

**CITY OF ANTIOCH
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
ANTIOCH CITY COUNCIL**

**Special Meeting
9:00 a.m.**

**September 16, 2006
El Campanil Theatre**

9:00 a.m. – ROLL CALL

Mayor Freitas called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 16, 2006 at the El Campanil Theatre.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Conley, Davis, Kalinowski and Mayor Freitas
Absent: Councilmember Simonsen
Staff: City Manager Jakel
Chief of Police Hyde
Community Development Director Brandt
City Attorney Nerland
Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator Skaggs
Minutes Clerk Lawson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STUDY FORUM

1. OPEN DISCUSSION ON QUALIFY OF LIFE ISSUES IN THE CITY OF ANTIOCH

Mayor Freitas welcomed the public and provided a brief summary of the issues that would be discussed as well as accomplishments since the last forum.

Dr. Larry Bienati, Facilitator, welcomed the public and presented a Power Point Presentation that explained the purpose of the forum. He further presented a Power Point Presentation that spoke to feedback that was received from the last community forum. Dr. Bienati explained the following points:

- Survey's Purpose
- Survey Design
- Survey Response Date as of July 20, 2006
- Survey Response Date as of September 15, 2006
- Common Theme Areas, in terms of Questions
 - Housing Authority
 - Safety
 - Crime

REVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST FORUM

City Manager Jakel provided a brief summary of the order in which the City Council and Staff would speak to various issues.

In responding to a resident, Denise Skaggs explained the duties of the Code Enforcement Officers (CEO) and noted that there were currently two CEO's working within the City at the present time.

Police Chief Hyde presented a Power Point Presentation and spoke to the feedback from the last community meeting. He provided a further explanation of current issues pertaining to:

- Property Crimes
- Newly Implemented Community Action Team (CAT)
- Deer Valley School Safety Plan
- Antioch Unified School District (AUSD) issues
- Deer Valley Shopping Center Business issues
- Officer Recruitment
- Expanded K-9 Program

Mayor Freitas introduced Hans Ho, Chairperson for the Crime Prevention Commission and Mickey Marchetti, with the REACH Program.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A citizen complimented City Officials, the Police Department and City Staff for their efforts in moving forward on the concerns of the citizens and the community. He requested additional information relating to loitering at City Parks and in particular at Knollcrest Park. He also expressed concern to what was being done with the present school issues and was the Antioch Unified School District (AUSD) Staff acting upon the current problems. Mayor Freitas stated that he would schedule a joint meeting with the City and the AUSD and that this meeting will be placed on a future Community Forum agenda. Police Chief Hyde added that he is also currently working with the AUSD to address any concerns.
- A citizen expressed her appreciation to the Police Department in regards to a recent incident in the downtown area and further expressed concerns to the homeless in the downtown area.
- A citizen asked if there were any other types of programs for the youth of the community to serve, rather than the REACH Program. She felt that the children needed a more positive and educational direction than what REACH could offer.
- A citizen expressed concern to the lack of security at a recent Deer Valley football game and wanted to ensure that additional security would be provided at future football games
- A resident expressed concern to the AUSD's responsibilities when children were expelled from elementary school.
- A citizen expressed concern to a recent incident that occurred at the Regal Cinemas wherein arrests were made to minors who were all African-American descent. She felt that these arrests were made because the children were of this descent and requested that the police department be more sensitive to this issue.
- A citizen requested that security officers within the Deer Valley Plaza stagger their breaks in order that the area is being patrolled on a consistent basis. In terms of safety, she further requested that a light fixture be placed at the corner of Cache Creek and Dallas Ranch Road, and that an officer patrol the trail located at Prewett Water Park leading to Country Hills Drive. She felt that street sweeping should be advertised in order that cars could be moved off the street.
- A citizen asked what the registration process was for Deer Valley High School. She also asked why so many students from Deer Valley High School were riding the bus after school and asked if they were in the Deer Valley High School district.

- A citizen stated that he felt that parents should police their own children and that it not be the responsibility of the City.
- A citizen stated that all crime needs to be dealt with regardless of the individual's race and felt that curfew issues should be enforced by the police department and the parents of minors.
- A citizen expressed concern to peer pressure that students endure and expressed the need for parents to teach their children values.
- A citizen expressed concern to the loitering issues at Gas City on Lone Tree Way and expressed the importance of the police department to patrol this area. He requested that additional police be available between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on Mokelumne Drive, due to the large amount of minors that loiter in this area.

A break was taken at 10:17 a.m. and reconvened at 10:30 a.m.

Mayor Freitas introduced Lonnie Karste, Project Manager, Prewett Family Park Civic Center Project.

Mayor Freitas welcomed and introduced East Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover.

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Ron Bernal, Assistant City Engineer, provided a Power Point Presentation that provided an overview to the "Rental Inspection Program" that included items relating to:

- Accomplishments
- Exemptions
- Number of Rental Units in Antioch
- City Council Study Session dated July 5, 2006
- Penalties
- Implementation Program

Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator Skaggs stated that two additional CEO's would be hired in the near future, and that she is currently focusing on Health & Safety violations. She provided a Power Point presentation that spoke to:

- Cases by Category
- Typical Code Violations
 - Unregistered vehicles
 - Property not being property maintained
 - Storage of abandoned vehicles
 - Broken or discarded furniture
 - Parking vehicles on unpaved surfaces

Mark Stevenson, Housing Authority of Contra Costa, provided an overview of the Housing Authority's Progress Report and stated that permanent positions would be going out to bid in the near future to oversee the City of Antioch's rental situation. He also noted that he was working with City Staff and the Police Department in regards to current Housing Authority violations. Mr. Stevenson further explained the process in which the Housing Authority's office staff operated.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A citizen asked how a Section 8 tenant is evicted. Mr. Anderson explained that the landlord chooses his own Section 8 tenant, as well as conducts a background check. It

is the landlord's responsibility to evict the tenant through a legal eviction process and that they are responsible for any damages, as well as the eviction process.

- A citizen expressed concern to her rights as a renter, in terms of repairs. Mr. Anderson stated that the State depends on the landlords to care for the property, and noted that the landlords can negotiate with the tenant. and it is based on a case by case basis.
- A citizen asked how long residents were allowed to perform construction work on their property. She expressed concern to a neighbor that has had his property under construction off and on for a long period of time. A concern was also expressed to homes within the community that have not landscaped their backyards that have high slopes, and she this posed a fire hazard, due to the large amount of weeds. Ron Bernal responded that through the City's Building Permit Process the construction limit is six months, which also includes City inspections, but it also depends on the type of construction that is being performed. Denise Skaggs requested that this individual contact her personally to address these issues.
- A citizen expressed concern to blight within his neighborhood, noting there were two homes in foreclosure that the yards were not being maintained. He also expressed concern to trash pickup, in terms of the trash company not picking up trash when renters leave a residence.
- A citizen expressed concern to two homes in his neighborhood that are in foreclosure and have become eyesores. He also expressed concern to trash being left when renters leave a property, noting that the trash can remain at the property for up to a month.
- A citizen stated that he had recently been harassed by a neighbor and requested the procedure to file a report. Police Chief Hyde requested that he call the police department and they would advise him of the process.
- A citizen requested information on how the City's complaint process was handled. Denise Skaggs stated that it was anonymous and that an assessment will be made on the complaint.

Mayor Freitas asked the timeframe in which it took for a complaint to be investigated through the Housing Authority and stated that he understood the public's frustration, in terms of the length of time it takes to investigate complaints. Mr. Stevenson stated that it depended upon the nature of the complaint, code or criminal violation. He further gave a more detailed explanation of the various types of violations. Councilmember Kalinowski interjected that he was concerned that out of a large amount of complaints that there have been a low number of termination letters issued by the Housing Authority.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (continued):

- A citizen stressed that the citizens of this community required answers as to how the Housing Authority is investigating issues and responses. He expressed concern that the Housing Authority was not performing their duties diligently. He requested that the Housing Authority send a letter to the citizen that has issued the complaint and notify them of the status of the investigation. He also requested further information on how a Section 8 violation is acted upon by the Housing Authority and expressed concern to an incident where a Section 8 tenant threatened a neighbor and he felt the Housing Authority did not act appropriately on this matter. He also felt that if the Housing Authority is not performing their job in a diligent manner, and that they should be held civilly and financially responsible for any damages to the residence.

Mr. Anderson stated that the investigation process is followed and tracked. He stated that he would like to see additional restrictions placed on the Section 8 Program, wherein tenants are allowed to remain on the program for only a specific period of time.

Mayor Freitas noted that representatives from Ellen Tauscher and Richard Pombo's Office were in the audience and encouraged the public the contact them with any concerns.

Mark Anderson, Housing Authority, stated that he has lost employees recently and was working diligently with the issues at hand. He felt that his staffing issues were now in a better situation to handle the issues and felt that a better job can now be done.

PUBLIC COMMENT (continued):

- A citizen expressed concern to a current Section 8 home in his neighborhood and suggested that the Housing Authority better educate the landlords and tenants of all Section 8 homes, as to the City codes and standards, as well as to the Housing Authority rules.
- A citizen expressed his appreciation to the City Council and City Staff holding this forum, and stated that he felt the Housing Authority should step up and be more proactive within the community. Per his request, City Attorney Nerland explained the City of Antioch's Zoning Codes and the City of Antioch's Code Enforcement standards that speak to looking at impacts as to whether a resident is violating the state laws.
- A citizen expressed a concern to vacant homes within his neighborhood and felt that there were numerous city code violations, in terms of overgrown vegetation and unwanted pests. Denise Skaggs stated that she was aware of this situation and it was currently being handled through a City Code Enforcement Officer. Mayor Freitas interjected and informed the citizen to contact him if he does not receive a response within 72 hours.
- A citizen expressed concern to the City and Housing Authority not responding to various neighborhoods and felt that the Housing Authority needed to perform a more extensive background check of Section 8 tenants.
- A citizen expressed concern to City code violations in the area of Bear Ridge development, and stated that he has contacted the City and has not seen any action regarding his complaints. He also requested that follow up calls be made to complainants. He further noted that the Bear Ridge development sign had been stolen, wherein Assistant City Engineer Bernal responded that the Public Works Department will order a replacement sign and it will be installed in the near future.
- A citizen spoke to the City of Brentwood's Violation Code Standards and felt that if Antioch adopted these codes, a majority of these issues would not be an issue. He expressed a concern to garbage cans that sit in front of homes for a long period of time and felt this created a blight in a neighborhood.
- A citizen requested the procedure for the public to add or revise City Codes. She further requested that the City contact the complainant regarding the status of the complaint, either by phone or postcard. She also asked how to determine where complaints should be sent, either to the Housing Authority or the City. City Attorney Nerland explained that any proposed changes would come from the City Council to the City Attorney's Office. Mayor Freitas then recommended that any concerns be brought before the Council at a City Council meeting.

In requesting a consensus from the audience, Mr. Bienati stated that through "raise of hands" it was the majority of the audience that the City responds to citizens within a 72 hour timeframe regarding the status of a complaint.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (continued):

- A citizen stated his appreciation to the support of the City Council and City Staff for this forum and stated that he felt confident that changes will take place. He expressed concern to the lack of information that the Housing Authority has provided, in terms of the complaints that have been received here today. He felt that Mr. Anderson from the Housing Authority had no specific answers to the concerns expressed. He requested that an action plan be implemented and that federal laws need to be changed to correct these concerns. Councilmember Kalinowski stated that he would be meeting with the County Facilitator to address these concerns, as well as the County Administrator.
- A citizen expressed concern to questions that could not be clearly answered from the Housing Authority and expressed concern to the Housing Authority's lack of staff members, due to the high number of Section 8 homes in this area. He also expressed concern to there not being some type of self-reliance on the part of the Section 8 tenant and asked if a license was required to be a Section 8 landlord. Assistant City Engineer Bernal stated that a license was not required.
- A citizen requested a response from Mr. Anderson from the Housing Authority regarding the manner in which the Housing Authority is managed. She also requested that more specific answers be brought back to the next forum. Mr. Anderson replied that he felt a better job could be done in the future, as well as better training to make Housing Authority employees more productive and pro-active.
- A citizen expressed her appreciation to the police department for their work performed in the community. She expressed a concern to a Section 8 home in her neighborhood and noted that tenants change on a continual basis.
- A Brentwood resident felt that Section 8 tenants do not pay their fair share in rent, and felt there were a number of discrepancies in the system.
- A resident requested that he be informed of his responsibilities as a landlord in Antioch, and suggested that all landlords be responsible for trash pick up at their rentals.
- A citizen expressed concern to various residents throughout the community that have placed trash in front of their home. He further noted that three City Councilmembers do represent ABAG and felt that they had a voice regarding Section 8 housing and that they should be more supportive of the community's concerns. He also asked if the Volunteer In Policing (VIP's) could somehow help with Code Enforcement issues.
- A citizen felt that once a Section 8 property is rented, it should be mandatory that the tenant be placed through tenant training, and felt this was the responsibility of the Housing Authority not performing their responsibilities.
- A citizen expressed concern to the increase of Section 8 housing in East Contra Costa County and felt it should be evenly distributed throughout all of Contra Costa County.
- A citizen expressed concern to the number of Section 8 houses within Antioch and questioned why there was not a limit.
- A citizen asked if the City's website is updated on a consistent basis. She felt that the Housing Authority should investigate Section 8 housing on evenings and weekends and suggested that a private investigator be hired to work outside of normal working hours.
- A resident requested that Richard Pombo's representative that is attending here today, reply to these concerns. A representative from Richard Pombo's office stated that they understood the concerns expressed here today and stated all concerns would be taken back to the office and reviewed.

- Ellen Tauscher's representative stated that she was taking notes and they will be received and reviewed by Ellen Tauscher.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Conley proposed that the Deer Valley Cafeteria be used as a study hall between the hours of 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Regarding Section 8 violations, he suggested that tenants be counseled and if rules are violated their rights could be removed. Furthermore, Section 8 standards need to be reviewed. Councilmember Conley felt that low income housing should be spread evenly throughout Contra Costa County and suggested that an e-mail program be implemented for continual communication between the public and the City Council. He urged the public to e-mail or write ABAG stating the importance of spreading low income housing evenly throughout the County. Mayor Freitas interjected that contact information would be placed on the City's website for the public.

Councilmember Davis stated his appreciation to the public for their attendance and input. He felt that a local office for the Housing Authority was needed and felt that the Section 8 voucher system, timeline and annual qualification requirements need to be reviewed on a continual basis.

Councilmember Kalinowski felt that the Section 8 issue needed to be addressed on a Congressional and local level. He stated that the system was broken at the Housing Authority District and County level and that these agencies need to work on these issues. He expressed concern to the Housing Authority process and system and felt it needed to be reviewed, and agreed that low income housing needed to be distributed on an even basis throughout the County. Councilmember Kalinowski stated that these issues would be agendized at a future City Council meeting, in regards to the strategic planning at the subcommittee level.

Mayor Freitas expressed his appreciation to the public for their input and the needs expressed for an action plan. In terms of Section 8, he felt that to move forward, the most important steps were to implement an action plan, move forward with its implementation, review timelines and maintain accountability. He also felt that community forums should be held on a continual basis and noted that the next forum would focus on the police department, in terms of crime, Section 8 and rentals issues, and the downtown revitalization. Mayor Freitas felt that all residents of the City should take pride in their homes and that the City Council is committed to these issues. He commended the working ethics of the police department, code enforcement and all city employees.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Freitas adjourned the City Council meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Lawson
Minutes Clerk

Approved:

DONALD P. FREITAS, MAYOR

Attest:

L. JOLENE MARTIN, CMC, CITY CLERK