

CITY OF CONVERSE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 2008
10:00 AM

Be it known that the City Council of the City of Converse met for a Special Meeting at the City Hall Conference Room at 405 South Seguin Street on Saturday, March 22, 2008 at 10:00 to discuss the following. The following members were present:

Mayor Al Suarez
Councilwoman Gloria Weers
Councilman Billy Schindler
Councilman Rene Rodriguez
Ms. Dorian Jauregui, Fire-EMS Commission Chair
Dr. Mary Riley, Planning Commission Chair

Dr. Reginal Harris, EDC Chair
Mr. John Mendoza, EDC Vice-Chair
Ms. Laura Beehler, B&E Commission Chair
Mr. Jon Lindgren, B&S Commission Chair
Ms. Tonya Drake, P&R Commission Chair
Mr. Mark Luft, EDC Executive Director
Ms. Jackie Gaines, EDC Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor Suarez called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM stating City Council has a quorum.

2. Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Harris recognized the Commission Members, (listed above) and welcomed Mr. Carlton Degenhardt, Mr. Steve Brown, Ms. Becky Johnson, and Mr. Richard Weers.

3. Action to Approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes for March 1, 2008.

Ms. Jauregui made a motion to approve the minutes of the workshop conducted March 1, 2008. Ms. Drake seconded the motion. The motion to approve the workshop minutes of March 1, 2008 was passed unanimously.

4. Opening Remarks by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Economic Development Corporation.

Dr. Harris thanked each one for taking on the task as being appointed as City Officials to serve our City. Dr. Harris agreed with Mr. Lindgren's letter with respect to the speed this Committee is taking and suggested slowing down the pace of the process. Dr. Harris also thanked everyone that submitted letters and bullet points.

Dr. Harris said the first meeting was a good meeting and we were able to find our weaknesses as a committee and that allows us to build from that meeting as well as this meeting and the next meeting. Only then we will be ready to bring the public in for debate and constructive comments.

Vice-Chair Mendoza thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Vice-Chair Mendoza said the City Strategic Plan is a blueprint that considers all aspects unique to this city and began covering Phase 1-B of the meeting.

5. Discussion for the Possibility of Building a Civic Center. (Ms. Gloria Weers)

Councilwoman Weers discussed building a civic center and should start planning for this now for a future plans.

6. Discussion for the Future Development for Senior, Condominium or Garden Homes. (Ms. Gloria Weers)

Councilwoman Weers suggested building Garden Homes or Condominiums, something without a yard for senior citizens to live.

A question was asked where we would focus getting funding for something like this.

Mayor Suarez replied that would be a City Council decision concerning your suggestions and we as a Council would decide whether the funding would come from bonds or selling land. There are a lot of creative ways to come up with the financing.

Mr. Luft reported the amount of monies from CDBG is limited now. We could make a simple policy issuing bonds as the Mayor said. We could leverage with private/public partnerships. We have a site that would address both items 5 and 6 of this agenda if the City Council, Planning, and Zoning agree to partner with a private sector to do that. I have spoken with a developer in Converse to discuss facilitating item 6.

Discussion with questions and answers continued.

7. Discussion on a Plan for the Steering Committee's City-Wide Strategic Planning Workshop.

Dr. Harris covered members submitting two bullet points for discussion of what you believe the importance of developing a city-wide strategic plan can have on the effectiveness of your respective commission and/or leadership on that commission?

There was discussion of the Beautification and Environmental Commission overlapping with other Commissions.

Mayor Suarez replied when we looked at what all the Commissions were doing we knew there would be some overlapping especially with the Planning Commission. But what I did see is if the Planning Commission was not able to fulfill a task then B&E would. This is the first year for this Commission and there will be adjustments made to make it a better quality Commission.

8. Discussion of the Needs Assessment Survey Questionnaire.

Dr. Harris said we did not discuss the Needs Assessment Survey Questionnaire at the last meeting and we will not discuss this item at this meeting. But Dr. Harris said he did not think this document is a current survey since it is dated 1998 and this is now 2008. This document has a good foundation that we can build upon.

Vice-Chair Mendoza asked if the current City Vision Statement is appropriate to pursue. Vice-Chair Mendoza made a recommendation of the Steering Committee revise it to come up with another vision statement.

Dr. Harris discussed the bullet points of why an assessment survey questionnaire is needed to accomplish a 3-5 year strategic plan for the City of Converse.

Mr. Luft agreed with Dr. Harris's statement that according to the 2005 statistics our reach is 125,000 people. Mr. Luft continued saying the region itself is slated by the year 2020 the numbers will increase by 20 percent, so you are adding about another 18,000 to 20,000 more people.

Dr. Harris asked everyone to go through the survey and extract what we can and then we will add to the survey.

Ms. Jauregui read the following vision statement located on the City of Converse Request for Solicitation Strategic Planning Services document.

The Strategic Plan shall support the City Council's vision for the citizens of Converse to have a better quality of life in the community by a commitment to excellence in the delivery of public services. The City Council's vision includes:

- Well planned residential neighborhoods.
- Well planned business, educational and recreational opportunities.
- Strong Local Economy.
- Safe Living Environment.
- Responsible Economic Growth.
- Quality Public Services & Infrastructure.
- Most important, a City Government that is responsive to the needs of our citizens.

Mr. Mendoza discussed focus areas to consider which were Economic Development, Public Safety, Infrastructure; civic center, Transportation; expanding VIA services, Citizen Services and City Workforce, and Community Development and Growth. Other focus suggestions were green space, and parks.

* At approximately 11:10 Councilman Rodriguez left the meeting.

9. Discussion of Ideas of How to Distribute Questionnaire to Converse Residents and Stakeholders.

Dr. Harris covered the requested replies of the discussion on how the distribution of the assessment questionnaire should be distributed, collected, and evaluated. Some of the suggestions were to publish in the Herald, mail to specific locations, (every fourth person selected), put the questionnaire on the website, distribute in the mail with a return envelop, telephone survey. These suggestions came from the 1998 survey packet Ms. Weers provided. Dr. Harris added we do not need to leave out the Businesses.

Mr. Luft said all the points are valid. We need to safeguard we do not have duplications.

Mr. Weers suggested the website should be used only to give notification to the residents about the survey.

There was a discussion whether to send to outside our city.

10. Discussion of Subsequent Steps.

Dr. Harris asked to table what areas of concern to address at the April 26, 2008 general public meeting. Keep the six focus areas in mind.

11. Discussion of Future Agenda Items.

- New mission and vision statement
- Go through the 1998 survey and develop questions for the 2008 survey
- Survey distribution, target areas, and validity control of survey

* At approximately 11:45 Councilman Schindler left the meeting.

Dr. Harris said I feel we need to push back our public meeting until we are ready to bring this information to the public for public comment. The board agreed to move the public meeting back.

12. Set a Date and Time for Next Meeting.

Saturday, April 12, 2008, City Hall Conference Room 1 at 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

13. Adjournment

Mayor Suarez adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:56 am.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 1st day of April, 2008.

Al Suarez
Mayor

ATTEST:

Adriana I. Hieronymus
City Secretary