



City of Commerce

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 - 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 Altamirano called meeting to order at 5:19 pm

ROLL CALL

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

The City Council/Successor Agency recessed to Closed Session at 5:19 p.m. City Attorney Tapia stated that Councilmember Argumedo is participating remotely and that this constituted one of the two opportunities allowed under State law. He confirmed that Councilmember Argumedo qualified in accordance with the applicable provisions.

1. Conference with Legal Counsel Pursuant to Government Code Sections 54956.9(d)(2) & (e)(2) - Regarding Anticipated/Potential Litigation - Two (2) Matters.
2. Pursuant to Government Code §54956.8, the City Council will confer with its real property negotiator, Ernie Hernandez, with respect to real estate negotiations:
 1. Wash-Tel Commerce, LLC concerning proposed price and other terms relating thereto, comprised of 6233 -6241 Telegraph Road and 6329 Washington Blvd (APN: 6336-010-030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035, & 038, 6336-010-922 & 927).
 2. 5873 Telegraph Road, Commerce CA

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

City Council/Successor Agency reconvened to open session at 6:18 p.m.

ORAL CLOSED SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

City Attorney Tapia reported on the Closed Session items as follows:

Item #1: Two matters were discussed. Councilmember Rebollo participated in the discussion of only one of the matters. Staff provided a presentation, Council gave direction, and no reportable action was taken on these items.

Item #2A: Staff provided a presentation, Council gave direction, and no reportable action was taken.

Item #2B: This item was not discussed.

6:00 P.M. - CITY COUNCIL MEETING**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Altamirano called regular meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director of Community Services Serrano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Councilmember Garcia offered the invocation.

APPEARANCES AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Commendation Honoring Rosa Zambrano for Receiving the Older American Recognition Award from the Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults and for her Services to the Community

Council and Mayor congratulated Rosa Zambrano and talked about her achievements.

Rosa Zambrano spoke about having great mentors. And how her name was drawn in lottery for the Village

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jonny Torres spoke on behalf of CEA (Community Empowerment Associates), a nonprofit organization that has been providing gang intervention services in the City

of Commerce since 2008. Mr. Torres shared that he leads a team of approximately 30 staff members and that CEA is currently engaged in crisis response work within the city.

Alejandra Aguilar-Avelino, representing the East Los Angeles Women's Center, requested the Council's support in identifying a small parcel of city land that could be used to create a Healing garden space for women and residents. She also asked for \$50,000 in funding to support a public mural project. She noted that the East LA Women's Center is located in the City of Commerce and serves local residents.

Charlie, a Commerce resident, voiced concerns about the Camp Commerce enrollment process. He noted that in the past, residents could view enrollment status online. He recommended that the City consider allowing residents to view the enrollment lottery process online or implement a revised system to increase transparency and fairness.

CONSENT CALENDAR

City Manager Ernie Hernandez announced that Item #9 would be continued to a future meeting.

Councilmember Rebollo requested to pull Item #7 for further discussion.

Vice Mayor Lainez requested to pull Item #8 for discussion.

Item #7 – Councilmember Argumedo inquired whether street striping in the area could be refreshed in preparation for Black Friday, noting that it had been effective in the previous year.

City Manager Hernandez responded that the City would be coordinating soon with Citadel Outlets regarding Black Friday and will ensure the striping is completed before the holiday shopping season.

A motion to approve Item #7 was made by Councilmember Rebollo and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lainez, to adopt a Resolution appropriating funds for the City's Holiday Decor Program and traffic control services for the Black Friday event. The motion passed unanimously.

Item #8 – Mayor Pro Tem Lainez expressed support for using this item as an opportunity to brand the City's bus shelters, suggesting an artistic approach, particularly in the Arts District.

Mayor Altamirano agreed and emphasized that shelters in arts-focused areas should stand out visually.

City Manager Hernandez recommended focusing distinctive branding efforts on highly visible areas like Telegraph Road and Washington Boulevard, while suggesting more standard designs for less prominent areas. He further recommended delaying the item to allow staff to return with additional options and design alternatives.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez suggested incorporating the City Seal and other elements to reflect the identity of the City and Arts District.

Transit Supervisor Guzman explained that design customizations were feasible, including the use of color and a metal disc with the City Seal. However, he noted that such customizations could increase the cost per shelter and may reduce the total number of shelters the City could install.

Councilmember Garcia expressed appreciation that the long-awaited shelter updates were being considered and thanked staff for bringing the item forward.

A discussion followed about shelter sizes, with staff noting that some shelters are 12 feet in length while others are 14 feet, depending on location-specific needs.

Following discussion, the item was continued to a future meeting so staff could return with updated proposals based on Council feedback.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia, to approve the Consent Calendar minus items #7, #8 and #9. The motion was carried by the following vote:

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

2. Approval of Warrant Register Nos. 1B, 1B SA, and Handwrite Register Nos. 1B, 24B, 24B SA
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Brenda Villa Aquatic Center Moving Sectional Glass Windows and Heavy-Duty Fans Installation Project Acceptance
5. Fund Trade Agreement for the Exchange of Proposition A Funds With the City of Diamond Bar
6. Approval of the Grant of an Easement to Southern California Edison (SCE)

Across Lot D in the Wash-Tel Property

7. Holiday Décor Program and 2025 Black Friday Funding Approval
8. Purchase of Twenty-Five (25) Bus Shelters and Accessories for Transit Operations
9. Revised Purchasing Policy

SCHEDULED MATTERS

10. Presentation/Update from the Sheriff's Department of Public Safety in the City of Commerce

This item was continued to the next meeting

11. Presentation Regarding Digital Billboards

Community Development Director Serrano introduced Scott Sheldon, a consultant from Tierra Realty Advisors, who presented findings regarding the feasibility and potential benefits of digital billboards in the City of Commerce. Sheldon explained that his firm had evaluated various options and that any proposed signs would be fully operated and maintained by the sign companies, with no maintenance cost to the City. City Manager Hernandez added that the City is exploring opportunities to partner with existing businesses and utilize City-owned properties to generate lease revenue and share advertising income from digital signage.

During Council discussion, Councilmember Mireya Garcia inquired about the cost of maintaining digital signs, to which Sheldon responded that maintenance would be handled entirely by the sign companies. Councilmember Rebollo asked whether there are specific areas with a concentration of billboards and raised concerns about light pollution, especially for nearby residential neighborhoods. Councilmember Rebollo also asked if other cities had reported public concerns about digital signs. Director Serrano explained that most existing signs are located along freeways, with some along Washington Boulevard and there will be no hazard for the residents. City Manager Hernandez noted that each new sign would be addressed through an individual Development Agreement. Mr. Sheldon further explained that each agreement would include restrictions on what content can and cannot be advertised and that lighting levels are regulated to industry standards. He emphasized that digital signs use LED lighting, which is brighter during the day and dims automatically at night, and that no sign would be placed within 250 feet of residential zones.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez expressed similar concerns about proximity to residential

areas and suggested limiting animation or transitions that might distract drivers. Scott Sheldon clarified that digital signs transition between ads instantaneously—referred to as a “click”—and that cities have the right to regulate lighting levels and require adjustments if needed. He also noted that the signs could display public service announcements, including AMBER Alerts and emergency messages, and that the sign systems are equipped with cameras to regulate brightness and monitor ad displays. Mayor Pro Tem Lainez also proposed that lease revenue generated from the billboards should be reinvested into residential and commercial beautification projects.

Councilmember Hugo Argumedo voiced his support for moving forward with the project, emphasizing its potential for ongoing revenue generation. Scott Sheldon confirmed that there would be no upfront cost to the City, as the installation and operation would be fully funded by the developer. He added that this model would provide the City with continuous income without the burden of managing ad sales. City Manager Hernandez reiterated that whether on City-owned or private property, the City would benefit financially through either leases or development fees.

Mayor Altamirano inquired about the potential annual revenue, and Scott Sheldon cited Montebello as an example, noting that the city earns over \$100,000 per year from just four digital signs. Mayor Altamirano requested additional workshops and a City Council study session to further explore possible locations and gain a deeper understanding of how the digital billboard program would function. City Manager Hernandez concluded by stating that an ordinance would need to be established and that any billboard placements would require approval from Caltrans to ensure they do not pose distractions to drivers.

12. Gateway Cities Regional Fiber Optic Network Project

Public Works Director Abbas provided an overview of the staff report, outlining both the benefits and challenges of the project. In response to Councilmember Rebollo’s question regarding the appearance of the above-ground portion, Director Abbas stated that additional poles would be installed.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez acknowledged that while the initiative had good intentions and that the Council of Governments (COG) was proud to connect four cities, there are concerns to consider. He inquired about the broadband capabilities, noting that a large portion of the City currently lacks access, and emphasized that this project could be a significant benefit. However, he agreed with the concerns and recommendations raised, stressing the importance of ensuring the project serves the City’s best interests.

City Manager Hernandez explained that the project remains in the discussion phase and that staff will continue working with COG. He noted that the agreement

will come before the Council for approval, including any necessary conditions.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez further stated that funds allocated for this project must be expended by 2026. City Manager Hernandez reiterated that the City's goal is to protect itself while also considering the regional perspective.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez moved, seconded by Councilmember Rebollo, to authorize the City Manager and/or his designee, Public Works Director, to forward the attached letter to the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) outlining the City's concerns and recommendations. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

13. Update on DTSC Clean-up and Grass Planting

Public Works Director Abbas provided an update on the properties cleaned by DTSC, reporting that out of 544 private properties, 484 have been completed.

Mayor Altamirano stated that residents have expressed concerns that the hydro seeding does not look good. He emphasized that the result looks poor and the City should hold DTSC financially liable.

Councilmember Rebollo asked what type of grass was previously in place and agreed that the work performed by DTSC looks terrible. Councilmember Rebollo suggested that even if the City has to bear some of the cost to redo the work, it should be addressed. She added that a "happy medium" solution needs to be found. Director Abbas noted that DTSC has permits through the end of the year.

Councilmember Garcia agreed that the situation needs to be fixed.

Mayor Pro Tem Lainez commented that this is an example of a state agency initiative with good intentions but poor execution. He noted that residents were not informed they would be responsible for maintenance. He stated that, since it is City property, it should be maintained like City property.

Councilmember Argumedo concurred with the concerns expressed by his colleagues, stating that the City must demand better results from DTSC.

City Manager Hernandez identified two key challenges: (1) the funding allocated to DTSC to administer the program, with reimbursement from DTSC likely to be difficult, and (2) inconsistency in residents watering the areas, which would also be an issue if sod were installed. He stated that if the City chooses to take responsibility, the first step would be to purchase a water buffalo to water the

areas, and recommended that the City begin watering them.

14. Arts in Public Places Program

This item was continued to a later date.

PUBLIC HEARING

15. Confirmation of 2024-2025 Weed Abatement Charges

Director of Administrative Services and City Clerk Shumway provided a brief overview of the staff report. Mayor Altamirano opened Public Hearing. There were no individuals wishing to address the City Council on this item. Mayor Altamirano closed Public Hearing.

Councilmember Rebollo moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia, to confirm the 2024-2025 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 Altamirano, Mayor Pro Tem Lainez, Councilmember Argumedo, Councilmember Garcia, and Councilmember Rebollo

CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY REPORTS

Councilmember Rebollo thanked Rebecca Longoria for her efforts with National Night Out and also thanked Sergeant Jimenez for serving as MC. She expressed her appreciation to all Deputies and law enforcement officers for their involvement in the community. Councilmember Rebollo further recommended that residents check out the hiking backpacks available at the library, noting that they are well-equipped and useful for hiking trips.

Councilmember Garcia commended the success of the 4th of July celebration, highlighting the outstanding laser show, and expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts. She reported that the Parks and Recreation Department continues to prioritize community wellness by bringing back Zumba classes and water aerobics.

She attended the NALEO Conference in Atlanta, the National Night Out event, the Backpack Giveaway at Bristow Park, and the Colorado River Aqueduct tour and thanked the Water District Board of Directors for the invitation.

Councilmember Garcia requested an update from the City Manager on outstanding requests, including progress reports. She suggested beginning a review of City-owned warehouse locations as potential sites for a future sports facility, and inquired who would take the lead on this effort.

Councilmember Garcia also inquired about the reopening of the Bristow and Veterans libraries when school is back in session, specifically whether they would

be open Monday through Wednesday and when that schedule would begin.

Additionally, Councilmember Garcia referenced her prior request for the Memorial Wall to include recognition for Purple Heart recipients. City Manager Hernandez stated this will be agendaized as part of the Subcommittee first. Councilmember Garcia further requested that the Memorial Wall honoring all fallen soldiers be placed on the next Council meeting agenda.

Vice Mayor Lainez reported that he attended National Night Out. He noted that he was unable to attend the Backpack Giveaway because it was his son's birthday. He thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for organizing the Back-to-School event and the Concert in the Park held on Saturday.

Mayor Altamirano reported that he attended the Scholarship Event and congratulated all of the scholarship recipients. He commended the Parks and Recreation Department for doing a great job with events and concerts. He stated that National Night Out was very successful, with volunteers helping to make the evening remarkable. Mayor Altamirano thanked the Star Wars volunteers who participated, as well as Fernando Ortiz, one of the main organizers of the Backpack Giveaway, and all those who donated school supplies. He noted that a local clothing company also contributed items that were distributed to children.

Mayor Altamirano also reported that he attended the Performing Arts Unplugged event at the Teen Center and stated that the participants did a remarkable job. He requested that all of the Unplugged participants be given certificates of recognition and invited to a future City Council meeting to be honored.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.