

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL  
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

August 30, 2017  
5:00 p.m.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Mayor Cooper called the special meeting of the City Council to order at 5:14 p.m. in Mike Balkman Chambers at City Hall.

Present: Jeffrey Cooper, Mayor  
Thomas Small, Vice Mayor  
Jim B. Clarke, Council Member  
Göran Eriksson, Council Member  
Meghan Sahli-Wells, Council Member

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**Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

John Nachbar, City Manager, led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Andrew Weissman.

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**Community Announcements by City Council Members/  
Information Items from Staff**

Council Member Eriksson reported on the recent Short Term Rental Subcommittee meeting noting the length of the process.

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**Joint Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda**

Mayor Cooper invited public comment.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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### **Receipt and Filing of Correspondence**

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER CLARKE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER SAHLI-WELLS AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

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### **Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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### **Action Items**

Item A-1

#### **CC - Approval of Revised Draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the General Plan Update (GPU)**

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, introduced the item.

Ashley Hefner, Advance Planning Manager, provided a summary of the material of record; summarized revisions of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ); discussed the recent update of the state's General Plan guidelines; an offer from OPR, a state advisory agency, to provide free advice and support; the schedule; identification of roles and responsibilities; and timelines.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding clarification that there were no recommendations made by the City Council that were not accepted; providing additional time for a new City Council to consider the item; whether there are any items to cut out of the schedule in order to allow the current City Council to act on the item; the timeline based on the current schedule of City Council meetings; and the ability to add special meetings.

Ashley Hefner, Advance Planning Manager, summarized the steps of the General Plan Update (GPU) process and the timeline of meetings.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding shaving time off the process; formation of committees; content; frequency of meetings; the process for selecting a Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC); individual subcommittees; committee structure; the decision tree; regular reports from each committee on discussions and recommendations; a suggestion to add a GPU status item on each City Council agenda; at what point committees should be established; concern with fatigue; division of labor; directing the focus of subcommittee work; prioritization of tasks; formation of the CAC; work to be accomplished by staff before the September 11 City Council meeting; the process for forming standing committees to advise on the GPU; clarification regarding legal requirements; the process for the Charter Review; Council Member appointments; layers of committees; subject matter experts; Council Member involvement; training requirements for members of the advisory bodies; clarification that there is no financial benefit to serving on the advisory bodies; conflicts of interest; land use recommendations; additional research by staff on the matter; Brown Act issues; length of time for the process; creating a short term committee with members that do not have a conflict of interest for the Request for Proposals (RFP); creating an advisory committee with community members rather than technicians; focusing on having a range of community members and transitioning into a more technical GPU advisory committee working on the actual update work; ensuring an interdepartmental effort; the feeling that the RFP sets the vision of what is being sought; the importance of community input; ensuring a strong component of equity and affordable housing; encouraging ownership of the process; a suggestion to hold public meetings; and the importance of inclusion.

Mayor Cooper invited public input.

The following member of the audience addressed the City Council:

Andrew Weissman discussed the process for the Charter Review; the challenging nature of the GPU process; finding a unanimous consensus among committee members; staff preparation for each meeting; the numerous elements involved; the proposed timeline; and the desire for the maximum amount of community involvement.

Additional discussion ensued between Council Members and staff regarding concern with further stretching out the timeline; expecting a citizen group to identify creative ideas; hiring a firm to be innovative; ensuring that the equity issue is addressed; the importance of public involvement in the consultant selection; the consultant as the main driver of the process; the importance of the document to the community; the General Plan as the constitution for future development in the City; the importance of creating a collective vision; public understanding of how the City works; taking the time to fine-tune the process; and satisfaction with the process.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding the process; early release of the staff report for the November 13 meeting where the RFP is to be considered; downtime and diminished participation during the holidays; having certain tasks done concurrently; consensus to form a CAC prior to the start of work; draft RFP language; utilizing international talent and locally based partners; quality of submittals; the deadline for submittal of RFPs; the amount of effort put into responses to RFPs; the short period allowed to submit an RFP; an observation that the universe can narrow over the holidays; the potential to not have enough respondents; inherent lead time needed to present an item to the City Council; adding additional City Council meetings; holding a public meeting before the RFP goes out; a suggestion to have Council Members individually address neighborhood associations; having special meetings on November 13, 2017 and April 23; allowing the timeline to be shortened; the new City Council; an observation that dedicated candidates would already be part of the process; programming in time for staff to provide detailed, updated information to new Council Members; mentoring; care taken with scheduling agendas; using special meetings to provide focus in the process and condense the schedule; finding ways to collapse the timelines; assumptions made on decision points; the potential to get through certain reviews more quickly; balancing creativity, technical expertise and experience; guidelines to help Council Members score their own thoughts and organize their criteria; making the process less subjective; gradation to address outlier qualifications; distinguishing between a good firm and a stellar firm; the inherent question of whether a firm is qualified; identifying stand out firms; the intent to raise the level of aspiration; finding a team that matches the uniqueness

of Culver City; innovation and creativity; ensuring broad distribution; clarification that the response to the RFQ does not limit the RFP; equity and social equity; the subcommittee process for creating the criteria; taking into consideration the actions of the City of Los Angeles; edits to the content of the RFQ; concern that the term affordable housing is not used in the RFQ; the Olympics; agreement to add a general statement to work with regional partners; consideration of what is happening nearby that concerns and impacts Culver City; future plans for additional Metro lines in the City; affects to local return; corrections to typos; clearly defining the TOD Visioning Program; taking Measure M into consideration; the proposed Sepulveda Pass/Westwood to LAX Metro line; things that are outside of City control; sending a signal to consultants by acknowledging things that are wrong; concern with painting a negative picture; perspective; and outreach to consultants.

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ERIKSSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER CLARKE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE RFQ WITH EDITS SUGGESTED BY VICE MAYOR SMALL AND COUNCIL MEMBER SAHLI-WELLS.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, discussed next steps in the process as listed in the report.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding evaluation of the RFQs and RFPs; use of a subcommittee; looking outside the City for evaluators; interdepartmental review; traffic modeling; and distribution of qualifications to the full City Council as they come in.

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#### **Recess/Reconvene**

Mayor Cooper called a brief recess from 6:50 p.m. to 7:12 p.m.

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Item A-2

**CC - Receive Presentations of Conceptual Plans Prepared by SWA Group and wHY Architects for the City Hall Landscaping Replacement and Centennial Garden Project**

Joe Susca, Senior Management Analyst, provided a summary of the material of record noting that audience members were encouraged to fill out a survey at the conclusion of the meeting to state their preference of plans presented.

Kulapat Yantrasast, wHY Architects, provided background on the firm; presented conceptual plans for the City Hall Landscaping Replacement and Centennial Garden Project; discussed commemorating the City; community outreach; listening; engaging stakeholders; creating a transformative project; and he presented a short video of residents discussing the City and City Hall.

Responding to Vice Mayor Small, Kulapat Yantrasast discussed their advisors and influencers.

Gregory Fischer, wHY Architects, discussed interviews with residents; perception; the current space; coordination of planting and structure; he provided photographic examples of issues with the current space; discussed usable hardscape and landscape; misaligned elements; public input; and improving the current space.

Kulapat Yantrasast discussed coordination of elements; their proposal to align existing layers; relating City Hall to the rest of the City; Culver City 360: their campaign to provide access from all sides; including the rest of the City; helping people to feel like they belong to the City Center; and the four layers of the garden.

Mark Thomann, wHY Architects, discussed the overlapping layers; capturing the diversity and excitement of the City; transforming City Hall into the heart of the City; inviting people in; commemorative pieces; culture; music; play; maintaining layers of experience; enhancing and building on what currently exists; the botanical layer; healthy sustainable environments; integrating new technologies; and creating an asset for the City and for the people.

Kulapat Yantrasast, Mark Thomann, and Gregory Fischer presented an overview of their proposal; discussed creating

a welcoming and open feel; restoring and opening up the courtyard; providing a place for young families to play; incorporating historic plants; capturing missed opportunities of the current space; ideas in the plan; different zones; creating identity; safe spaces for children; the central plaza; opening up the space to the rest of the City; engagement with surrounding businesses; creating a place of shade and quiet; access to the garages; opening up the existing memorials and artwork; creating access to the plaza; walls created by the cypress trees; creating an active space for people to have lunch in; removing the barrier on Duquesne; landscaping; traffic calming measures; creating safe crossings; setting the tone for how cities should be in the next 100 years; application of landscape structures; storm water capture; the connection to Ballona Creek; the genesis landscape that Harry Culver originally saw; the bionic street; creating a teaching tool; understanding what it takes to operate and maintain landscape; contributing to the infrastructure of the City; the user experience; interaction with the environment; water management; temperature management through landscape, shading and water management; making the process transparent and interactive; air and water quality; integration of ideas; finding a tree that blooms in September; building upon the existing jacaranda arbors in the City; symbolizing Harry Culver; and looking toward the next 100 years.

Discussion ensued between WHY project representatives, staff and Council Members regarding donor recognition; maintenance; plaques; naming opportunities; spreading the sense of the City and identity throughout the space; involvement in fundraising; continued public involvement and engagement; the importance of discussion; the Advisory Board; creating ownership and relationships; creating a network; incorporating all of the four components of civic, commemorative, botanical and cultural; the evolution of the project; maximizing the size of the trees as much as possible; the corner piece; kick starting the process and engagement with the artwork; growth and activation of the project over time; the root system of jacaranda trees; use of sagebrush; the stairwells; the budget; the phased approach and timeline; exploring artwork on the corner; passive spaces on Lafayette Street; a symbol to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary; raising money for the artwork separate from the budget which could be dedicated to landscaping; engineering constraints; venting; the air

intake to the garage; the presentation included in the staff report; innovative water technologies; tree choice; the fundraising aspect; civic visibility; sponsorship; development of goals with the consultant; concern that the decision point is not clear; the phasing plan; cost estimates; ground cover; and clarification that the decision would be made on September 11, 2017.

Roman Chui, SWA Group, introduced members of the team; discussed incorporation of a nod to the previous 100 years of the City; tying together the whole system; streetscape; programming; understanding traffic; and outreach.

Tina Aghassian, HLB Lighting, provided background on the company; acknowledged appreciation and respect for art in Culver City; discussed creating memorable, safe spaces; and projects done in the area.

Doug Conion, KPFF discussed sustainability and storm water treatment.

Gerdo Aquino, SWA Architects, presented conceptual plans for the City Hall Landscaping Replacement and Centennial Garden Project; discussed the Centennial and honoring the City; experiencing a Centennial Garden; inspiration; crafting a narrative; celebrating 100 years; using music as a foundation; continuous celebration throughout the year; different shapes and forms of music; understanding circulation and community; capturing creativity; creating community; redefining the edge; expanding street trees into the site; using mature trees; the instant canopy; what happens beneath the canopy; programming the space; public activation; and complimenting other activities in the City.

Roman Chiu, Gerdo Aquino, and Tina Aghassian discussed existing conditions; updating the plantings; celebrating and activating the next 100 years; different phases; the budget; drawing people in on the main corner; cultural elements; enhancing the areas; active spaces; addressing the different areas in the design; bringing people all the way into the deep site; creating interactive art pieces through music; celebrating what the City is about; an observation that screenland is about more than just the film industry; sculpture as sounds and play; interactive elements; cross generational engagement; large scale elements; plants that symbolize music; texture and materiality; using elements to tell the story of the City;



celebrating the street edge with interesting paving; activities that use the curb; food trucks; hardscape activity at the edge; replacing water intensive plants; creating a community gathering space; using laser cut technology to inscribe donor names; complimenting other spaces; activating spaces at night; maintenance; the importance of the lighting components; shadows; creating an experience; educational opportunities; activities and events; providing a place of respite and a place to appreciate art; civic pride and identity; enhancing and preserving what exists; repurposing water features; lighting updates; calming Duquesne and making it more interesting; using existing landscaping; introduction of drought tolerant landscaping that reflects the musical aspect; background on SWA Group; bringing space to a level where people feel comfortable and safe; balancing historical and modern values; creating a destination that is everything for everyone and a platform for different activities that cannot happen in other places; the cost estimate for all three phases; celebrating the Centennial in a unique way and beginning a dialogue that can be built upon.

Discussion ensued between project representatives, staff and Council Members regarding clarification that the cost estimate includes the artwork; materials and process for creation of the artwork; the impeded view of the main part of City Hall; the buffer from Culver Boulevard; the space in relationship to the scale of the building; treatment of the concrete walls to add textural feel and character; cognizance of the budget; sensitivity to existing design elements; the desire of people to get involved; donations and willingness of residents to help build the garden; clarification regarding the budget, Phase 1 and the rest of the project; money budgeted for Lafayette; consideration of the other spaces and phases; amplifying the process as capital budgets increase; taking a more integrated, informed approach; building off of a holistic idea; liability concerns with the equipment; durability of the art pieces; situations that happen in an urban context; sustainability of the urban condition; identifying areas prone to potential accidents; deflecting accidents; anticipating what will happen; education; enhancements on Duquesne; concern with further blocking engagement of the courtyard; creating a meaningful space; how much change is needed and who it is being changed for; clarification regarding illustrations and scaling; integration of the

ventilation shaft; absorption of the bus stop and the sidewalk; site furnishing; the residential nature of Lafayette; concern with noise issues; determining the decibel range; eliminating invasive species; introduction of drought tolerant, adaptive plants; the century agave plant; the parkway ordinance; the time frame for completion of Phase 1; clarification regarding lighting the art pieces; general safety lighting; light in the trees; moonlighting patterns; and distribution of the survey.

Mayor Cooper invited public participation.

The following member of the audience addressed the City Council:

Paul Jacobs expressed appreciation for being able to participate in the process; discussed Phase 1; support for creating a place of calmness and passivity; concern with possible distractions to drivers by placing a major piece of sculpture with lighting at the corner of Lafayette and Culver; drawbacks of jacaranda trees; compatibility with the significant corner; fundraising; providing an opportunity for the community to participate in a tangible way; the film sculpture at Overland and Culver; Phase 2; support for enhancement rather than a complete overhaul; opening the Duquesne side by removing the cypress trees; and the proposed landscaping.

Louise Coffey-Webb expressed concern with the proposed new art pieces; discussed the Art in Public Places Ordinance; vetting; longevity; maintenance; and safety.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Coffey-Webb, staff and Council Members regarding restrictions in the ordinance; the process for art placement; guidelines; recommendations for longevity; and encouraging spaces where art might be placed in the future rather than creating the art that would then dominate and shape around it.

Annette Besounian suggested that the City not fix a problem that does not exist; expressed support for the beautiful palm trees; discussed the messiness of jacaranda trees; expressed concern with the reliability of fundraisers; cautioned against going over budget; and she suggested adding a few nice changes rather than totally overhauling the space.

Bernadette Dollard expressed hope that as many mature trees would be kept as possible to provide shade and cool the area, and she suggested removing the Italian cypress trees gradually.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding next steps in the process; Phase 2 proposals; fee breakdowns; cost estimates for each of the three phases; money in the budget for 2017-2018; clarification that the proposals are close to the budgeted amount; and proposals that require more than one phase.

Kulapat Yantrasast discussed Phase 1, the Centennial Garden; jacaranda trees; and the need for an open process.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding problems created for the Downtown Business Association and the Business Improvement District (BID) with cleanup of the jacaranda trees; daily cleanup by the BID; support for usage of the tree; City Council access to the presentations; appreciation to the firms for their bids; competition for Pershing Square; staff encouragement to audience members to fill out the survey; a suggestion to provide an opportunity for further comment in the interim period; the feeling that feedback be limited to those who were able to attend the presentation; providing an opportunity for those watching at home to submit comment; posting both presentations for comment; encouragement to interested parties to view the video of the meeting to see both presentations; a suggestion to add an alert with a link to the presentations from the meetings; and the outreach process.

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#### **Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda**

Mayor Cooper invited public comment.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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#### **Items from Council Members**

None.

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**Member Requests to Agendize Future Items**

None.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 9:40 p.m., the City Council adjourned to September 11, 2017.

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Jeremy Green  
CITY CLERK of Culver City, California  
EX-OFFICIO CLERK of the City Council

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JEFFREY COOPER  
MAYOR of Culver City, California