

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MINUTES**

May 13, 2013

Mayor Vierra called the May 13, 2013 City Council Study Session to order at 5:33 p.m. with the following in attendance:

ROLL CALL Council Members Durossette, Ingwerson, Kline, Lane, Mayor Vierra

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Alley Closure Discussion.

Toby Wells, Deputy City Manager/City Engineer presented a brief report to Council stating that Mr. Ledbetter is requesting permission to install gates to control after-hours access to the alley which intersects his business to help limit theft and trespass on his property. Mr. Ledbetter has offered to provide keys to the affected residents and the City personnel for access after normal business hours.

The City currently has no policy in place that would allow this type of access control by private property owners to public alley ways.

- A representative from Mr. Ledbetter's business addressed Council urging Council support of the request. The owners and employees of the business are worried about their safety as well as theft and property damage. They have exhausted all options available to them and are turning to the City for assistance.

After some Council discussion regarding various options Council gave the following direction:

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Allow Mr. Ledbetter to install a temporary gate for three or four months while staff formulates a policy for gating alley ways. This will allow us time to see how the temporary gate is working and make any necessary changes to the policy prior to bringing it to Council for final approval. Policy should make a distinction between residential alleys and non-residential alleys.

5:50 p.m. Mayor Vierra excused himself from the meeting and Vice Mayor Lane conducted.

2. Parks Maintenance and Planning.

Toby Wells, Deputy City Manager/City Engineer updated Council on a recent Request for Bid issued by City staff for landscape maintenance services to City parks and grounds. The proposed contract for landscape maintenance of parks and grounds will not result in the elimination of any currently filled positions. The City personnel currently assigned to mow and edge the lawns will be working on other parks maintenance activities.

- Frank Alvarez, resident and City employee, spoke in opposition to moving to a contractor for landscape maintenance. Among his concerns were quality of work; added costs such as broken sprinkler heads; the potential loss of a City position to an outside Company.

After lengthy Council discussion, Council gave the following direction:

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Move forward with contract with Valley Scapes in Merced. Valley Scapes will provide mowing, edging, blowing and weeding services to City parks. Add provision to contract for either reimbursement or replacement of any broken sprinkler heads. The timing of the contract should coincide with the FY 2013/14 Budget.

3. Hatch/Mitchell necessity of medians for Traffic Safety.

Deputy City Manager, City Engineer, Toby Wells, presented an overview of the traffic volume at the intersection of Hatch Rd. and Mitchell Rd. The intersection is one of the busiest intersections in Stanislaus County with over 44,000 vehicles per day. A median was installed in 2012 to Southbound Mitchell Road with U-turns permitted to allow access to the businesses on the northeast corner.

The property owner on the northeast corner has expressed concerns that the installation of the median is impacting the profitability of his business and has requested that staff remove the median or revise the median to provide a left turn movement into the property. Staff is strongly opposed to either request due to safety reasons.

The following addressed Council requesting the median be removed:

- Gabe Villa, business owner,
- Sukhi Sandhu, business owner,
- Tony Covarrabias, Manteca Commercial Property
- Jose Sanchez, business owner,

The following residents spoke in support of keeping the median:

- Dave Pratt, Resident

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Agendize for the July 8, 2013 regular City Council Meeting. Provide accident data and intersection data for City of Ceres and comparison data from surrounding communities. Provide a drawing with a dedicated left hand turn lane into the Shopping Center from Southbound Mitchell Rd. (left in but no left out.) and a drawing with a 30 foot section of the median removed allowing for a left hand turn into the Shopping Center from Southbound Mitchell Rd. and a left hand turn out of the Shopping Center onto Southbound Mitchell Rd.

7:11 p.m. Vice Mayor Lane adjourned the City Council Study Session.

/s/Ken Lane, Vice Mayor

/s/Cindy Heidorn, CMC, City Clerk