

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

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

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

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

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 and 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.

  
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Victor M. Gordo, Mayor  
City of Pasadena

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk