

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

June 9, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Mayor Eriksson called the special meeting of the City Council to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Mike Balkman Chambers at City Hall via teleconference.

Present: Göran Eriksson, Mayor
Alex Fisch, Vice Mayor
Daniel Lee, Council Member
Meghan Sahli-Wells, Council Member
Thomas Small, Council Member

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Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Eriksson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Council Member Sahli-Wells reported that George Floyd had been laid to rest and she asked for a moment of silence to honor his memory and to center actions on racial justice.

Scott Bixby, Police Chief, announced the formation of the Police Chief's Advisory Panel; discussed the Police Department's Work Plan; and introduced Mily Huntley who is overseeing the program.

Mayor Eriksson indicated that Vets Park would be displaying crimson and gold which are the high school colors for George Floyd in his honor.

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Joint Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda

Mayor Eriksson invited public comment.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, explained procedures for making public comment.

Mimi Ferrel, City Clerk Specialist, read public comment received from:

Luis Gonzalez: discussed comments from the Culver City Police Department (CCPD) Chief regarding the need for the Ballistic Engineered Armored Rescue Counter Attack Truck (BEARCAT); costs; employee salaries; and proposed that funds be taken from the Chiefs to cover costs for the BEARCAT if they feel the vehicle is truly needed.

Hilary Graham: expressed support for #BlackLivesMatter and #DefendBlackLives; discussed the fact that one third of the overall budget goes to CCPD; wanted to see the CCPD defunded; and she felt that funds should be redirected to providing other needed social services and affordable housing.

Joshua Church: discussed the prohibition of the cartoid hold restraint; the well-documented history of racism by CCPD; recent curfews; current issues with police bias; the number of black people living in Culver City vs. the number arrested; systematic racism; history of the country; the need to acknowledge personal racism and work to combat it; demilitarizing the police force; asserted there was no need for the BEARCAT; and proposed reducing the police budget and redirecting the money to support underfunded schools and the community.

Jeff Schwartz: discussed the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmed Arbery and others; comments made in the interview with Chief Bixby in Culver City Crossroads; claims made that CCPD complies with seven of the 8 Can't Wait reforms; legal loopholes which allow officers to avoid accountability; the open letter from the Board of the Culver City Police Officers Association excoriating Council Members,

with the exception of the Mayor, for their lack of support; the need for critical reflection; and the urgency for strong independent oversight of CCPD with redistribution of functions and resources to agencies to do work that is restorative and preventative rather than punitive.

Mark Lipman: discussed the community conversation around reimagining budget priorities; building a safer community through funding much needed public services such as housing and education and other measures to help lift people out of poverty; reducing the role of CCPD; social workers with guns; focusing police efforts on crime; funding a direct housing program in the next budget; the Emergency Plan to End Homelessness passed by the Committee on Homelessness; he provided a copy of the plan passed by the Committee on Homelessness and the original plan to house every person currently homeless in the City; discussed the budget request and scope of implementation; funding to hire needed social workers tasked with managing the caseload; identified funding sources; documented areas of cost savings; plan alignment with calls in other parts of the country to defund the police; restructuring the role of police in society; making better use of public money to address the homeless emergency; he asked that the City Council direct the City Manager to make an honest assessment of where savings can be made in emergency services to offset costs of serving the homeless in Culver City; and he urged the City Council to examine the proposals for serious consideration in the upcoming budget negotiations.

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Receipt and Filing of Correspondence

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

MOVED BY VICE MAYOR FISCH, 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 - (1) Progress Update on the Culver City Economic Recovery Task Force; (2) Consideration of Temporary Street Closure in Downtown Culver City; (3) Discussion of Potential Slow Streets Program; (4) Discussion of Potential Parklet Program; (5) Discussion of Potential Zoning Code Modifications to Support Business Recovery and Attraction During the COVID-19 Local Emergency; and (6) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate

Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development Manager, provided a summary of the material of record; discussed the focus on recovery strategies; engagement; departmental coordination; Temporary Use Permits (TUPs); expanding outdoor dining and retail on private streets, in parking lots and in public right-of-way; and social distancing requirements.

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, discussed temporary zoning code modifications; possible future zone text amendments; non-conforming use expiration dates; uncertainty due to COVID-19; temporary exclusion of outdoor dining areas from parking calculations; the need for Council direction; allowing take-away alcohol services; Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) regulations; and TUPs for retail sales and dining in parking lot areas.

Heba El-Guindy, Mobility and Traffic Engineer, provided background information on the proposed traffic control plans; discussed traffic patterns; emergency vehicle lanes; proposed temporary street closures; accessibility; costs for traffic control devices; maintenance; other uses for equipment for road closures associated with construction projects; pilot projects permitting requirements to establish parklets within the public right of way; streetscape and complete street projects; planters; drainage; size; costs; establishing Slow Streets; the experience of Los Angeles with Slow Streets; monitoring; involvement of neighborhood associations; volunteers; traffic safety; traffic calming; education; changing the speed and volume of circulation in the neighborhood; assessment of roles and responsibilities; potential liability; and expectations set by the Mayor's office for neighborhoods chosen for Slow Streets.

Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development Manager, discussed development of a comprehensive recovery strategy; community messaging; collaboration to develop messaging concepts; the focus on unity and renewal; revision of the Culver City seal and branding to relay a sentiment of hope and recovery; and she discussed ways that this message and related graphic representation could be displayed.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, presented a series of graphic design options created by Amy MacFarland to relay the proposed "Creating Tomorrow Together" message; she discussed visibility and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements; color and design options; font consistency; banner mock-ups; various formats; the budget for the Cultural Affairs Department; funding for temporary art in the 413 Cultural Trust Fund; starting with a simple messaging component and, as a second phase, integrating an original temporary art project during the summer; money available in the banner contract; involvement of the Cultural Affairs Commission; and she provided a cost-benchmark based on the budget for the 50 double-hung banners displayed in 2018.

Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development Manager, provided updates on the work being done by the Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF); discussed the creation of the ETRF website as an information and recovery resource; surveying needs of residents; creation of a hard copy resource guide; ensuring equity in recovery; assisting individuals with disabilities and/or vulnerable populations; continued parking relaxation and curbside pick up; implementing performances and art installations when appropriate to serve as a catalyst for community recovery; and collaboration with the University of Southern California (USC) Sol Price School of Public Policy to evaluate economic recovery options.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding parklets; using the public right of way for restaurants; ADA access; safety concerns over emergency vehicles and busses endangering pedestrians, cyclists and scooters in emergency lanes; K-Rails; the focus on the downtown area; creative ideas for other neighborhoods; the Slow Streets program implemented by Los Angeles; jurisdiction; collaboration; the initial recommendations of the ERTF; Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) public/private tax sharing programs for hospitality provider relief; the unique opportunity of the City to enhance mobility for pedestrians, bikes, and busses at this time; traffic control; expansion of outdoor dining for restaurants;

willingness of restaurants to invest in making the area aesthetically pleasing; K-Rail storage; exploring new mobility options while reopening after COVID-19 closures; inter-departmental collaboration; the overall traffic control plan; costs; making adjustments to bus routes; the emergency vehicle lane; impacts to bus travel times; incorporating mobility options; primary bus clientele; proposed redirection of traffic flow at the intersection of Washington, Culver and Canfield Boulevard; the possibility of closing Canfield; minimizing traffic congestion and promoting circulation; restaurant and retail space expansion on Culver Boulevard and Main Street; advance signage; sales tax; and funding for restaurant and retail space expansion.

Mayor Eriksson invited public comment.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, explained procedures for making public comment and indicated that written comments submitted prior to the start of the meeting would be read after those participating in the meeting have a chance to speak.

The following individuals made public comment:

Bubba Fish: discussed his experiences cycling in the City; the opportunity to rethink the streets; difficulty safely biking west on Culver Boulevard in the current design; he urged the City Council to implement a new lane for cyclists and explore non-car transit options; expressed support for collaborating with Los Angeles to close off the entirety of Main Street to cars; and he urged the City Council to be bold and explore new mobility options while some stay at home orders are still in place.

Darrel Menthe, President of the Downtown Business Association (DBA), discussed work with staff on the proposal for the closure of Culver Boulevard and Main Street; the importance of taking advantage of the rare opportunity to make changes; costs; the dedicated bus lane; actions of other cities; messages of support for the changes; and he urged City Council Members to move forward with bold and drastic changes while the opportunity is available.

David Metzler expressed support for the Slow Streets program; discussed the many people interested in volunteering for the program; community benefit; he suggested the addition of protected mobility lanes stretching from both east and west sides of the City to downtown and merging a protected bike

lane with the already existing bus lane going eastbound; and he urged the City Council to move forward quickly.

Karim Sahli thanked staff for their hard work; discussed a design he had submitted to staff and to Council Member Small for restructuring the north side of Culver Boulevard from Duquesne Avenue to Venice Boulevard; adding a bus and a bike lane; and he asked that the City Council review his design.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, read public comment submitted by:

Angela and Deborah Picone: expressed support for closing down vehicle access on Main Street to allow for more outdoor seating for restaurants, many of which are small and cannot safely seat groups of people indoors, and she discussed benefits to the public as well as to small businesses.

Travis Morgan: offered strong support for the temporary street closure in Downtown Culver City as well as for the Slow Streets program; offered to volunteer as a sponsor for Slow Streets in Fox Hills; discussed the extension of the Caltrans deadline causing delay in funds; he suggested a Phase 2 project to include eastbound traffic or a temporary Downtown connector; discussed ways to direct westbound traffic; and he provided a link for Caltrans.

Mariana: expressed support for street closures in Downtown Culver City to help maintain social distancing as well as allow small businesses to safely operate.

Josh Hamilton: expressed support for the partial closure of Culver Boulevard and felt that the measure would help make Downtown more pleasant by allowing more space for individuals to safely spend time outside noting that he personally felt more comfortable dining outdoors than in a restaurant.

Mimi Ferrel, City Clerk Specialist, read public comment submitted by:

John Kent: expressed support for the proposed street closures and Slow Streets program; hoped that the measure would be successful enough that similar permanent changes could be implemented in the future; and felt that Main Street would be perfect as a pedestrian or pedestrian and bike only promenade.

Erik Mar: provided background on himself; expressed support for proposed street closures along Culver Boulevard and Main

Street; and felt the measure would result in many positive benefits.

Prisca Gloor: expressed support for proposed street closures and the Slow Streets program as a very important step toward increasing safety for cyclists in the City.

Michael Monagan: provided background on himself noting that he is a frequent cyclist; expressed support for the Slow Streets program; urged the City to create safe and accessible bike lanes.

Chimin Lee Metzler: expressed support for implementing the Slow Streets program Downtown and indicated that she is riding her bike more often recently due to less cars on the road.

Eric Pazelle: expressed support for the Slow Streets program; felt the measure would be a positive by-product of the current pandemic; and hoped that the program would eventually be expanded further east, down Washington Boulevard.

Roger Toussaint: expressed support for outdoor dining and entertainment wherever possible in Culver City.

Irina Codreanu: expressed support for the closure of Main Street to allow for expanded patio seating at Rocco's in Culver City.

Sebastien Cornic, Meet in Paris restaurant: expressed support for street closures allowing for expansion of outdoor patio areas; discussed drastically reduced revenue due to the COVID-19 crisis; take-out business; operating at 50% capacity due to social distancing requirements; he indicated that street closures allowing for outdoor dining would allow for 80-90% capacity; and he felt that passing this measure would benefit the community beyond financial gain.

Hisham Dakhil: introduced himself as a lifelong resident of Culver City; expressed strong support for the proposed closure of Main Street; stated that positive growth in the community over the last eight years had slowed due to the pandemic; and felt that the proposed measure would help with recovery from closures caused by COVID-19.

Lisa Salemi: expressed support for the proposed closure of Main Street and Culver Boulevard to support local businesses.

Jason Michael Lopez: expressed support for the proposed street closures and felt the measure would make it safer for

residents to enjoy services and increase revenue for local businesses.

Katie Herman: expressed support for the proposed street closures and expressed enthusiasm for participating in the outdoor dining expansion.

Alex Owens-Sarno: expressed support for the proposed street closures to extend the patio of Rocco's Tavern noting the importance of supporting local businesses willing to operate under social distancing guidelines and people who rely on said businesses.

William Silver: expressed support for the proposed road closures to accommodate patio seating and discussed opportunity costs.

Curtis Anderson, Rocco's Tavern; expressed support for the proposed road closures and extended patios for restaurants and bars noting that the measure would help them recover from the financial setbacks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ken Kaufman, City Tavern and Rush Street: expressed support for efforts of the DBA and the City to expand the capacity of bars and restaurants; expressed confidence that local restaurant owners would team up to create a new sense of community through outdoor dining; discussed increased capacity; benefits vs. costs; and consideration of the expansion of Irving Place which would benefit Rush Street.

Luis Castaneda, Cafe Vida; expressed support for the proposed additional outdoor dining space; described difficulties with their business model based on volume and high turnover; and expressed excitement that the new measure would help get their business back to financial stability.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk read public comment submitted by:

Eric Sims, Center Theater Group: expressed support for proposed street closures to allow for an increase in outdoor dining space; discussed the importance of ensuring that progress made Downtown is not lost; logistical hurdles; support for the arts; and he acknowledged that the proposed measure would not affect his business but felt that supporting the community will have a benefit for all.

Mimi Ferrel, City Clerk Specialist, read public comment submitted by:

Angela Vianello, Novecento Pasta and Grill: described limitations to sidewalk space; urged City Council Members to pass the measure to close Main Street in order to expand their outdoor dining area; and described how a majority of their customers feel safer sitting outdoors under the present circumstances.

Louis Skelton: provided background on himself; expressed support for proposed street closures to allow for extended patios for restaurant and hospitality locations in the downtown area; stated that the measure would help to restore jobs, income, and taxes that were lost due to the mandated restaurant closures in March; and he offered his assistance and provided contact information.

Denise Toussaint: thanked the City Council for advocating for street closures and extended patios noting that would assist in the recovery of many restaurants financially devastated by the pandemic.

Derrick Angus, Janga by Derrick: expressed support for closing Main Street and the north side of Culver Boulevard; felt that expansion of the street would allow for stimulation of sales and a change in mood and atmosphere; discussed social distancing guidelines; capacity restrictions; challenges earning back revenue from losses in sales; fees charged by delivery apps; the importance of customers; revenue to keep up with rent and overhead costs; he cited a University of Oregon study indicating that fresh air and circulation may lead to fewer infections; and urged Council Members to approve street closures.

Michelle Mariolis, Rocco's Tavern: expressed support for the closure of Main Street to extend seating and indicated that she would provide ideas about how to arrange tables via email.

David Coles, Bike Culver City: expressed support for the adoption of a Slow Streets program and making parts of the downtown area car-free during the COVID-19 pandemic; hoped that Bike Culver City would be seen as a partner when utilizing these programs; felt that lane closures on Culver Boulevard would create safe travel routes for cyclists and scooter riders and other users of micro-mobility without squeezing out pedestrians; he noted that changes could be made after the trial period as there is no permanent or fixed infrastructure; and he did not want to see small issues prevent the project from moving forward.

Bill Sasiela, Piccalilli: expressed support for street closures and the expansion of outdoor dining areas; reported that the restaurant had been open for two months before the period of restrictions requiring delivery only; discussed decreased capacity and revenue as a result of social distancing measures; and reduced flexibility when dealing with multiple smaller parties due to social distancing requirements.

Alex Manos: expressed support for the proposed street closures and patio expansions noting that this would help restaurant owners begin to get back to their capacity levels prior to the pandemic.

Michele Weiner: expressed excitement at the proposed street closures and the Slow Streets program; discussed the Bicentennial Celebration as an example of the public enjoying additional public space at the intersection of Main and Culver; benefits for seniors and others of a safe space to walk and ride bikes; including community supplied references for the proposed resource card; and she suggested a walking/biking parade instead of a car parade for the proposed Fourth of July event.

Ken Mand: discussed the importance of expanding public spaces to ensure that local business owners can survive the current financial crisis; urged Council Members to ensure that the westbound bus lane also be used as a bike lane; discussed mobility goals; emergency lanes; felt the bus route should be temporarily rerouted if the space cannot be shared; urged the City Council to post signs to inform eastbound traffic of closures; suggested leasing K-Rails for six months to reduce costs and using delineators and temporary fencing as an alternative; and he proposed reallocating public space in the Arts District for pedestrians after implementation of the Downtown closure.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, read public comment submitted by:

Kevin Kearns, The Auld Fella: expressed support for the proposed road closures; reported re-opening at 60% capacity and the reluctance of patrons to eat inside; and he expressed concern that they and other business owners would not be able to remain solvent without outdoor seating areas.

Mimi Ferrel, City Clerk Specialist, read public comment from:

Adam Sydenham, Palihotel: requested guidance from the City on expanding their food and beverage service out onto the sidewalk, and felt the expansion would help the hotel reopen sooner.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding zoning issues and code modifications; acknowledgement that the plan was not perfect, but concern that getting it perfect and making lots of changes would take time; the importance of allowing restaurants to expand and increase revenue as soon as possible; making the TUP process more ministerial; ensuring that the focus is placed on the entire City; support for zoning code modifications; take-away alcohol services; retaining a family atmosphere; maintenance of local laws regarding open alcohol consumption; the importance of alcohol restriction signage; Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) guidelines regarding expansion into the right of way for adjacent businesses; the process of obtaining a permit for a business owner to expand; importance of minimizing parking requirements in this moment; and the City Council expressed support for the work of staff on zoning issues and code modifications.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding temporary street closure in the downtown area; Brown Act considerations; the possibility of making changes to the proposal; ideas received during public comment to be taken into consideration; staff agreement to examine plans submitted; modification of traffic signals; accessibility issues; the fire station; the importance of implementing the plan in a timely manner as opposed to taking time to create the best plan possible; engineering concerns; opportunities to create optimum outdoor dining space; return on investment for the restaurants; timeline for implementation; necessary traffic control devices; use of temporary devices; staff installation; the proposed change to two-way traffic on the south side of Culver; alignment of traffic signals; costs related to necessary modifications for the proposal submitted by the public; achieving multiple goals at the same time; implementing the staff proposal immediately and making adjustments over time; potential access issues for the Fire Department; removing parking by City Hall; concern with engineering a temporary project using permanent standards; cities with less space that are able to address obstacles; evolution of the project in the short term; timing restrictions related to equipment; alternative or temporary solutions to allow the project to begin as soon as possible; different types of K-Rails; cost variations; permeability of

barricades; the importance of lane accommodation for cyclists and scooter riders; additional storage and transportation costs for K-Rails; less expensive and more efficient alternatives; usage by bikes and scooters but not pedestrians; concern over frequency of buses causing safety concern for cyclists and scooter riders; barriers and medians preventing cyclists from exiting the proposed lane; a suggestion to create a lane for bikes and scooters on the north side; relocation of the bus stop on Culver Boulevard to accommodate outside dining space; observing what works in other cities in the United States with dual use bus/bike lanes; concerns with regard to emergency services; acknowledgement that the current plan would be a temporary solution to help local restaurants and not a permanent plan for the future of the downtown area; support from area residents for the proposal; incorporating a proposal for the amphitheater in new Town Plaza or the courtyard area at City Hall; gratitude for the hard work of staff on the plan; concern with getting stuck in an "analysis paralysis" and slowing the process; cyclists and scooter riders sharing a lane with emergency vehicles and buses; ensuring a means to exit the emergency lane; length of the spans; gaining input from the Police Department on the item; clarification that only westbound movement would be accommodated in the lane; access control; use of solar powered gates; the urgency of opening outdoor dining space as soon as possible to help restaurants recover; making adjustments to the plan after implementation; speed surveys and necessary approvals from the state to reduce speed limits Downtown; the time consuming nature of engaging in the process to lower the speed limit; posting signage to encourage slower speeds; and enforceability.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding the potential parklet program; priorities; consideration of parklets in west Culver City where parklets would be useful; appreciation for research done by staff; allowing restaurants to create their own proposals; support for experimentation; clarification that the parklet project is a lower priority than Downtown street closures to help restaurants; use of the City Hall courtyard as another possible location; research on districts around the City that would benefit from this project instead of solely focusing efforts on the downtown area; successful temporary parklets in Montreal; exploring temporary options and maximizing use of street space; parking zones; resident input; and moving forward to allow restaurants the opportunity to express interest in the potential parklet program.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding establishing a Slow Streets program; volunteers; summer block parties; liability concerns; logistics of the permit process that must be followed when enforcing slower speeds; support for the Slow Streets project; referencing already established City processes that may inform implementation; potential immunity of the City in terms of liability when approving a roadway condition; and consideration of the difference in speeds of permit processes.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding zoning code modifications to support business recovery and attraction during COVID-19; the messaging banner presentation; consideration of the three alternatives involved; the importance of using messaging with the potential to serve dual purposes; general support for the first option of the three alternatives presented; discomfort around the idea of the banners as appearing more like branding than art; use of public funds; a suggestion to use the funds for banners to commission a local Black artist to paint a mural; consideration of what message the City is sending with the posting of the banners; possible insensitivity due to timing of posting overly positive banners in a time of trauma; a suggestion to wait before moving forward with the banner program; messaging around the recovery as part of phase one and an art project as part of phase 2; ensuring there is an equity component; the focus of the project as being inclusive and encouraging the reopening and recovery of Downtown; proposed branding of collateral materials in addition to posting banners; creating a consumer confidence campaign; potential changes in infection rates; and consensus to direct staff to return in a few weeks for additional consideration.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding appreciation to staff and the Task Force for their efforts; the importance of finding members to join the ERTF who will address worker protection for all employees returning to work; staff agreement to include non-profits, community organizations and labor organizations; clarification that all recommendations that were voiced; outreach to Spanish speaking workers; ensuring that areas other than Downtown receive revitalization support beyond parklets; activating public space for socially distanced public events; and appreciation to first responders.

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Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda

Mayor Eriksson invited public comment.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, indicated that no additional public comment had been received.

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Items from Council Members

Council Member Sahli-Wells reminded everyone of the City Council meeting to discuss Renter Protections on June 11, 2020.

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Council Member Requests to Agendize Future Items

None.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:38 p.m., the City Council adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on June 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

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Jeremy Green
CITY CLERK of Culver City, California
Culver City, California

GÖRAN ERIKSSON
MAYOR of Culver City, California

Date: _____