreach efforts, which included conducting workshops. She also discussed potential funding sources and grant opportunities that had been identified in the final Parks Master Plan.

Council member Rebollo recommended that the staff investigate the available grant funding sources highlighted in the presentation.

In response to Council member Lainez's inquiries about the timeline for implementation following the approval and acceptance of the Parks Master Plan, Director Alaniz explained that progress was already underway on playgrounds, with bike lanes being the initial project. The easier-to-implement recommendations would be prioritized and actioned promptly. For the remaining proposals, the staff would begin the process of applying for grants and potentially utilizing general fund resources. However, any such use of funds would require approval from the City Council.

Vice Mayor Altamirano advocated for the prompt implementation of the skate park and suggested exploring grants and soliciting contributions from local businesses.

Mayor Argumedo shared that he had attended three community meetings and acknowledged the extensive outreach efforts made during the planning process.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia, to receive and file a presentation on the City's Parks and Open Space Master Plan by RJM Design Group, Inc., the Project Consultant; and adopt a Resolution approving the City's Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

13. Second Request to Modify Previously Approved Art in Public Places Program in Conjunction With a New Parking Structure Built at 5401 Telegraph Road, Commerce, CA

Acting Director of Economic Development and Planning, Molinar-Esparza,

presented an overview of the staff report.

Council members and the Mayor expressed agreement that the initial concept effectively captured the essence of the community. They requested the presentation of additional proposed concepts and urged that the project be submitted to the Art in Public Places Commission and Beautification Committee with a wider array of options.

Council member Rebollo, seconded by Council member Garcia, made a motion to deny the current request and instead asked the applicant to provide a more extensive range of options. They also recommended that these additional options be presented to the Arts in Public Places Commission and Beautification Committee for further consideration. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Garcia, Lainez, Rebollo, Vice Mayor Altamirano and Mayor Argumedo (5)

14. Professional Services Agreement with KNN Public Finance, LLC for Municipal Financial Advisory Services and Authorize Staff to take the Necessary Steps to Advance the Procurement of a TIFIA Loan with the United States Department of Transportation Build America Bureau

Director of Transportation McFerguson provided an overview of the staff report.

Councilmember Lainez moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, to adopt a Resolution approving a Professional Services Agreement with KNN Public Finance, LLC; for municipal financial advisory services and authorize staff to take the necessary steps to advance the procurement of a TIFIA Loan with the United States Department of Transportation Build America Bureau. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

15. Eastern Avenue Transit Hub Alternatives

Acting Director of Public Works Nila presented a summary of the staff report.

Vice Mayor Altamirano recommended choosing option 2 to alleviate the issue of buses on the street.

Councilmember Lainez sought information on measurable results and expressed the need for understanding what traffic improvements were effective before

implementing further changes. Councilmember Lainez emphasized the importance of knowing about traffic light improvements before proceeding. Director Nila noted that obtaining this information would require a request to the County.

Mayor Argumedo inquired about the situation at Eastern and Jillson and possible mitigation measures, including the installation of a traffic stop sign. Director Nila discussed the limitations of making changes to the area, especially due to increased traffic congestion. She mentioned that the County of Los Angeles would need to be involved in any specific measures for that area.

Councilmember Rebollo requested the presence of a traffic deputy at the intersection during peak hours to help mitigate congestion.

Councilmember Garcia asked if Eastern was part of the original plan. Director Nila explained that initially, Commerce Way was considered for the bus hub, but it was later recommended to locate it on Eastern. The design of Commerce Way included curb cutouts for buses.

Councilmember Garcia inquired about alternative locations for the bus hub and the area that might be less congested. Director of Transportation McFerguson explained that exploring other areas would require additional funding.

Vice Mayor Altamirano recommended placing the bus hub on Jillson and creating a cutout in front of the current transportation facility, which is soon will be relocated

Mayor Argumedo expressed support for returning Eastern to two lanes and possibly re-routing the bike lanes, endorsing option 2.

Councilmember Rebollo mentioned that the City of Culver City had rescinded previous traffic measures. Acting Director Nila explained that they had reverted to the original project. Councilmember Rebollo requested information about the funding source and the outcomes after reverting to the original layout in Culver City.

Councilmember Lainez moved to receive and file, and Vice Mayor Altamirano seconded the motion. The motion passed with four in favor and one opposed (Mayor Argumedo).

Mayor Argumedo proposed revisiting the item, continuing the discussion with the discussed recommendations, seeking more information, considering a stop sign at Jillson, creating a cutout, and reviewing alternatives. Vice Mayor Altamirano moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia, to reconsider the item. The motion passed.

AYES: Councilmembers Garcia, Lainez, Rebollo, Vice Mayor Altamirano and Mayor Argumedo (5)

Mayor Argumedo moved to table this item, continue to future meeting and take action when all options are reviewed. Vice Mayor Altamirano seconded. The motion was carried by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Garcia, Lainez, Rebollo, Vice Mayor Altamirano and Mayor Argumedo (5)

16. Award of Construction Contract to FS Contractors, Inc. for the Ferguson Drive Sidewalk Improvements Project

Acting Director of Public Works, Nila, provided a summary of the staff report.

Council member Rebollo inquired about the encroachment affecting 15 properties. Acting Director Nila explained that efforts had been made to minimize the encroachment. She further elaborated that property owners would have up to a year to relocate their fences. If they choose not to do so, staff would remove the fence, but owners would need to reinstall it themselves if they wish.

Responding to Council member Lainez's queries regarding the project timeline, Director Nila estimated that it would take approximately 6-8 months to complete, with a more precise schedule to be obtained from the contractor. Council member Lainez also inquired about the possibility of using block grant funds to assist owners who need to move their fences. Additionally, Council member Lainez recommended the installation of larger and flashing stop signs on Gaspar.

Councilmember Lainez moved, seconded by Councilmember Rebollo, to adopt a Resolution approving the Plans and Specifications, awarding a construction contract to FS Contractors, Inc. for the Ferguson Drive Sidewalk Improvements Project, and authorizing Construction Management and Inspection Services by Transtech Engineers, Inc.; and make a finding and determination that the Ferguson Drive Sidewalk Improvements Project is exempt from further CEQA review. The motion carried by the following

vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

PUBLIC HEARING**17. Confirmation of 2022-2023 Weed Abatement Charges**

Director of Administrative Services and City Clerk Shumway provided an overview of the staff report. Mayor Argumedo opened Public Hearing. There were no individual wishing to address the City Council on this item. Mayor Argumedo closed public hearing.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, to confirm and approve of the 2022-2023 Weed Abatement Charges as recommended by the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Director of Weights and Measures. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

ORDINANCES**18. Adoption and Second Reading of an Ordinance Revising Section 2.20.010 of Chapter 2 ("Compensation") of the Municipal Code with Respect to Compensation of Councilmembers**

Director of Administrative Services and City Clerk Shumway provide a brief summary and recommended adoption.

Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia, to adopt, by title only and waving a full reading, of an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Commerce, California, Revising Commerce Municipal Code, Title 2 (Administration and Personnel), Chapter 2.20.010 (Compensation) with respect to compensation of Councilmembers. Director of Administrative Services and City Clerk Shumway read the title of an Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

19. Adoption and Second Reading of (2) Ordinances to Repeal Ordinance Nos. 782 and 795 and to Revoke Development Agreements Nos. 782 and 795 Related to Commercial Cannabis Permit Applications

Director of Administrative Services and City Clerk Shumway provide a brief summary and recommended adoption.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Councilmember Lainez, to adopt, by title only and waiving full reading of Uncodified Ordinance to repeal Ordinance No. 782 revoking related Development Agreement No 782 between Green Leaf 26 Corporation and the City of Commerce which allowed commercial cannabis activities at 6400 Fleet Street, and Uncodified Ordinance to repeal Ordinance No. 795 revoking related Development Agreement No 795 between Notstan LA Inc. and the City of Commerce which allowed commercial cannabis activities at 2620 South Malt Avenue and make findings of a CEQA categorical exemption. Director of Administrative Service and City Clerk Shumway read the title of an Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

20. First Reading of an Uncodified Ordinance Approving a Development Agreement Related to Application No. 18-052 - Continuance of the Item to Next City Council Meeting

City Attorney Tapia stated that this item was put on the agenda, and recommended to be presented at the upcoming meeting, but this is for the preservation of the posted notices.

Councilmember Lainez moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, to continue this previously noticed item to the next regular scheduled City Council meeting: Introduction and First Reading, by waiving the full reading and reading by title only, an Uncodified Ordinance approving the Development Agreement with DJCC Corporation (California Corporation) related to Application No. 18-052, for a commercial cannabis business at 5350-80 East Washington Boulevard, Commerce CA, and direct staff to prepare and file corresponding Notices of Exemption. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Argumedo, Mayor Pro Tem Altamirano, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Lainez, and Councilmember Rebollo

CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY REPORTS

Councilmember Rebollo extended warm birthday wishes to her mother.

Councilmember Garcia expressed gratitude for the National Night Out event and made a request for recycling bins to be provided at special events.

Councilmember Lainez shared their recent activities, including attending the Gateway Council of Government 2023 Mayoral Summit at the Senior Center. Councilmember Lainez also thanked Mayor Argumedo for his opening comments. Councilmember Lainez reported that he participated in National Night Out, expressed appreciation for the event's sponsors and the hardworking staff, also attended a Scholarship Breakfast, and joined the Unplugged Theater banquet.

Vice Mayor Altamirano reported attending National Night Out, where he expressed thanks to all staff involved. He also issued a warning about ongoing catalytic converter thefts in the community.

Mayor Argumedo provided an update on his recent engagements, including attending a JPA meeting at Bell Gardens, participating in a Regional 2023 Mayoral Summit with Janice Harn in attendance, who showed strong support for addressing the homeless situation, attending an I-5 JPA meeting, a County Sanitation District board meeting, National Night Out, and a Scholarship Breakfast.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:27pm