

MEETING MINUTES CITY OF MILPITAS

Minutes of: Special Meeting of Milpitas City Council
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2019
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Barbara Lee Senior Center, Rooms 140/141,
40 N. Milpitas Blvd., Milpitas

CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor Tran called the special meeting to order at 5:40 PM. City Clerk Mary Lavelle called the roll. All present said the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PRESENT: Mayor Tran, Vice Mayor Dominguez, Councilmembers Montano and Phan

ABSENT: Councilmember Nuñez was absent

Mayor Tran stated he would abstain from discussion for item no. 2 (due to the proximity of his residence) and he left the meeting when item no. 1 was concluded.

PUBLIC FORUM

Rob Means, resident, spoke of a PRT (personal rapid transit) conference he'd attended the previous week.

Allysson McDonald, resident, asked the Council to consider amending an ordinance on just cause eviction protections by extending it to all on the first day of tenancy, or for landlords offering a one-year lease, in order to cover all tenants with the new state law.

Mayor Tran asked if there was a motion to do what she had requested, and none was offered.

Galen Boggs, Milpitas resident and from Congressman Ro Khanna's office, was present and introduced himself to all.

STUDY SESSION

1. Economic Development Strategy

Economic Development Director Alex Andrade reviewed the agenda for this topic along with the staff and consultants. He introduced Sujata Srivastava, Derek Braun and Evelyne St-Louis from the consulting firm of Strategic Economics.

Mr. Andrade displayed the Office of Economic Development vision statement and provided background on the plan for an economic development strategy for the City of Milpitas, which had not been updated in many years. Ms. Srivastava reviewed the five goals of the strategy and stated an Action Report would be provided to the city at the end. She reviewed strengths and challenges to city government, commercial spaces, amenities, and location and transportation. She summarized comments heard during outreach efforts including the workshops held.

Mayor Tran asked for data over the last five or ten years on employment and jobs. The consultant displayed American Community Survey data on education points across the Bay Area. She described development patterns over the years. A specialization niche in Milpitas was in R&D/Advanced Manufacturing, such as the companies located here: Flex, KLA, Cisco and View.

Councilmember Phan asked for more micro level comparison figures, when she displayed a map of 2018 Peninsula data of the location of jobs and higher education workforce alongside the Caltrain transit route.

Ms. Srivastava displayed some data given to the City on tax revenue by segments of the retail market, with shopping mall and auto markets at the top. The group was seeking ultimately for Council to review the strategic plan by early 2020.

Next, Mayor Tran invited any questions from the Council to the consultant. He appreciated the information on sales tax, however it was down more recently, and wondered why that was so, year over year. He asked for business-to-business sales tax and information on internet sales tax. The Mayor felt rents were a bargain in the valley, but the cost point was not driving new development, while

there was more going on in other cities. He wondered what separated Berryessa BART from the Milpitas BART station in terms of development.

Councilmember Montano inquired if the consultant could show - with BART coming in - where the commuters riding on BART were going to go upon arrival, and how they would move around at that end of Milpitas.

Councilmember Phan, in regard to warehousing, wanted to know what revenue the city was getting from that. Ms. Srivastava would have to look into that, while Mr. Andrade responded, it depends. He emphasized shopping locally. Mr. Phan asked when the next update would come and staff replied via written memo to City Council in December. Staff was working with the consultant on future opportunity sites, and to mirror those in the General Plan, where it was most likely to turn over employment use (versus other use).

Mr. Andrade displayed overhead four discussion topics for the City Council, related to:

- 1) Technology and Manufacturing business success
- 2) Innovation District – having a proactive approach
- 3) Maximize potential around the Transit Center (new Milpitas BART station)
- 4) Collaborate with local small businesses

Councilmember Montano noticed there were not many manufacturing companies listed (on an earlier slide) and wanted to know how the City would deal with a downturn in the economy.

Councilmember Phan asked what was local government's role in recruiting companies to Milpitas. Staff responded that was the task of Economic Development staff, and its relationships built.

Vice Mayor Dominguez wanted companies coming in here to have a commitment to the City of Milpitas, and to understand Milpitas pride of its residents and workers in the city. City wide accessibility to the internet was needed.

Mayor Tran commented about prior industry in Milpitas, noting lots were gone in favor of residential building. He supported all the growth in the McCarthy Ranch area. He wanted to help existing industries to survive, to hang on and for the city to realize benefits from taxes that come in from businesses.

Vice Mayor Dominguez felt there needed to be a partnership with education. Tie education to jobs with job training to keep local residents from leaving Milpitas. She spoke of a computer coding program for students at Milpitas High, and finding ways to do so for Milpitas adults. Don't forget small businesses while planning. She noted a San Jose program that helped small businesses when a parking garage was built.

Councilmember Phan commented on a proactive approach and what was relative to what's going on around Milpitas. He wanted comparative data on what was happening with neighbor cities, to talk about retaining existing businesses in Milpitas. For example, how did the City reward local businesses that grow, i.e. help them with permits as they grow. He asked about streamlined processing systems to help businesses. Staff mentioned the monthly developer roundtables, out of which came the revised fee structure.

Councilmember Montano liked the idea of an "Innovation District" as described, east of the BART station parking lot.

Mayor Tran commented on parking at Valley Fair Mall, and the potential need for more parking at Great Mall in Milpitas to meet demand. Make the best use of the land there near BART noting any development in the TASP should be aligned with innovation. He would like to see development of business around BART, and have dollars come in to the city.

Mr. Andrade described a land banking practice of some property owners, who were waiting for the right time to sell acreage, in some cases of existing vacant R&D property.

Mayor Tran felt it was hard to connect Milpitas residents and maximizing the economic development efforts near transit. He did not think residents would use transit to get around. Item 3 on staff's list should not include residents. He urged a focus on daytime workers for access to the Milpitas Transit Center.

Vice Mayor Dominguez urged having place-making opportunities, outdoor markets, with art, a small bit of park, and thinking about what she'd seen in large cities. Provide service to Milpitas residents at the Transit Center. Prioritize residents while meeting needs of workers. Expand partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. She would like to see the Chamber have a home near or at the BART station. Also tap into philanthropy to get money.

Councilmember Phan suggested the need for some “cool bars” and more fun places in Milpitas, especially for millennials.

Councilmember Montano said that to maximize development, you get what you pay for. She wanted to see top notch businesses, near the Transit Center, such as Apple and to target millennials.

On the small business question, Mayor Tran felt that was important to this community. He spoke about the Chamber and the improved relationship. The City did not contribute to the Chamber as much as it should. The City should do more to support small businesses and promote business, as he did every day on Facebook. Use social media more, with interactive advertising.

The Mayor recommended when BART opens, to have a “welcome center” upon arrival in Milpitas. Commercial spaces should be open at the BART station and show the Bay Area that Milpitas is open for business.

Vice Mayor Dominguez agreed with the Mayor on Main St./MidTown and believed it was the right City Council to make it happen. Meantime, gentrification was a big concern. A plan to support the small businesses in Milpitas was needed.

Councilmember Phan said with regard to small business, some like convenience. Businesses were more mobile, with delivery service.

Councilmember Montano spoke of increasing costs for businesses, and asked if city businesses must go with the City’s service provider for garbage/trash collection. The City Manager replied yes, they do.

Mayor Tran addressed representatives of the Milpitas Chamber of Commerce, who were in the audience. He challenged the Chamber to come to the City with a big “ask” and to describe what it could do for business in the city. He suggested it come forward to ask for \$100,000 from the city in the next budget.

Councilmember Phan mentioned the cannabis industry, and the stimulus it brought to local economies.

Vice Mayor Dominguez acknowledged the need to be better with Chamber of Commerce, and mentioned an educational component to support small businesses.

Mr. Andrade explained the next step would be an information memo coming to the City Council in December, while he and staff continued to keep moving along on economic development strategy efforts.

2. Milpitas Gateway / Main Street (MidTown) Specific Plan

Vice Mayor Dominguez called on Planning Director Ned Thomas. Mayor Tran had departed the meeting.

Planning Director Mr. Thomas addressed ideas for a Milpitas Gateway Main St. Specific Plan, prior to going out to prepare an update to the MidTown Specific Plan, adopted in 2002. There was a need to keep up with current planning practices along with current conditions in that section of Milpitas. With the BART station opening, it would be a “game changer” as discussed. Partnerships were important including with MUSD and other schools alongside many economic development opportunities.

In the planning framework, five opportunities to address were listed on the overhead screen. Mr. Thomas identified three Focus Areas within the specific plan map area boundary including: I-880 frontage; Main Street; and Calaveras Blvd., along with other segments of the plan. It would seek to bring the old and the new together to gather along the Main St. corridor. Landscaping and architectural design were important as well as solutions to parking issues along Main Street.

Planning Manager Jessica Garner reviewed the Main Street catalyst site (a paper map was distributed to Councilmembers).

Councilmember Montano asked if the City was going to have historic preservation elements/efforts in the Main Street corridor.

Ms. Garner described Public Engagement ideas including a “Taste and Talk” concept, “Pop-up Planning” and the “Better Block” approach in order to gain input from the community on the updated plan.

Mr. Thomas reviewed the timeline for the specific plan process, with a goal for circulating a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selection of a new consultant by the spring in 2020. He asked Councilmembers if there were additional issues to address (no. 1), if they were comfortable with the focus areas, and any more ideas for public engagements.

Councilmember Montano said on economic development, she urged having restaurants to make sure those make an appealing place. Look at some of the nearby cities and look at their “old” town sections while including art and historic plaques.

Councilmember Phan recommended murals along the streetscape. Have an art museum feel, with all the restaurants allowing for “instagrammable” venues, with great photo opportunities. Mr. Phan asked about federal “opportunity zones” while staff responded that there were not any established for Milpitas.

Ms. Garner mentioned some property owners were interested to develop along the Main St corridor, near Serra Center. She also reported the plans for updating of water and wastewater plan updates, to help modernize this area.

City Manager Steve McHarris responded to the Council that business improvement districts (BIDs) could be looked into.

Councilmember Phan asked staff reach out to the Councilmember who was absent at this meeting (Mr. Nuñez) to seek his input on these two topics at this meeting.

Vice Mayor Dominguez suggested sending out text messages as was done recently during emergency for the power outage and fire emergency. She loved the dining idea concept for outreach and was excited about the food truck park concept along with other ideas.

Councilmember Montano said it was an excellent idea on the expanded circulation (as noted on the map in red and blue focus area), to allow for passage through Thompson Street to get out onto Main St.

Vice Mayor Dominguez recommended reverse texting, as much as that was possible, for public engagement efforts. See the big picture, with big vision and examples for participants. She spoke of various events she’d participated in with outside organizations in a few other cities that could be a model for Milpitas.

Councilmember Phan commented on the timeline, stating it was commendable while staff should take its time with this plan. He urged staff to take time for the engagement.

Vice Mayor Dominguez thanked staff for all the hard work on the beginning part of this plan in a vital part of Milpitas.

She invited comments from any speakers in the audience.

John Agg, resident, felt this was the most stimulating City Council meeting he had attended, and it was excellent work by the Planning staff. He was concerned about the linkage between the Transit Area and the Main Street/MidTown area.

Voltaire Montemayor, resident, was familiar with the area and watched development there.

Galen Boggs, resident, was excited to see Main Street developed and become more social. Keep Milpitas as historically distinct, he recommended. If it was hard to reach the federal rail administration or other federal agencies, his office (Congressman Ro Khanna) was available to help constituents reach out. That office could write support letters when applying for grants.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:02 PM, Vice Mayor Dominguez adjourned the meeting as the study sessions were concluded.

The foregoing minutes were approved by Milpitas City Council on December 3, 2019.

Mary Lavelle
Milpitas City Clerk