

MINUTES

Special meeting of the City Council of the City of Redlands held on September 14, 2023 at 12:00 P.M. at the Fox Event Center, 123 Cajon Street, Redlands, California.

**Present: Eddie Tejada, Mayor
Paul Barich, Mayor Pro Tempore
Denise Davis, Council Member
Jenna Guzman-Lowery, Council Member
Mario Saucedo, Council Member**

Staff: Janice McConnell, Assistant City Manager; Chris Boatman, Assistant City Manager; Jeanne Donaldson, City Clerk; Don McCue, Library Director; Danielle Garcia, Management Services/Finance Director; Brian Desatnik, Development Services Director; John Harris, Municipal Utilities and Engineering Director; Rich Sessler, Fire Chief; Rachel Tolber, Police Chief; Tabitha Crocker, Facilities and Community Services Director; Ross Wittman, Project Manager

Executive Director Evan Sanford and President Lisa Jeffers of the Redlands Chamber of Commerce opened the State of the City event and welcomed and acknowledged several dignitaries. They expressed their appreciation of all the event sponsors for making this day possible. The event's Presenting Sponsor was Prologis. Additional sponsors included the Rotary Club of Redlands, Southern California Edison, Rochford Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Alta Vista Credit Union, Redlands Community Hospital, Crafton Hills College, Viewpoint Advocacy, SoCal Gas, Barich & Associates and Fern Cottage Florals.

To address Brown Act considerations, Mayor Tejada called the special meeting of the Redlands City Council to order at 12:25 P.M. to provide the opportunity for Council Members to attend the State of the City luncheon. On behalf of the City, he thanked the Redlands Chamber of Commerce and the Fox Event Center for hosting and organizing today's event.

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Beautification Award - Ross Wittman read the citations while Mayor Eddie Tejada presented awards recognizing individuals and organizations for their efforts in support of the Redlands community. In the category of Beautification Awards, recognition was given to Judson & Brown Elementary School, located on Pennsylvania Avenue and situated in the groves. As a way to embrace the past, they invited Larry Dierdorff to create two new murals, incorporating both history and a positive school culture that is on display to the community. The murals are a daily reminder to students about how to positively interact with one another.

Community Hero Award - In the category of Redlands Heroes, recognition was given to Kirk Escher who demonstrated commendable commitment to the Redlands Community Center. Kirk volunteers at the Community Center assisting with the youth basketball league, volunteering to support Saturday games, operating the scoreboard, and acting as an announcer for each youth game. Despite the many activities that Kirk is involved in, he still finds time to volunteer and support youth sports. Kirk's dedication to this community is a tremendous asset to the success of the Redlands Community Center youth basketball program.

Mayor's Special Awards - Mayor Tejeda honored Mary Reyes Sanchez, posthumously, with a Special Award for her dedication and commitment as a Community Volunteer for over 25 years at the Senior Center. Her son, Robert Lanas accepted the award. Susan Knobler, local small business owner of Suze Q Shops for You, was recognized for donating her time and money to care for housebound elderly and is currently partnering with charitable organizations to make a positive difference to help those who have been diagnosed with cancer. Brian Seghers, local small business owner of Rendition Tattoo, reaches out every year to his fellow small business owners to join in his Christmas toy drive to give toys away to those in need, so no child has a sad holiday season because a family can't afford toys. Linda Hamilton, Mary Clements and Richard Corneille, representing ANCA Redlands Chapter, a local nonprofit organization, were recognized for their dedication and efforts to empower residents with knowledge about how they can positively impact climate change.

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY

City Council Member Presentations

Council Member Mario Saucedo highlighted the importance of Regional Boards, including Southern California Associations of Governments (SCAG), San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA), Omnitrans and the League of California Cities. Council Member Jenna Guzman-Lowery reflected on her experiences as a Council Member and thought the best way to serve the community was to be engaged, be a good listener and be willing to tackle hard questions. Having difficult conversations helps to identify how the City can better serve the needs of everyone. Council Member Denise Davis listed accomplishments and success stories for the City, including programs such as, Youth Council, an eight-month leadership academy designed as a training ground for local high school students; the Climate Policy Council, an initiative she helped to establish, along with a great team of people associated with ANCA and the University of Redlands; the Utility Bill Assistance Program, now active and providing eligible customers with much needed financial relief; and the completion of Step Up in Redlands making a positive impact in the fight against homelessness. Mayor Pro Tem Paul Barich was proud to report that the City had made great strides towards addressing the community's concerns related to homelessness and renovations of the hotel conversion project, Step Up in Redlands, were complete. This permanent supportive housing project opened in January 2023 to establish a community living environment to encourage the homeless to get off the streets. It offers 98 studio apartments for single adults, on-site case management, along with other support services.

State of the City

Focusing on our Community

Mayor Eddie Tejeda provided an overview of the City's accomplishments of last year and pointed out his mission was to bridge any perceived divide in the community and give all residents the confidence that their city government was truly responsive to everyone. Top priorities for the City remained consistent and included the economy, the community's quality of life and the environment. He stressed the importance of encouraging small businesses, especially those along State Street, which represent the greatest generator of sales tax revenue per square foot. He spoke of the transformational developments which will be seen with State Street Village, City Center and The Grand and he added that the City was fully cognizant of the concerns over parking in the downtown area.

He was pleased to report a Parks Master Plan was in the works, and he highlighted infrastructure improvement projects including water line replacements, sewer lines, alleys and 37 miles of street either repaired or resurfaced and ongoing Wastewater Treatment Plant projects. The City recognizes the serious and complex problems associated with homelessness and is committed to utilizing a multi-pronged approach to address the issues, such as transitional housing and collaborating with partners in the nonprofit sector, Steps for Life, Family Services, Youth Hope and others. The goal is to have Redlands become a model city for how to end the crisis.

Mayor Tejeda spoke of the climate crisis and the importance of striving to improve air quality. He mentioned that staff has positioned the City to be completely transitioned to 300 State Street as the new City Hall, has projected the new police station to begin operations by 2027, and has identified two future sites for additional fire stations. In closing, he added that the State of the City continues to be resilient and strong. Revenues from Measure T continue to provide the funding needed to help the City become fully staffed and to ensure the City can focus on providing all residents with the quality of life they expect.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None forthcoming

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Tejeda again thanked the Redlands Chamber of Commerce and all the event sponsors. The special meeting was adjourned at 1:33 P.M.

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