

CITY OF PASADENA
City Council Minutes
March 18, 2024 – 5:00 P.M.
PASADENA CONVENTION CENTER
300 EAST GREET STREET, PASADENA, CA 91101
ROOMS 101-105

SPECIAL MEETING

OPENING: Mayor Gordo called the special meeting to order at 5:12 p.m. (Absent: None)

ROLL CALL:
Councilmembers: Mayor Victor M. Gordo
Vice Mayor Steve Madison (arrived at 5:18 p.m.)
Councilmember Tyron Hampton
Councilmember Justin Jones
Councilmember Jason Lyon
Councilmember Gene Masuda
Councilmember Jessica Rivas
Councilmember Felicia Williams

Staff: City Manager Miguel Márquez
City Attorney/City Prosecutor Michele Beal Bagneris
City Clerk Mark Jomsky

The pledge of allegiance was led by Councilmember Masuda.

DISCUSSION RELATED TO THE ONGOING CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND CONSIDERATION OF A POSSIBLE CITY POSITION RELATED THERETO

Recommendation: The City Council has requested background information to assist in determining whether and how to address the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Among the alternative approaches for consideration, after public comment, are the following:

- (1) Not take any official position on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East; or
- (2) Adopt a policy that the City will not take official positions on any non-local, political, or social issues; or
- (3) Adopt a Resolution taking an official position on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East; or
- (4) Take any other action determined by the City Council.

Mayor Gordo announced the rules of decorum for the special meeting; he stated that public comment will be limited to one minute per person to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.

City Manager Márquez provided introductory remarks; Assistant City Manager Harvey-Williams gave a brief report, and summarized the item and staff recommendations as part of a PowerPoint presentation.

City Clerk Jomsky reported that the City Clerk's Office received over 2,000 emails relating to the item. He summarized that there was a large number of emails in favor of the City Council adopting a resolution calling for a ceasefire, a large number of emails in opposition to the City Council acting on this matter, and numerous emails with various positions along the spectrum. He stated that the City Clerk's Office began posting correspondence in alphabetical order and will continue to do so as emails are received, processed for duplication, and redacted of personal information. He stated that City staff will make best efforts to ensure that all correspondence will be posted online, distributed to the City Council, and made part of the public record for this item.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON
MATTERS LISTED ON
THE AGENDA ONLY**

The following individuals expressed support and/ or provided comments for the City Council to adopt a resolution calling for a ceasefire in response to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East:

Lucy Pettit, Los Angeles resident
Erica Nellesen, Pasadena resident
Giancarlo Abejero, Glendale resident
Beatrice Valenzuela, Los Angeles resident
Estee Chandler, from Jewish Voices for Peace
Teri Stein, Los Angeles resident
Hedad Tarifi, Arcadia resident
Eric Pettit, Los Angeles resident
Dr. Lena AlSarraf, Pasadena resident
Reverend Rosa Candida Ramirez, Alhambra resident
Joshua Martinez, Pasadena resident
Zoe Laub, from PCC Anti-War Club
Astrid Conder, Los Angeles resident
Chris Mehren, Pasadena resident
Hannah Koester, Pasadena resident
Lucinda Wills, Pasadena resident
Johnathan Silva, Glendale resident
Marley Otto, Pasadena resident
Dan Huynh, Pasadena resident
Abdullah Farooq, Pasadena resident
Max Pettit, Los Angeles resident
Mark Chase, Pasadena All Saints Church
Blair Miller, Pasadena resident
Frank Scoffield, Pasadena resident
Randall Heyn-Lamb, Pasadena resident
Caelyn Oei, Covina resident
Doni Heyn-Lamb, Pasadena resident
Robert Schaefer, PCC Anti-War Club
Salma Zahr, Pasadena resident
Rob Muthaih, Pasadena Mennonite Church
Milly Itzhak, Claremont resident
Huda Alnatour, Pasadena resident
Sophie He, Pasadena resident

Dr. Gilbert Walton, Pasadena resident
Sofia Kabbara, Pasadena resident
Amari Bennett, Pasadena resident
Bert Newton, Pasadena resident
Amal Alkalla, Pasadena resident
Tasha Willis, Pasadena resident
Cecile Kim, La Crescenta resident
Holly Hamdan, Pasadena resident
Avraham Stern, Pomona resident
Teddy Harris, Pasadena resident
Nate Hebert, Pasadena resident
Emma Bornstein, Pasadena resident
Elly Levy, residence not stated
Ayah Kana, Pasadena resident
Arend Jessurun, South Pasadena resident
Md Shaheed, La Verne resident
Azeemuddin Khaja, Pasadena resident
Mohammad Shehata, La Crescenta resident
Anastasia Lewis, Pasadena resident
Lisa Muthiah, Altadena resident
Joe Roos, Altadena resident
Valerie El-Alfie, Pasadena resident
Thea Krizmanich, Santa Monica resident
Dunya, Pasadena resident
Omar Ricci, Glendale resident
Rizwan Bhatti, Pasadena resident
Nasser Karem, residence not stated
Jessica Gerhardt, South Pasadena resident
Thea Acker, Pasadena resident
Cheri Herrboldt, Altadena resident
Peter Dreier, Pasadena resident
Sofia, PCC Anti-War Club
Margaret Villa, residence not stated
Kaveh Naeeni, Pasadena resident
Sarah Alikhan, Pasadena resident
Una Lee Jost, Pasadena resident
Sarah Owainat, Glendale resident
Charles Xu, Pasadena resident
Levent Akbarut, Pasadena resident
Viri Mata, Pasadena resident
Charlotte Biancheri, Los Angeles resident
Khadeeja Abdullah, Alta Loma resident
Emily Ortiz, Orange resident
Jon Mabuni, Pasadena resident
Anthony Manousos, Pasadena resident
Jennifer Levy, Pasadena resident
Carmen Conde, Pasadena resident
Tarek Shawky, Pasadena resident
Ely Wahba, Pasadena resident
Lady in black coat, residence not stated

The City Council recessed
the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

The City Council
reconvened the meeting
at 7:18 p.m.

Amer Zahr, Michigan resident
Girl in beige sweater, residence not stated
Omar Z., Irvine resident
Yasmeen, Pasadena resident
Jon Fuhrman, Pasadena resident
Victoria Alexander, Los Angeles resident
Michael Diaz, Costa Mesa resident
Jill Shook, Pasadena resident
Yasmin Cardona, residence not stated
Jacinta Lincka, Pasadena resident
Jaime Gutierrez, residence not stated
Esther Anderson, Pasadena resident
Nizam Hosani, residence not stated
Nishay Ahmed, residence not stated
Jessica Ferguson, Pasadena resident
Lulu Hammad, residence not stated
Lesly Velez, residence not stated
Saulo Velez, residence not stated
Mohamed Hamideh, residence not stated
Ethne Dennis, residence not stated
Liza Pena, Whittier resident
Isabel Ngo, Pasadena resident
Ryda Hamida, Pasadena resident
Reem Carnahan, Pasadena resident
Daniel Hashimi, Pasadena resident
Muneera Gardezi, Pasadena resident
Man with blue scarf, residence not stated
Adriana Bautista, Pasadena resident
Amir Shalabi, residence not stated
Adam Elalfi, Pasadena resident
Naveen Elguindi, residence not stated
Nour Hijaz, Pasadena resident
Fernando Islas, Los Angeles resident
Nazli Janjua, Claremont resident
Joe Feinblatt, Pasadena resident
Lady in beige sweater, residence not stated
Liberty McCoy, Pasadena resident
Maria Avalos, Pasadena resident
Noor Abdel-Haq, Party for Socialism and Liberation
Andrew Good, Pasadena resident
Easah Zain, Pomona resident
Kaya Streets, residence not stated
Zain Hasan, Pasadena resident
Shaq Bdair, Pasadena resident

The following individuals expressed concerns and/or opposition to the City Council adopting a resolution calling for a ceasefire in response to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, urging the City Council to focus on issues within local communities and refrain from taking stances on international affairs.

Franci Levine Grater, Pasadena resident
Jason Moss, Jewish Federation of the Great San Gabriel and
Pomona Valleys
Terry Tornek, Pasadena resident
Raina, Pomona resident
Anne Marie Otey, Pasadena resident
Rob Mor, Pasadena resident
Sophie Miller, Pasadena resident
Paul-Matthew Zamsky, Pasadena resident
Batsheva Frankel, Los Angeles resident
Jen Stock, Los Angeles resident
Justin Bois, Pasadena resident
Carl Selkin, Pasadena resident
Yekusiel Rivkin, Pasadena resident
Beth Sheby, Los Angeles resident
Alan Zachary, Encino resident
Ed Honowitz, Pasadena resident
Lia Goldstein, Los Angeles resident
Matthew Sheby, Pasadena resident
Michal Polonsky, Pasadena resident
Laura Garza, Los Angeles resident
Deborah Liatos, Los Angeles resident
Larry Garf, Pasadena resident
Lady in green coat, residence not stated
Shawn Paper, Pasadena resident
Alexandra F., Pasadena resident
Amy Weliky, Altadena resident
Rod Stirbl, Pasadena resident
Andre Quintero, residence not stated
Arnold Siegel, Pasadena resident
Lady in black vest, residence not stated
Jesse Duker, Pasadena resident
Benzion Chinn, residence not stated
Mara Landay, Pasadena resident

Mayor Gordo thanked the members of the public for their comments and re-emphasized the rules of decorum during the City Council's discussion on this matter.

Councilmember Rivas acknowledged that the City should prioritize local matters over international affairs, but pointed out that despite the City's lack of policy to consider larger issues, the City has addressed matters pertaining to foreign affairs (i.e., Proclamation Announcing Support for Armenian American Community Members in December

2022). She expressed support for the City Council to further discuss policy for acting on nonlocal affairs at a later time. She provided a brief overview of the resolution she drafted, noting directions to congressional representatives and the federal government to utilize diplomacy to end the bloodshed. She expressed support for a ceasefire resolution and submitted her draft for the City Council's consideration and discussion.

Councilmember Masuda thanked the public for their comments. He expressed neutrality on the matter and stated that after reviewing the public comments he received by email, he supported the idea that the City Council should focus on local needs, and allow congressional leaders more informed on international affairs to lead the nation on these types of issues. He moved to approve staff recommendation B, to adopt a policy that the City will not take official positions on any non-local, political, or social issues. Motion failed due to lack of second.

Councilmember Lyon stated that the City has a history of acknowledging issues that are important to the community. He expressed support for the City taking a position on a non-local issue under three circumstances: if there is demonstrable interest of constituents, if the position taken is in the best interest of the City as a whole, and if the position taken is fairly representative of the City as a whole, where even those who may disagree can recognize the wisdom of the decision. He emphasized his role as an elected official is to represent his community broadly and the need to utilize language that is broadly representative.

Vice Mayor Madison acknowledged that the City Council is a political body and expressed support for taking positions on political issues. He advocated for making changes to the resolution proposed by Councilmember Rivas to better reflect sentiments on both sides.

Mayor Gordo advocated for building upon Resolution No. 9831 (Condemning Hate and Xenophobic Violence Against All Persons), which was adopted on March 22, 2021, as a basis for urging the City's federal representatives to work towards peace for all. Following discussion, Mayor Gordo presented and proposed language for a declaration that incorporates sentiment from Resolution No. 9831, calling on state and federal leaders to work cooperatively with the global community to pursue peace in the Middle East. He noted that the proposed language clarifies that the City of Pasadena is supportive of peace in every part of the world and urges federal legislators and the President to work collaboratively to that end.

Following discussion, it was moved by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Mayor Gordo, to adopt the proposed declaration.

Vice Mayor Madison noted that the language in the proposed declaration does not say anything, and advocated instead to work with Councilmember Rivas' proposed resolution instead.

Councilmember Williams stated that contrary to prior statements that the City Council is not a political body, it is rather a body of public servants. She emphasized that a resolution is law and expressed concerns that the City Council does not have the expertise to propose such law pertaining to foreign affairs. She expressed support for focusing on policy and Mayor Gordo's proposed declaration.

At the request of the City Council, Version 1 of the Mayor's proposed declaration was distributed to the full City Council and posted on the video screen. The Mayor then reviewed the declaration as part of the City Council's deliberations.

Councilmembers Hampton and Jones supported the approach proposed by Mayor Gordo, and spoke in agreement with Version 1 of Mayor's proposed declaration, which calls for the release of all hostages and a ceasefire.

Councilmember Rivas stated that she cannot support Version 1; she referenced the verbiage in the second "Whereas" and stated that if the risk of death is imminent, a ceasefire should be called for.

Councilmember Williams and Mayor Gordo agreed to a friendly amendment to approve Version 1, instead of Version 2, of the proposed declaration.

Councilmember Hampton advocated for a short recess to provide the City Council with an opportunity to wordsmith Version 1 of the declaration.

Councilmember Rivas made a friendly amendment to the motion to implement language in Version 1, Section 2, to state that "the City of Pasadena joins other cities calling on leaders at state and federal levels to work cooperatively with the global community to release all hostages, seek bilateral de-escalation and ceasefire, ensure timely delivery of aid to Gaza, and pursue peace in the Middle East to guard and protect the lives, health, and security of all innocent civilians."

Mayor Gordo and Vice Mayor Madison advocated for a friendly amendment to remove the verbiage from Section 2 stating that the City "joins other cities". Vice Mayor Madison emphasized the need to properly assign responsibility, noting that the State leaders are not responsible for working on peace in the Middle East. He stated that President Biden's Administration is responsible for working on the matter and suggested that the declaration give direction for the Administration to "continue" their efforts. Mayor Gordo agreed with removing "state leaders" from the declaration.

Councilmember Williams accepted all friendly amendments and suggested changes to the declaration and the current motion.

For clarification purposes, City Attorney Bagneris read the declaration with the amendments made to Sections 2 and 3:

“Section 2: The City of Pasadena calls on leaders at the federal level to continue to work cooperatively with the global community to release all hostages, seek bilateral de-escalation and ceasefire, ensure timely delivery of aid to Gaza, and pursue peace in the Middle East to guard and protect the lives, health, and security of all innocent civilians.”

“Section 3: The City Council requests a copy of this declaration be sent to the offices of Congressmembers Judy Chu and Adam Schiff, Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler, and President Joe Biden.”

Following discussion, it was moved by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Mayor Gordo, to approve the proposed declaration as amended and detailed above.

AYES: Councilmembers Hampton, Jones, Lyon, Masuda, Rivas, Williams, Vice Mayor Madison, Mayor Gordo
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

ADJOURNMENT

On order of the Mayor, the regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Victor M. Gordo, Mayor
City of Pasadena

ATTEST:

City Clerk