

CITY OF PASADENA
City Council Minutes
April 7, 2025 – 5:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chamber

OPENING: Mayor Gordo called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. (Absent: Councilmembers Hampton, Jones, and Madison)

CLOSED SESSION On the order of the Mayor, the regular meeting recessed at 5:01 p.m. to discuss the following closed session items:

Councilmember Hampton arrived at 5:10 p.m. **CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL regarding pending litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)**

Councilmember Jones arrived at 5:12 p.m. **Name of Case: Poer & Quillian v. City of Pasadena, et. al. Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No.: 22AHCV01036**

Councilmember Madison arrived at 5:20 p.m. **CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL regarding pending litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)**

Name of Case: Crutchfield et al v. City of Pasadena Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No.: 24STCV12359

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL regarding pending litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)

Name of Case: Gordon v. City of Pasadena Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No.: 24STCV26720

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - ANTICIPATED LITIGATION Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2) (one potential case)

The above closed session items were discussed, with no reportable action at this time.

On the order of the Mayor, the regular meeting reconvened at 6:35 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was led by Councilmember Jones.

ROLL CALL:
Councilmembers:

Mayor Victor M. Gordo
Vice Mayor Jessica Rivas
Councilmember Rick Cole
Councilmember Tyron Hampton
Councilmember Justin Jones
Councilmember Jason Lyon
Councilmember Steve Madison
Councilmember Gene Masuda

Staff:

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

CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Mayor Gordo presented a proclamation to Pasadena Beautiful Foundation and the City's Public Works Department, declaring April 12, 2025 as Arbor Day in the City of Pasadena. Greg de Vinck, Public Works Director, thanked the City Council for recognizing Arbor Day, and briefly spoke on the importance of increasing the City's tree canopy and updating the tree master plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Roy Becerra, Pasadena resident, expressed concerns regarding vandalism of his personal property and requested assistance with his matter.

Olden Denham, Pasadena resident, thanked City staff for meeting with him and provided comments related to officer-involved shootings and the need for the City to take action to implement recent related legislation.

Yadi, Pasadena resident, requested for the City Council to agendaize discussion regarding the City's response to the Eaton Fire and to provide more information on the City's fire preparedness.

The following individuals provided comments advocating for the City's divestment from specific companies (in relation to Israel) and the Fire & Police Retirement Board pension portfolios:

- Sean Wakasa, Altadena resident
- Justine Wuebold, Pasadena resident
- Randall Heyn-Lamb, Pasadena resident
- Marina Lecoeuche, Pasadena resident
- Jasmine Emgate, Pasadena resident
- Alex Vilaoria Winnett, Pasadena resident

William Magnum, Altadena resident, expressed concerns regarding poor water pressure and the City's response during the time of the Eaton Fire.

In response to public comment, Mayor Gordo reported that the Fire Department will be reporting on the Eaton Fire at the Public Safety Committee meeting on April 16, 2025.

Councilmember Madison left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

In response to public comment, Mayor Gordo stated that the Fire and Police Retirement Board handles the fiduciary responsibility for investing funds, separate from the City Council's investment policy. Councilmember Hampton suggested that the public could attend the Fire and Police Retirement Board meetings to provide their comments directly to FPRS.

CONSENT CALENDAR

City Manager/ Executive Director

APPROVE THE AMENDED JOINT EXERCISE OF POWERS AGREEMENT FOR THE BURBANK-GLENDALE-PASADENA REGIONAL HOUSING TRUST TO REMOVE BOARD MEMBER TERM LIMITS (Housing Dept.)

Item discussed separately

Item discussed separately

AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SWINERTON BUILDERS FOR HALE BUILDING INTERIOR REMODEL – PHASE II (1ST FLOOR) PROJECT FOR AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$2,517,162 (Public Works Dept.)

City Council

RESIGNATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, & REAPPOINTMENTS

APPOINTMENT OF TARA L. MASTRO TO THE SENIOR COMMISSION (District 1 Nomination)

APPOINTMENT OF NAT NEHDAR TO THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (District 4 Nomination)

APPOINTMENT OF MARJORIE LINDBECK TO THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE PARKING METER ZONE ADVISORY COMMISSION (At Large Nomination/District 3)

APPOINTMENT OF JULIA COWLISHAW TO THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE PARKING METER ZONE ADVISORY COMMISSION (At Large Nomination/District 7)

RESIGNATION OF ANDREA TOTTEN FROM THE ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY COMMISSION (District 1 Nomination)

City Clerk/ Secretary

Item discussed separately

LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHING PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD (PRHB) FOR SCHEDULED AND UNSCHEDULED VACANCIES AFFECTING TENANT MEMBER, AT LARGE MEMBER, ALTERNATE TENANT MEMBER, AND ALTERNATE AT LARGE MEMBER POSITIONS (Office of the City Clerk)

MINUTES APPROVED

March 3, 2025	City Council
March 3, 2025	Successor Agency to the Pasadena Community Development Commission
March 10, 2025	City Council
March 10, 2025	Successor Agency to the Pasadena Community Development Commission
March 17, 2025	City Council
March 17, 2025	Successor Agency to the Pasadena Community Development Commission

CLAIMS RECEIVED AND FILED

Claim No.	Claimant	Claim Amount
2025-0226	Wilma Mitchell	\$ 35,000.00+
2025-0227	Mia Oliva, Gianna Salcedo, Mya Salcedo	35,000.00+
2025-0228	California Automobile Insurance Company obo Kristofer Carnish	1,433.63
2025-0229	Eddy Blanco	486.00
2025-0230	Sara Katrdzhyan	248.47
2025-0231	Michael Crowley	2,700.00
2025-0232	William Martin	187.00
2025-0233	Mercury Insurance aso Milette Tamayo	5,215.56
2025-0234	Michelle Harris	35,000.00+
2025-0235	Benjamin Lin	1,200.00
2025-0236	Julissa McCarthy	1,000.00
2025-0237	Khaterine Smith	10,000.00+
2025-0238	Shivam Dixit	1,500.00
2025-0239	CSM, LLP o/b/o USAA a/s/o Lindsay Pond	4,168.15
2025-0240	John George Walkowicz	35,000.00
2025-0241	State Farm Mutual Ins Co aso Lee Myles	5,106.01
2025-0242	Clyde Scoby	Not stated
2025-0243	Andrew Alexander Mendoza	5,000.00
2025-0244	Nazar Balyan	35,000.00+
2025-0245	Enrique Navarro	6,000.00
2025-0246	Monica Cuellar	35,000.00+

MOTION:

It was moved by Councilmember Masuda, seconded by Councilmember Lyon, to approve Items 3 and 5 on the Consent Calendar. (Motion unanimously approved) (Absent: Councilmember Madison)

CONSENT ITEMS DISCUSSED SEPARATELY

Councilmember Masuda left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

APPROVE THE AMENDED JOINT EXERCISE OF POWERS AGREEMENT FOR THE BURBANK-GLENDALE-PASADENA REGIONAL HOUSING TRUST TO REMOVE BOARD MEMBER TERM LIMITS (Housing Dept.)

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:
 (1) Find that the action proposed in the agenda report is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines per Section 15320 (changes in organization of local agencies); and
 (2) Approve the Amended Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust (“Trust”) Joint Powers Agreement (“JPA”) removing the two-term limit for Board of Director representatives and authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the staff recommendation. (Contract No. 23,832-1)

Councilmember Lyon expressed opposition to the proposed recommendation and advocated for maintaining rotational government of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust through term limits.

Vice Mayor Rivas reiterated her support for overall support for term limits but noted that after partaking in discussion at the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust Board meeting, she supported the recommended action.

MOTION:

It was moved by Vice Mayor Rivas, seconded by Councilmember Hampton, to approve the staff recommendation.

AYES: Councilmembers Cole, Hampton, Jones, Vice Mayor Rivas, Mayor Gordo

NOES: Councilmember Lyon

ABSENT: Councilmembers Madison and Masuda

ABSTAIN: None

Councilmember Madison returned to the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Councilmember Masuda returned to the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SWINERTON BUILDERS FOR HALE BUILDING INTERIOR REMODEL – PHASE II (1ST FLOOR) PROJECT FOR AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$2,517,162 (Public Works Dept.)

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

(1) Find the contract proposed in the agenda report to be categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 – Existing Facilities, and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances; and

(2) Award contract to lowest and best bid dated March 6, 2025 submitted by Swinerton Builders in response to the plans and specifications for the Hale Building Interior Remodel – Phase II (1st Floor) project, and authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract for an amount not-to-exceed \$2,517,162 which includes the base contract amount of \$2,288,328 and a contingency of \$228,834 to provide for any necessary change orders. (Contract No. 33217)

Nina Chomsky, Pasadena resident, advocated for the project to preserve, respect, and maintain the historic characteristics of the first-floor lobby and ceiling of the Hale Building.

MOTION:

It was moved by Councilmember Cole, seconded by Councilmember Lyon, to approve the staff recommendation. (Motion unanimously approved) (Absent: None)

Mayor Gordo stated a conflict of interest, recused himself from the item, and left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHING PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD (PRHB) FOR SCHEDULED AND UNSCHEDULED VACANCIES AFFECTING TENANT MEMBER, AT LARGE MEMBER, ALTERNATE TENANT MEMBER, AND ALTERNATE AT LARGE MEMBER POSITIONS
(Office of the City Clerk)

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Find that the proposed action contained in the agenda report is exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3), the "common sense" provision that CEQA only applies to projects that may have a significant effect on the environment; and
- (2) Adopt a resolution approving and formalizing the process to make appointments to the PRHB for scheduled and unscheduled vacancies affecting Tenant Member, At Large Member, Alternate Tenant Member, and Alternate At Large Member positions on the Board. (Resolution No. 10120)

MOTION:

It was moved by Councilmember Hampton, seconded by Councilmember Madison, to approve the staff recommendation. (Motion unanimously approved) (Absent: Mayor Gordo)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Gordo returned to the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Councilmember Lyon reported a conflict of interest, disclosing that he previously worked as general counsel for the Western Justice Center, recused himself, and left the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Councilmember Cole reported that he previously voted on this item as a former Planning Commissioner, recused himself, and left the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: QUASI-JUDICIAL ACTION: AN APPEAL OF THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS' DECISION TO APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #7114 TO ESTABLISH A CLUBS, LODGES, PRIVATE MEETING HALL LAND USE WITHIN AN EXISTING BUILDING (MAXWELL HOUSE) AT 55 SOUTH GRAND AVENUE

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Find that the action proposed in the agenda report is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities), and there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt classes, and therefore, there are no unusual circumstances; and
- (2) Adopt the findings in Attachment A (of the agenda report) to uphold the Board of Zoning Appeals' decision and approve Conditional Use Permit #7114, with the conditions in Attachment B (of the agenda report).

City Clerk Jomsky recapped that the 16 letters in support of the Western Justice Center's application for Conditional Use Permit No. 7114 ("CUP"), 3 letters in opposition to the CUP, 1 letter providing a status update on the CUP, and 1 letter providing information on the Maxwell House, were received during previous public hearings. He reported that additionally, 1 letter in opposition to the CUP and providing comments on the matter was received for this public hearing by the City Clerk's Office, and noted that all correspondence

was distributed to the City Council, posted online, and made part of the public record for this item.

Justin Mahramas, representing the applicant, provided background information on the Western Justice Center's ("WJC") request for a CUP.

Richard McDonald, representing the appellant, stated that the number of events historically held by the WJC reported by staff and presented by the applicant is inaccurate, and expressed concerns that the Maxwell House is not permitted to advertise and host such events, stating that the WJC's mission and core functions are non-profit in nature.

The following individuals expressed opposition to the WJC's application and/or provided related comments:

Anita Yagjian, appellant
Peggy West, appellant
Carl West, appellant

Councilmember Madison reiterated his support for the WJC's initiatives and their mission, while expressing concerns with them operating the Maxwell House as an event venue. He discussed his interpretation of the lease for the Maxwell House and noted that only community meetings or even fundraisers for the organization during non-business hours would be appropriate, not for-profit activities such as weddings and similar events that have been noncompliant with the City's municipal code. He advocated for the City Council to work with the WJC to amend the lease agreement (providing sufficient support to maintain the premises) while maintaining the intent of the lease, and including consideration for the adjacent residential neighborhood.

In response to Councilmember Hampton's inquiry regarding the complaints filed by the neighbors adjacent to the Maxwell House, Jennifer Paige, Planning Director, reported that the City did not directly receive formal complaints from the neighbors during the temporary use permit period. She stated that the neighbors had made their complaints to the WJC, who then responded by attempting to address the neighbors' concerns. She added that the City's Code Enforcement Officers respond to complaints during the day and the Police Department responds during after-hours.

In response to Councilmember Madison's request for clarification, Planning Director Paige confirmed that the City only became aware that the WJC did not have a CUP to host ancillary special events at the Maxwell House after a traffic accident associated with an event occurred in recent years.

Discussion ensued regarding the hours of operations for after-hour events, limiting the number of permitted events as part of the CUP, and the cost improvements implemented by the WJC in response to the neighbors' complaints.

Mike Davis, appellant, expressed his concerns and spoke on disruptions that occur as a result of events hosted by the WJC.

Mayor Gordo reminded the public that the issue at hand is not to discuss and evaluate the past conduct of the WJC, or the lease agreement itself, but rather for the City Council to determine if a CUP, with conditions outlined by staff, should be approved for the WJC.

In response to Mayor Gordo's inquiry regarding the plan for public use, Dion O'Connell, Assistant City Attorney, clarified that the plan was crafted mainly to fulfill federal regulation requirements for the negotiated sale of surplus property to a public body. City Attorney Bagneris also clarified that the City's interpretation of the zoning code and the lease agreement allows for special ancillary events to be hosted at the Maxwell House as a public benefit.

Councilmember Hampton noted he would be unable to support the staff recommendation unless certain revisions were made, including that staff provide an established point of contact for residents to make complaints afterhours, the number of allowed events be limited to 18 events per year, event hours be restricted, a six month review of the CUP occur from the date of the first event, and a check-in at 12 months be conducted at the hearing officer level.

MOTION: It was moved by Councilmember Masuda, seconded by Councilmember Jones, to close the public hearings:

AYES: Councilmembers Hampton, Jones, Madison, Masuda, Vice Mayor Rivas, Mayor Gordo

NOES: None

ABSENT: Councilmembers Cole and Lyon

ABSTAIN: None

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Following discussion, it was moved by Councilmember Hampton, seconded by Councilmember Jones, to provide direct point of contact for residents to make complaints afterhours, modify the hours of operations for the WJC to host events (Sat 9am-10pm, Sun 9am-8pm, and block out all major holidays), limit the number of events to 18 per year, add 6 month and 12 month reviews from the date of the first event, with both reviews to occur at the hearing officer level.

AYES: Councilmembers Hampton, Jones, Masuda, Vice Mayor Rivas, Mayor Gordo

NOES: Councilmember Madison
ABSENT: Councilmembers Cole and Lyon
ABSTAIN: None

**RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM OFFICERS AND
DEPARTMENTS**

City Manager

Councilmembers Lyon and Cole returned to the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Vice Mayor Rivas left the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Councilmember Madison left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Item held; to be heard at a future City Council meeting.

Councilmember Madison returned to the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Vice Mayor Rivas returned to the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Councilmember Hampton left the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

APPROVE THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF THE LIBRARY GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS (Finance Dept.)

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

(1) Adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the issuance and sale of not-to-exceed \$195,000,000 aggregate principal amount of its General Obligation (GO) Bonds (Central Library Project) Series 2025, declaring its official intent to reimburse and approving other related actions in connections therewith (Resolution No. 10121); and
(2) Find that the proposed action is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as defined in Section 21065 of CEQA and Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project.

It was moved by Councilmember Hampton, seconded by Councilmember Jones, to approve the staff recommendation. (Motion unanimously approved.) (Absent: Councilmember Madison and Vice Mayor Rivas)

REPORT ON RENT RELIEF PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY THE EATON FIRE

Recommendation: This item is for information only; no action is required at this time.

Councilmember Hampton requested for the item to be deferred to the next City Council meeting.

Christine Rodriguez, Pasadena resident, thanked the City Council for providing information on resources available to tenants impacted by the Eaton Fire and advocated for a rent relief program.

Councilmember Madison requested City staff to include the amount of relief funds raised by Pasadena Community Foundation in the staff report.

Councilmember Cole recommended that City staff identify solutions to prevent impacted residents from losing their homes while also alleviating the financial burden on housing providers by exploring private sector, nonprofit sector, and faith-based sector solutions and support to step up and provide assistance to those affected by the fire.

Following discussion and public comment, on order of the Mayor, and consensus of the City Council, the item was held to a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Advisory Bodies

Mayor Gordo stated a conflict of interest, recused himself from the item, and left the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

REQUEST FROM THE CITY COUNCIL TO RETURN WITH OPTIONS AND LEGAL ANALYSIS ON THE REQUEST OF THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD FOR THE CITY COUNCIL TO DIRECT THE CITY ATTORNEY TO PREPARE AN ORDINANCE WITHIN 60 DAYS ADOPTING ALL AVAILABLE TENANT PROTECTIONS PROVIDED IN THE ELLIS ACT (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 7060 ET SEQ.)

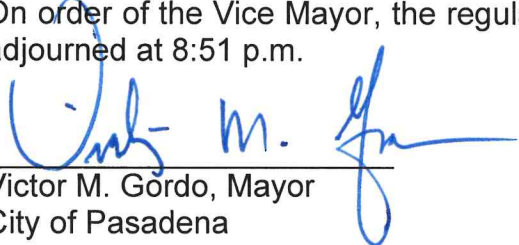
Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Find that the action proposed in the agenda report is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b); and
- (2) Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance within 60 days adopting all available tenant protections provided in Government Code Section 7060 et seq., as detailed in the agenda report.

Following a brief discussion, it was moved by Councilmember Cole, seconded by Councilmember Jones, to approve the staff recommendation. (Absent: Councilmember Hampton and Mayor Gordo)

ADJOURNMENT

On order of the Vice Mayor, the regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 8:51 p.m.



Victor M. Gordo, Mayor
City of Pasadena

ATTEST:



City Clerk