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CALIFORNIA



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COMMISSION MINUTES **Thursday, August 10, 2023** **2:00 p.m.**

**Members of the public who wish to speak to the Commission during the meeting must submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board Secretary prior to the commencement of the public comments for each agenda item of interest. Comments by the public on matters not identified on the agenda, but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission will be heard during the item designated as "Public Comments Period." The length of public speaking time is two minutes, unless the presiding officer grants some other amount of time.*

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*The Meeting called to order at: 2:00 PM by President **Wirfs**. Commissioners present: **Chang, Chu, Garcia, Manriquez, Perez, Quon, Thomas**. Also present: Assistant General Manager Edgar Garcia, El Pueblo Staff Emily Wooten, and Deputy City Attorney Joshua Templet.*

A quorum was established.

Commissioner Wirfs welcomed all in attendance and requested Commissioner Chu introduce himself. Commissioner Chu. Commissioner Chu shared that he is an insurance professional who loves volunteering and being a part of the community. He thanked those in attendance and shared his excitement to learn more at El Pueblo.

Edward Flores provided General Public Comment.

There was no update from City Council District 14 (CD14).

There was no update from the Neighborhood Council.

Item 1: General Manager's Report

Edward Flores provided Public Comment on Item 1.

Mr. Garcia presented the General Manager's Report. Mr. Garcia shared a review of events that occurred at El Pueblo since the previous meeting. He began by speaking on the Friends of the Chinese American Museum's (FCAM) Chu Tat Shing exhibit and LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes' memorial for Gloria Molina. Mr. Garcia invited Pastor Philip Valdes to share about the Los Angeles Plaza United Methodist Church's recent exhibition. Mr. Garcia shared that the Department was recently involved with the California Endowment and Los Angeles Conservancy Awards. El Pueblo's Getty Marrow Undergraduate Intern Samantha Sanchez shared information



with the Commission about the recent “Museum Day” event where Getty Marrow Interns from across El Pueblo, including El Pueblo, the Chinese American Museum, the Museum of Social Justice, and LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, hosted crafts and educational activities in the Kiosko Plaza. El Pueblo Staff Summer Ibarra shared the success of the recent “El Pueblo de Los Angeles First Annual Car Show”. She shared that there were over four hundred (400) low riders at the El Pueblo. Mr. Garcia noted that there was only one (1) minor security incident during the event. He also shared that the Car Show increased visitorship exponentially. The Plaza Firehouse museum experienced a jump from a visitor count of one-hundred and sixty-five (165) visitors on the same day in 2022 to five-hundred and seventy-eight (578) during the car show. Mr. Garcia mentioned many upcoming events Mr. Garcia continued to update the commission on staffing. He shared that the Department has been actively interviewing for additional museum guides. Accountant Oscar Alcantara-Lopez recently left El Pueblo. The Department recently hired new Senior Accountant Hanaa Eid. Mr. Garcia stated the Department is working to fill three (3) full-time position vacancies: Administrative Clerk, Accountant, and Real Estate Officer. Mr. Garcia invited Jim Jang of FCAM to give a short update on the Chinese American Museum expansion. Mr. Garcia stated that there is a General Services Division (GSD) work order for exploration and tenant improvements of the first floor of the Biscailuz Building. He hoped for a more substantive update from Council District 14 as the project continues. Mr. Garcia shared that, through work with the Bureau of Engineering, City Council, and the Mayor’s office, the solicitation for the El Pueblo Master plan was circulated and released. Mr. Garcia explained that Ms. Wooten is the main point of contact for Absolute International Security (AIS) on-site. She stated that she has established standing meetings that take place on the Wednesday before each scheduled Commission meeting. These meetings are intended to bring issues reported by stakeholders, Merchants, and staff to the attention of AIS and to work as a team to improve. Commissioner Wirfs requested an update on the physical report on security incidents. Ms. Wooten noted that reporting took time to bring up to the previous standard, but that these reports are now completed. It is at the discretion of management to release these reports to the Commission President. Mr. Garcia shared that there were twenty-four thousand four-hundred and five (24,405) museum visitors during the month of July. Commissioner Quon asked for an update on the security breach that occurred at the Chinese American Museum. Mr. Garcia noted that the individual was never identified. Commissioner Quon also requested an update on the information plaques around the park. Mr. Garcia shared that he is awaiting an update from GSD Printing on their status. Commissioner Thomas inquired about current vacancies on Olvera Street and the nature of office space leasing at El Pueblo. Mr. Garcia shared that there are four (4) center and one (1) west puesto vacancies. Mr. Garcia explained that office vacancies at El Pueblo is more difficult to quantify as many spaces are mixed-use. Mr. Templet noted that, in contrast to the very structured lease requirements for Olvera Street, office space is not as limited in use at El Pueblo. Mr. Templet confirmed for Commissioner Thomas that office space at El Pueblo is leased at market rate. Mr. Garcia clarified that it would be up to the Department to craft a Request for Proposal (RFP) to guide how space is used. Commissioner Cardenas inquired if the security spreadsheet would be provided to the commission. It was clarified that this document was previously provided to the Commission President. Commissioner Cardenas asked if another meeting had been held between AIS management and the Merchants. Ms. Wooten stated that this had not occurred, but that David Reynoso from AIS had shared he was open to another meeting with Merchants.

Item 2: Commission Committee Reports

Edward Flores provided Public Comment on Item 2.

Commissioner Wirfs noted that a chair for the 1871 Memorial Ad Hoc committee would be

appointed later in the meeting.

Commissioner Wirfs confirmed that no meeting of the Mexican-American/Latino Historical Monument Ad Hoc Committee had been held and that a chair would be appointed later in the meeting.

Item 3.1: Metro Presentation

Metro Principal Transportation Planner, Brian Lam, presented information about the West Santa Ana Branch Study to the Commission. Mr. Lam focused on the Slauson A Line Station to Union Station segment of the metro project and environmental impact report. This study began in June of 2022 and was focused on determining cost-effective alignments. The Metro Board emphasized the need for a “One-Seat Ride” from Union Station to South East Los Angeles County. Other key considerations for the project were to enhance regional/local mobility, the DTLA 2040 plan including the transformation of the Alameda corridor, and cost competitiveness for Federal funding. This segment of the line would have three (3) stations including Union Station, Little Tokyo, and the Arts/Industrial District area. The four and a half (4.5) mile segment was disproportionately costly than the rest of the project as it was predominantly underground. The expenditure estimates begin in year 2030 with a completion date of 2041. Underground profiles are the costliest, followed in order by trench, aerial, and at-grade. He shared the study looked at multiple combinations of these profiles and noted that many of them faces technical issues. The “base line” concept consisted of a mostly underground line that transitions to an aerial profile. The study narrowed these options to two (2) concepts. The first concept, the “refined underground alignment” has a small portion of at-grade when reaching the I-10 Freeway. The second concept, the “Alameda Aerial Median,” would have a portion of aerial guideway from 4th Street ending as the line reaches the same at-grade I-10 Freeway portion. The second concept has an optional alternative route to avoid operational impacts on LA Wholesale Produce. Mr. Lam noted that there were several options for the Union Station terminus. He stated they are recommending the “WMD Design.” He stated that they will recommend dropping the previously proposed Union Station Forecourt location. The Little Tokyo station design was updated based on stakeholder feedback. Mr. Lam explained two (2) options for the Arts/Industrial District station including an underground station and an aerial station. Mr. Lam presented a cost comparison of each concept and noted that while the “Alameda Aerial Median” concept was the most cost effective of the options, there were other environmental impacts to be considered. The next steps for the study are public meetings to obtain feedback for report completion. He noted that the final report is anticipated to be presented to the Metro Board for further instruction by the end of 2023.

Commissioner Manriquez shared that she had previous experience with the community impact of multiple metro lines. She asked when work on this particular line began. Mr. Lam shared that the environmental study began in 2018. He noted that the concept is based in the Pacific Electric Red Car lines that ran through this corridor to Santa Ana.

Commissioner Quon complimented the project. She asked what the anticipated impact on El Pueblo parking would be. Mr. Lam shared that studies found that Union Station parking would be sufficient to accommodate the parking demand in the area.

Commissioner Chang asked for clarification on the meaning of “One-Seat Ride.” Mr. Lam clarified that this would require no transfers.

Commissioner Thomas shared that he was in favor of light rail. He inquired why there were three

(3) stations on the northern end of the line and the low-income areas between these and the final terminus of this segment were without stations. He also noted that the proposed line runs very close to the existing Blue Line. Mr. Lam noted that early in the project there were additional stations proposed. However, during ridership modeling, most transfers occurred at Slauson. This route provided a more direct route from Long Beach to Union Station. Mr. Lam shared that there were issues with inter-lining these lines.

Commissioner Cardenas inquired if the survey team would be planning outreach to the Skid Row area, which she noted is the planned location of the Arts/Industrial District station. Mr. Lam shared that as the project continues there will be Community-Based Organization (CBO) engagement. The Metro Community Outreach Department is currently working on being CBOs on-board for guidance on outreach and planning. Mr. Lam said he would relay the request to focus more on that community.

Commissioner Perez shared concerns about the economic impact on small businesses and housing in the areas impacted by the project. She hoped that this project would focus on making this ridership friendly while taking consideration of the communities around the space. She felt this project was sorely needed, but emphasized the preeminence of community consideration.

Item 3.2: Approval of the Minutes of 07-13-23.

MOTION: Commissioner Cardenas moved to approve the minutes of 07-13-23. Seconded by Commissioner Chang.

Vote on Item 3.2: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Chu, Abstained; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Thomas, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

Item 3.3 Appointment of Committee Chairs.

Commissioner Wirfs inquired if Commissioner Chang would be able to Chair the 1871 Memorial Ad Hoc Committee. Commissioner Chang declined the appointment. Commissioner Wirfs appointed himself as the chair.

Commissioner Manriquez volunteered to serve as the Chair of the Mexican-American/Latino Historical Monument Ad Hoc Committee. Commissioner Wirfs duly appointed Commissioner Manriquez to the position.

Item 3.4: Election of Officers.

Commissioner Wirfs: You know; I realize it's been probably about a month since our last meeting when we had nominations. I was nominated as President, Commissioner Quon was nominated as Vice President. And I realize we didn't actually have a robust discussion about what it meant to do that. So what I wanted to do actually was, before we go into this item, really describe just as I see it the roles of the President, which then carry down to the Vice President as well. Obviously, this is a very visible role presiding over the meetings and this, again, is based on my experience and guidelines as I see them. It's not like it's written down anywhere "How to Be President of the Commission." So, obviously, presiding over the meetings which requires, you know, an understanding and mastery of Robert's Rules of Order, the Brown Act and the way that that allows us to and also prevents us from discussing certain things or discussing in a certain order. And then, obviously, knowledge of the ordinances, both LA Charter as well as the Administrative Code, a loose understanding of the applicable sections to us. And then timely

and effective meeting management. I think I've done a decent job over the last year and you guys have all seen how that works. In addition to just the meetings themselves, there's obviously the preparation for the meetings. So prior to the meeting there is a meeting with staff and the City Attorney to set up the agenda for the meeting, reviewing of the prior meeting minutes, which means editing, submitting those edits, and then getting them ready for staff to be able to distribute. And then reviewing the agenda as its drafted as well as responding to and reviewing any communications from the staff as well as the general public. So, in a nut shell, that's the job and hopefully demystifies it a little bit. So I wanted to then open it up for discussion, I think. I'll start with discussion and move to additional nominations and then we can move to vote. Any discussion around President and Vice President and this body? Commissioner Manriquez and then Commissioner Quon.

Commissioner Manriquez: So, just stating the obvious, that the role of the Vice President is to fill in for the President when he's absent.

Commissioner Wirfs: Exactly. Sorry, I forgot that part. Yes, as Vice President you would then fulfill those duties in the absence of the President. And Commissioner Quon?

Commissioner Quon: So, I feel that the objective of the Commission is really to efficiently and effectively execute the business of El Pueblo and its stakeholders. And so, with that said, I believe, especially since half our Commission is brand new. I know there is four (4) new Commissioners that were brought in this year, and actually, I consider myself new, because I, prior to the four (4) new Commissioners, I was the last Commissioner that was appointed. I came in at the end of last year, and I feel like I am still learning so many new things about El Pueblo every time we have a meeting. So, with that said, I really believe that for the effectiveness of our Commission, that President Wirfs should continue as President. And I'm saying that because there are so many new Commissioners. I feel he's had excellent leadership, he knows how to run the meetings, he's very familiar with Robert's laws and all those things that he just went over. I think it's really important that we are able to do this in a timely manner. He, also, is very good at, I think, listening to all the stakeholders, that all voices are heard. And so, yeah, that's pretty much what I would like to say. And my last personal note on this, is that I feel that we, as Commissioners, are appointed to be here to what we think is right. I am here, I am not politically motivated, I am just here because I want to serve my community and I want to serve El Pueblo. And I don't appreciate it when the Mayor's Office puts pressure on, asking Commissioners to vote in a particular way that they may not personally believe in. So, I hope everyone will vote according to how they feel and to their consciousness. Thank you.

Commissioner Wirfs: Thank you, Commissioner Quon. Any other discussion items?

Commissioner Quon: And also, secondly, for new Commissioners, I think it would be great. I think as a Vice President, I think it's a great training role. I've had a very short term as a Vice President, but I feel like it really lends...it gives you an opportunity to learn about what it's like to be a President of a Commission and what it's like to participate in some of the planning meetings. So, I think that would be a great role for a new Commissioner to come in and fill that and then have someone, like President Wirfs, who has the experience, he's a veteran, to really train you to take that position. And I think that would be very critical for our Commission to move forward.

Commissioner Wirfs: Thank you, Commissioner Quon. Any other discussion? Yes, Commissioner Thomas?

Commissioner Thomas: I would just like to say that I feel like you've done an absolutely terrific job. Thank you, President Wirfs. And of course, I think we all look forward to continue working with you. I assume before we get into the voting, we will go over the voting process, because it has been a while. I've been the chair of a Commission before, but it's been a while. Are these anonymous votes?

Commissioner Wirfs: Oh no, it's on the record. We are going to poll a vote, we are going to call a vote just like we always do. Um, and we can get to the voting too. Yeah, it's going to be just like every other item that we vote on. So, again just to review, we are going to go through discussion, because I'm going to talk about the role. I think Commissioner Quon made some great points about sort of what it takes. I've described what it takes from my perspective. If there's other discussion items for that and then we will move into the nomination phase, after we close up discussion, which is if anyone wants to nominate themselves or nominate others. As of right now, we've got the two (2) nominations there and then we will go into a vote after that. Did you have any other discussion items? Alright, so, nominations. As of the last meeting this body had nominated both myself for President and Commissioner Quon as Vice President. I think what I'd like to do is take them individually, if we start with Vice President and then we'll have nominations for President after that. And then we will move into the voting section.

Commissioner Perez: We're nominating for Vice President?

Commissioner Wirfs: Correct, if there's any other additional nominations for Vice President.

Commissioner Perez: I nominate Ms. Carmen Chang.

Commissioner Wirfs: Carmen. Do you accept the nomination, Carmen?

Commissioner Chang: Yes.

Commissioner Wirfs: Yes, excellent. Any other nominations for Vice President? No? Nominations for President. Yes, Commissioner Manriquez?

Commissioner Manriquez: I'd like to nominate Liliana Perez.

Commissioner Wirfs: Commissioner Perez do you accept?

Commissioner Perez: I do.

Commissioner Quon: Am I allowed to nominate?

Commissioner Wirfs: Yeah, absolutely.

Commissioner Quon: I'd like to nominate President Wirfs.

Commissioner Wirfs: As of last meeting, we're both still on the nomination list. It carries over. As of right now we have two (2) nominees for President and two (2) nominees for Vice President. Any other nominations? Alright. Prior to calling the roll, it's been a pleasure to serve all of you. It's been a great year. It's gone by extremely fast, I felt like I've done my duty in the words of Admiral Nelson. So, it's been a pleasure. I am going to respectfully remove my name from consideration as the President. So, as it stands now, we have one (1) nomination for President which is Commissioner Perez, we have two (2) nominees for Vice President which are

Commissure Chang and Commissioner Quon. Are there any other additional nominations? Is there any more discussion? We'll take these individually, if we can start Ms. Wooten with the vote for Vice President. Oh sorry, I guess we've got to...

Mr. Templet: Josh Templet, City Attorney, I'm not the arbiter for Robert's Rules. It's actually the City Clerk's Office, but they can't staff every meeting, so let's work through this. Fortunately, we have Mr. Wirfs, who I think is quite knowledgeable about the rules, but let's just lay out how it works when we've got two (2) nominations for Vice President.

Commissioner Wirfs: Yeah, so we have two (2) candidates, so at this point we're going to take each nominee and then vote for that nominee as Vice President and then we'll go to the next candidate and then vote. You only get one (1) vote. Does that conform with your understanding as well?

Commissioner Quon: You know what, just take my name off the VP.

Commissioner Wirfs: So, Commissioner Quon has removed her name from consideration as Vice President so we have one (1) nominee for Vice President and one (1) nominee for President, that being such, we will call the roll for the Vice Presidential nominee and then we will call the roll for the Presidential nominee. Without objection that will be the order. Excellent.

Mr. Templet: Just so it is clear to everyone we need, in order for someone to be elected, we need a majority. So even if you've got the most votes, more than some other candidates, it shouldn't be a problem, everyone's got a vote, and then we need a majority for the person to be elected.

Commissioner Wirfs: Correct, and that's five (5) is the magic number.

Mr. Garcia: Apologies, to clarify, an abstention is a "yes."

Mr. Templet: Abstentions are not allowed. So that is correct.

Commissioner Wirfs: We're going with Wesson Rule.

Mr. Templet: Your vote will be recorded as a "yes." Thanks for providing that clarity.

Commissioner Wirfs: I don't remember the Latin for it. There is no abstention. You say "yes" or "no" and any attempt to abstain will be considered a "yes." This is the Wesson Rules of City Council. Any other rules or clarifications that we need? Yes, silence is consent.

Mr. Templet: You can say abstain, no one can prevent you from saying abstain, just the City Charter says we have to count that as a "yes." Feel free to say "abstain."

Commissioner Wirfs: Any other questions or clarifications? It's been a pleasure.

Ms. Wooten: On the vote to confirm Commissioner Carmen Chang as the Vice President.

VOTE: Confirmation of Commissioner Chang as the El Pueblo Commission Vice President.

Vote: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Chu, Y; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Thomas, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

Ms. Wooten: On the vote to confirm Commissioner Liliana Perez as the President.

VOTE: Confirmation of Commissioner Perez as the El Pueblo Commission President.

Vote: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Chu, Y; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, N; Thomas, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

Commissioner Wirfs: That being said, at the next meeting, actually, at the conclusion of this meeting, I'll hand the keys over to you Commissioner Perez.

Commissioner Perez: And you have done an amazing job, so thank you very much for the opportunity.

Item 4: Commission Business

Commissioner Cardenas requested an update on the rats. Mr. Garcia noted that any requests have been recorded from previous meetings.

President Wirfs adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.