

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
AGOURA HILLS CITY COUNCIL  
30001 Ladyface Court, Agoura Hills, CA 91301  
May 18, 2005 at 5:00 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m.

The flag salute was led by Councilmember Kuperberg.

Present were: Mayor Ed Corridori, Mayor Pro Tem Denis Weber, Councilmember John Edelston, Councilmember Dan Kuperberg, and Councilmember Jeff Reinhardt.

Also Present were: City Manager Greg Ramirez, Assistant City Manager Jim Thorsen, City Attorney Craig Steele, Assistant City Attorney Candice Lee, Finance Officer Georgette Holt, Director of Planning and Community Development Mike Kamino, City Engineer Ken Berkman, Recreation Manager Amy Jones-Brink, Recreation Manager Donna Conlin, Recreation Manager Dale Summersille, Assistant to the City Manager Carol Tubelis, Traffic Engineer Ed Cline, Facilities/Operations Supervisor Chris Dodd, and City Clerk Kimberly Rodrigues.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

On a motion by Councilmember Kuperberg, second by Mayor Pro Tem Weber, the Agenda was approved without objection.

**DISCUSSION/ACTION**

1. Proposed FY 2005-2006 Budget Priorities

Donald Zimring, Interim Superintendent, 4111 North Las Virgenes Road, representing the Las Virgenes Unified School District, thanked the Council for having an open budget process and spoke about joining with other communities in supporting funding for the School District.

Penny Sylvester, 29045 Old Carriage Street, urged the Council to support the School District.

For clarification to the public, Councilmember Kuperberg noted that although the City has not provided grants or designated funds for specific programs, the City has donated, over the past five years, almost \$2,000,000, including Redevelopment Agency funds, towards goods and services, which is a significant contribution to local schools. The funds have also supported school programs such as the Juvenile Intervention Team, the STAR unit, Crossing Guards, Grad Night, and Every 15 Minutes. In addition, the City has been a leader in a housing loan program for teachers who can receive up to \$300,000 housing loans to live in the area, worked out partnerships with other cities on beautification, and collaborated to purchase park land.

Mayor Corridori deferred to the Finance Committee.

Representing the Finance Committee, Councilmember Edelston provided a report recommending the following allocations: Building Contingency and City Hall Reserves be included in the 40% Operation Budget of \$3.57M; Lindero Creek Park at \$1.5-2M; Recreation Center reduced to \$2M; the Undesignated be included as part of the excess reserves at \$3M; and to allocate 1/3 of the excess reserves toward non-reoccurring cost improvements.

By consensus, the City Council supported the Finance Committee recommendations for reserve allocations; amended the Work Plan to include a \$250,000 grant for Morrison Park; retained the *Las Virgenes Educational Foundation* item on the project list, but not as a budget item until further information related to expenditures and legal issues were addressed; shifted the *clean up of the west entrance of the City at Thousand Oaks Boulevard* from a medium to a high priority item; and recommended the inclusion of the High Priority and Medium Priority items in the FY 2005-2006 Budget.

**The City Council recessed at 6:40 p.m. and reconvened at 7:14 p.m.**

2. Discussion, Public Comment, Direction to Staff and Possible Adoption of a Position Statement Regarding the Heschel West School Project

***Prior to tonight's meeting, copies of the following documents were distributed to the City Council with the Agenda packet:***

*Email and Facsimile in Support of the Heschel West School Project:*

*Email from Elizabeth Parker, Executive Assistant, City of Calabasas  
Facsimile from Cherie Paglia, City Manager, City of Hidden Hills*

*Emails in Opposition to the Heschel West School Project:*

*Ruth L. Gerson, Agoura Hills  
Joan and Rick Hernandez, Agoura Hills  
Kelly Morris, Agoura Hills  
Susan Morris, Agoura Hills  
Cyrena Nouzille, Agoura Hills  
Jess Thomas, Agoura Hills*

*Letters in Opposition to the Heschel West School Project:*

*Gene Berg and De De Harman Berg, Agoura Hills  
William and Carol Foster, 5601 N. Foothill Drive, Agoura Hills  
Joan and Rick Hernandez, 6060 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
George R. Larson, 5446 Luis Drive, Agoura Hills  
Lisa Levine, 6139 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
Jess Thomas, 6064 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills, representing OAHA*

*Cameron and Alice Thor, 5920 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills  
Richard G. Valesko, Agoura Hills*

***In addition, the following documents were received after the Agenda packet was prepared and copies placed at the dais for City Council consideration:***

*Letter dated May 18, 2005 from City Attorney Craig Steele to Dr. Daryl Koutnik, Department of Regional Planning, County of Los Angeles, regarding comments on the Revised Draft EIR for Heschel West School*

*Correspondence by the Public in Opposition to the Heschel West School Project:*

*Gene Berg and De De Harman Berg, 9211 Nightingale Drive, Los Angeles  
Steve and Janet Casey, 5560 Fairview Place, Agoura Hills  
Debbie Gallinot, 6014 North Fairview Place, Agoura Hills  
Gary Gallinot, 6014 North Fairview Place, Agoura Hills  
Julee Harman, 28008 Balkins Drive, Agoura Hills  
Nina Hull, 28453 Driver Avenue, Agoura Hills  
Lee Lanloio, Agoura Hills  
Kenneth J. and Barbara B. Leonard, 5835 Fairview Place, Agoura Hills  
Robert and Elsa Michitsch, 6012 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills  
Nadja Myers, 6037 Lapworth Drive, Agoura Hills  
Susan Nims, 28430 Driver Avenue, Agoura Hills  
Jean-Luc Nouzille, 6085 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
Sue and Bill Ouellette, Agoura Hills  
Theresa Porto, 28008 Balkins Drive, Agoura Hills  
Nancy Seck, 6135 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills*

*Emails by the Public in Opposition to the Heschel West School Project:*

*Kirk A. Allegro, 28312 Driver Avenue, Agoura Hills  
Larry R. Anderson, 5918 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
Nancy Gold, 5562 Lewis Lane, Agoura Hills  
Mary C. Keenan, 5374 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
Darryl Levine, 5521 Fairview Place, Agoura Hills  
Mindy Levine, Agoura Hills  
Vince Vignolle, 5754 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills*

Mayor Corridori announced that the Heschel West School Project is outside the City's boundaries and in the jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles; the City Council was not the decision making body for this project; the meeting was convened this evening for the Council to receive facts, staff comment, and public input; and, the Council would not be taking a vote on this project or the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) this evening.

City Attorney Craig Steele provided an overview of the process indicating that the County of Los Angeles is the lead agency and responsible for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in preparing the DEIR for the project. A DEIR was prepared for this project

in 2002 and after comment and public hearings, the DEIR was revised and recirculated. The County has prepared a revised DEIR which has been circulated for public review and comment for 45 days, pursuant to the CEQA requirements which ends, technically, May 18. The County has indicated that it would continue to take input and testimony regarding the adequacy of the DEIR throughout the public hearing process. The process is that the County has scheduled a noticed public hearing on May 25 and a second public hearing on the project on June 15. At the time the public hearing is closed, it is anticipated that the County's Regional Planning Commission would give direction to County staff to finalize the DEIR or revise and recirculate the DEIR, if necessary. If a final DEIR is to be prepared, they would give direction to County staff to prepare findings to approve or deny the application itself. The date the approval or denial will occur is uncertain at this time as the length of the public hearing process and time for the County to prepare a final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is unknown. The City has submitted comment letters and requested that they be made a part of the record and final EIR and, pursuant to CEQA, the County respond, in writing, to all the comments that were made and revise the EIR to address the additional issues. The letters have been submitted prior to the deadline and are available to the public for review. It is important for the City to participate in the consideration of the adequacy of the EIR because the EIR identifies the City as a responsible agency. The EIR indicates that the City is responsible for making some decisions on encroachment permits on utility connections and road improvements. In addition, the traffic mitigation measures suggested by the DEIR are entirely within the City of Agoura Hills, with one intersection under Caltrans jurisdiction, and the City would have to participate in decisions for the project to go forward. Under those circumstances, the City is interested in the adequacy of the EIR because the City would be required to use the EIR, if it is certified, on the permits requested. The City is not sure about the permits that could be requested or the decisions it may be asked to make as the County has not consulted with the City on this project. It's important for City staff to be thorough and proactive in their comments about the EIR and City Attorney Steele felt that, between the letters from Planning and Community Development Director Kamino and himself, this has been accomplished.

**Following presentation of the staff report and a question and answer period, Mayor Corridori opened the floor for public input.**

JMBM, LLP Proponents of the Heschel West School Project:

Ben Reznik, 1900 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles (submitted a *Support Book* containing 372 letters of support for the Heschel West School Project)  
Roger Van Wert, 1900 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles)  
Ron Hirsch, 1900 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles)

Old Agoura Homeowners Association Opponents of the Heschel West School Project:

Jess Thomas, 6064 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills  
Frank Angel, Agoura Hills  
George Colman, 5676 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills  
Robert Evren, 5732 Colodny Drive, Agoura Hills

Public Comment in Opposition to the Heschel West School Project:

Mary Wiesbrock, 6262 Timberlake, Agoura Hills, representing Save Open Space  
(submitted a letter to the City Council)

Public Comment in Support of the Heschel West School Project:

Maury Friedman, Agoura Hills

Louis Masry, 14490 Shawnee Street, Moorpark, representing the Agoura/Oak  
Park/Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

Andrea Jaffe, 27400 Canwood Street, Agoura Hills

Rick Wentz, 410 Upper Lake Road, Westlake Village

Andrea Gootnick, 29301 Castlehill Drive, Agoura Hills

Jay Lewitt, 29514 Bertrand Drive, Agoura Hills

Brian Greenberg, 1526 Falling Star, Westlake Village

Tom Block, 5647 Middlecrest Drive, Agoura Hills

Ian Taras, Agoura Hills

Jeri Cohen, 5725 Green Meadow Drive, Agoura Hills,

Ben Simon, 5930 Grey Rock, Agoura Hills

Jeff Aviezer, 27934 Blythedale Road, Agoura Hills

Mayor Corridori thanked the audience for their decorum, noting that the item would be brought back before the Council at their regular meeting of June 8.

Councilmember Kuperberg indicated that he would like to have the opportunity to digest the information received, including public comment, the City Attorney's letter, staff's input, and any information presented by other agencies to the County Regional Planning Commission, prior to taking a position on the issue. He also suggested the parties (proponents/opponents) sit down with the City's planning staff to see if any of the conflicts may be resolved prior to the next Council meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Weber stated that he felt it was appropriate to call this meeting and that this was the first time the Council had the ability to hear both sides of the issue. He concurred with Councilmember Kuperberg that he would like to have the opportunity to digest the information received and expressed concerns with the County not consulting with the City on this project.

Councilmember Reinhardt thanked everyone for a community meeting that could serve as an example for other communities in how people take on a difficult issue in a very adult, intelligent manner and thanked the public speakers for sharing their thoughts with the City Council in that fashion. He noted that this was a hard and complex issue and encouraged both sides (the proponents and opponents) of the issue to view the next few weeks as an opportunity to try again to dialog before the June 8 meeting. This would also give the Council the opportunity to review the volume of information received and the chance to come back in a few weeks and see what progress may be made on both sides of the dais.

Councilmember Edelston suggested that staff calendar a meeting with the representatives of the proponents and opponents to discuss and/or resolve some of the concerns related to the project.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:52 p.m., on a motion by Councilmember Kuperberg, second by Councilmember Edelston, the City Council consented to adjourn to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2005 for the FY 2005-06 Budget Workshop in the Community Room of the Civic Center and then to 7:00 p.m. for the next Regular Meeting of the City Council in the Council Chambers of the Civic Center with a Closed Session at 6:00 p.m. The Civic Center is located at 30001 Ladyface Court, Agoura Hills.

Kimberly M. Rodrigues, CMC  
City Clerk