CITY OF ALISO VIEJO
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2025, 3:30 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall, 12 Journey
Aliso Viejo, California

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ackley called the Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Aliso Viejo to order at 3:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: MAYOR TIFFANY ACKLEY
MAYOR PRO TEM MAX DUNCAN
COUNCILMEMBER RICHARD W. HURT
COUNCILMEMBER MIKE MUNZING
COUNCILMEMBER TIM A. ZANDBERGEN

STAFF PRESENT: MITZI ORTIZ, CITY MANAGER
SCOTT SMITH, CITY ATTORNEY
HONGDAO NGUYEN, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY
ELIZABETH W. HULL, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY
JANET MARTINEZ, CITY CLERK
ANN EIFERT, FINANCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
SHAUN PELLETIER, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
SO KIM, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
LIZZY MENDOZA, RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER
ISAAC AZIZ, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGER
CAPT. RYAN BUHR, CHIEF OF POLICE SERVICES

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

MAYOR ACKLEY RECESSED THE MEETING TO CLOSED SESSION AT 3:34 P.M.

CLOSED SESSION:

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d)(2) Number of potential cases: 1

MAYOR ACKLEY RECONVENED THE MEETING AT 4:00 P.M.

REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION:

City Attorney Scott Smith stated no reportable action was taken.

COMMUNITY INPUT:

1. Tom Merritt commented on upcoming development within the City.

DISCUSSION:

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP

City Manager Mitzi Ortiz commented on the importance of the workshop. Carol Jacobs, Baker Tilly Managing Director, provided the workshop objectives including discussing good governance, establishing the City Council's goals and priorities; and strengthening teamwork. Ms. Jacobs discussed the City Manager's role; led the City Council in an icebreaker exercise; reviewed the Strategic Plan Framework; and reviewed the City's recent accomplishments and challenges.

Key opportunities to achieve the strategic goals include potential property tax from proposed residential developments; expanded recreational partnerships with homeowners associations; establishment of development impact fees; reenvisioned uses of Aliso Viejo Ranch; potential sales tax from The Commons shopping center remodel; and an update of the City's master fee schedule.

Initiatives already in progress include analyzing the organization and reviewing contracts and consultant services; implementing an online budget book for easier reading and viewing; installing bike lane improvements; preparing the 2025-26 budget to include a five-year forecast; reviewing City's utility expenditures for efficiency and cost savings; preparing a neighborhood traffic calming program and traffic signal synchronization program; updating administrative policies; and upgrading data center equipment. Ms. Jacobs emphasized that these initiatives are being implemented by only 29 employees, in addition to their daily responsibilities. She also provided a brief overview of the City's revenue and expenditures.

City Council discussion ensued related to a vision for Town Center and code violations. Community Development Director So Kim noted that the City has one part-time Code Enforcement Officer and he checks for violations daily. Ms. Ortiz and Chief of Police Services Captain Ryan Buhr commented on enforcement related to overnight recreational vehicle parking.

City Council discussion continued related to Town Center ownership, City marketing for local businesses, code enforcement, commercial rental rates, and storefront vacancies. Captain Buhr provided additional information regarding parking regulations on private property. Ms. Ortiz noted that property management has been responsive in addressing concerns and violations. Ms. Kim provided an overview of code enforcement procedures and practices, and the City's ability to increase code enforcement staffing through its professional services agreement.

The City Council provided direction to staff to address signage issues and parking concerns, and to work collaboratively with the property owners at Town Center.

MAYOR ACKLEY RECESSED THE MEETING AT 5:36 P.M. AND RECONVENED AT 5:54 P.M.

City Council discussion ensued regarding development initiatives, including placing concept review items on City Council meeting agendas; preparing to conduct a comprehensive update of the Zoning Code; promoting a local business of the month via social media; showcasing Aliso Viejo as a boutique, family friendly and safe community; and private redevelopment of commercial spaces into mixed use.

Ms. Jacobs provided an overview of the proposed goals: financial stability; infrastructure investment; and Aliso Viejo Ranch.

City Council discussion ensued regarding financial stability, including additional sources of revenue, use of reserves, and cost recovery. Financial Services Director Ann Eifert provided information related to the City's investment policy and business licensing programs.

City Council discussion ensued regarding infrastructure investment, including construction of a skate park.

City Council discussion ensued regarding Aliso Viejo Ranch, including revenue opportunities, fee schedule, marketing, and community engagement. Recreation & Community Services Manager Lizzy Mendoza provided information related to the City's event sponsorship program and most recent rental fee update.

City Council discussion ensued regarding a storm drain utility fee. Public Works Director Shaun Pelletier provided an overview of the fee and approval process.

City Council discussion ensued regarding grant writing. Staff provided an overview of grant funding received, the grant writing process, and eligibility constraints.

The City Council reviewed and discussed proposed strategies that align with the proposed goals. Consensus was reached on the following priorities:

Goal A – Financial Stability. Continue to ensure the City's financial stability through careful planning and evaluation of revenue and investment opportunities.

1. Identify and pursue alternative funding opportunities to support key City projects, the Capital Improvement Program, and goals.
2. Monitor and routinely review contracts and agreements to ensure the appropriate delivery of services, alignment with procurement policies and procedures, and to identify potential cost savings.

Goal B – Infrastructure Investment. Maintain, replace, and fund the City's capital assets through infrastructure investment.

1. Prepare a master schedule to plan and budget future maintenance needs based on the recently completed asset evaluation.

Goal C – Aliso Viejo Ranch. Develop a plan to establish the Ranch as a prized community asset.

1. Review expenditures and seek opportunities for cost savings.
2. Identify services and programs that will increase community participation.
3. Create a projection to increase cost recovery.

The City Council and staff expressed appreciation for the opportunity to collaboratively share, discuss, and establish goals.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Ackley adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting is March 5, 2025

Respectfully submitted:

JANET MARTINEZ
CITY CLERK

Approved by:

TIFFANY ACKLEY
MAYOR