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National City Council Meeting

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Agency: City of National City- City Council Committees

Date: Jan. 21, 2025

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Summary

Here's what you need to know

- The National City Public Library reached several milestones in 2024, including doubling its circulation, greatly increasing library visits and active participation, expanding both in-house and external programs, and successfully launching San Diego County's first library tool-lending service. Concerns were also raised about a proposal to install armed guards at the library.
- The National City Council voted to advance the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process to analyze the feasibility of constructing 100-200 for-sale housing parcels on six city-owned plots to help combat the city's nearly 70 percent renter population.
- The National City Council received a presentation on One Calendar, a centralized platform designed to provide residents with information on community events, activities, and programs. The Council voted to postpone adopting One Calendar to allow for further discussion and evaluation.

Immediate Actions

- The following agenda items were approved unanimously:
 - Items 9.1, 9.2, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.12, 9.13, and 9.15 on the consent agenda.
 - Item 9.3: Second Amendment to the Agreement with Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC for On-Call Consulting Services for the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
 - Item 9.5: Agreement with KMA for a Full Cycle RFQ/P Process for City-Owned Parcels to Create For-Sale Homeownership Opportunities
- The decision to adopt item 9.6 (Agreement with SuperC AI Inc. to Provide a Cloud-Based Software Program to Streamline the Management and Operation of Community Events and Activities) was deferred to a future date to allow for a more robust assessment.

Accessibility Issues

- No accessibility issues were encountered while on assignment.

Follow-Up Questions

- N/A

Notes

Meeting Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Mayor Ron Morrison.
- The agenda for this meeting may be viewed by clicking [here](#), while a video and/or audio recording of the meeting may be found by clicking [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.
 - **All timestamps below were taken from the [video](#) recording.**

Councilmembers in Attendance:

- Mayor **Ron Morrison**: Present
- Vice-Mayor **Marcus Bush**: Present
- Councilmember **Luz Molina**: Present
- Councilmember **Jose Rodriguez**: Present
- Councilmember **Ditas Yamane**: Present

Staff Present:

- Ben Martinez, City Manager
- Barry J. Schultz, City Attorney
- Shelley Chapel, City Clerk

Agenda Item #5: Non-Agenda Public Comments: (4:48)

- Terri-Ann Skelly, Madison Rapp, Megan Stewart, and Robert Park commented on

the harmful effects of tobacco and cannabis products on the mental health, well-being, and development of youth and young adults.

- Edward Nieto raised concerns about the late release of audited financial statements.
- Sherry Gogue thanked the Council for their assistance in removing the grate that caused flooding in her neighborhood.
- Margaret Godshalk opposed a proposal to place armed guards at the National City Public Library, voicing concerns that it would conflict with the library's inclusivity, result in police officers receiving overtime at the library's expense, and, as a result, reduce the library's budget, impacting existing programming and staffing. "The safety of our staff and patrons is imperative ... however, I don't believe that the way to achieve this is to have someone carrying arms in the library," she said. **(22:15)**
- Mika Blanco urged the Council to promote a healthier 2025 by reducing the number of liquor stores, smoke shops, fast food restaurants, and pollution-emitting businesses in National City. "National City's data shows that we are in the top percentage of obesity for our children, top pollution, top asthma, and, also, at one point we were known for the 'Mile of Bars,'" she said. **(24:42)**

Agenda Item #6: Proclamations and Recognition: (26:03)

- 6.1) New City Employees and Promotions:
 - The National City Police Chief recognized Ivan Martinez Cuevas as a new-hire police officer.
 - Travis Karlen was recognized as the new Community Services Director.
 - Josie Flores Clark was promoted to Management Analyst III.
 - Zaide Jurado was promoted to Recreation Supervisor.
- 6.2) Employee of the Quarter:
 - Fire Engineer Daniel McGuire was named Employee of the Quarter for his 9-year career characterized by professionalism, leadership, and a strong commitment to the fire department and the community.

Agenda Item #7: Board of Trustees Annual Report to the City Council: (44:54)

- Presentation by Margaret Godshalk, Library Board of Trustees member:
 - In 2024, the National City Public Library reached several milestones, including doubling its circulation to over 100,000 checkouts, increasing visits by approximately 30,000, and gaining thousands of new active library cardholders. Additionally, the library staff managed over 30,000 reference questions and facilitated programs for 12,000 participants.
 - The National City Public Library has secured over \$150,000 in funding from the California State Library and The Packard Foundation to support various

programs, such as English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult/Family Literacy, Lunch at the Library, and Stay and Play.

- With the support of a state-funded sustainability grant, the National City Public Library launched San Diego County’s first library tool-lending service, promoting sustainability by providing free access to tools and equipment primarily for low-income individuals.
- The National City Public Library has expanded its resources beyond its walls by joining the [Link + Program](#), enabling patrons to borrow books from other libraries, and through [Discover & Go](#), which provides free access to museums and attractions across San Diego. The library also partnered with Southwestern College and Pima Medical Institute to provide work-study opportunities.
- For the first time, the National City Public Library participated in the [One Book, One San Diego program](#), a collaborative effort by KPBS and over 80 public library organizations to promote community engagement through literacy.
- Council comments:
 - Vice-Mayor Bush thanked Godshalk and the library staff for their work with the library and community before briefly addressing concerns regarding the proposal to implement armed library guards. “At the end of the day, we do need to make our people feel safe that are using the library and we don’t want to lose that,” he said. **(51:22)**
 - Mayor Morrison asked where National City currently ranks in library participation per capita.
 - Godshalk responded that she is not currently aware of its ranking, but she can provide the answer in the future.

Agenda Item #8: Regional Boards and Committee Reports (54:33)

- Councilmember Molina provided an update from the SANDAG Board of Directors on the new Port of Entry in Otay Mesa. With a total cost of \$1.3 billion, the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry is set to open in late 2027, featuring state-of-the-art technology designed to “shorten border wait times, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance regional mobility, fuel economic growth, and strengthen border security.” **(55:43)**
- Vice-Mayor Bush provided an update from the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) on the proposed trolley to the airport. The initial plan for a trolley from the Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) facilities to the airport has been replaced with a proposal to extend existing trolley lines and install an automated people mover. **(58:34)**

Agenda Item #9: Consent Calendar (1:02:56)

- Presentation:
 - Item 9.4 was moved to the next meeting date on Tuesday, Feb. 4.
 - Items 9.3, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.11, and 9.14 were pulled from the consent calendar.
- Public comments:
 - None.
- Council comments: (1:04:11)
 - Councilmember Yamane asked why item 9.4 was moved to another date.
 - Mayor Morrison responded that it was pulled after staff agreed to a request for additional information.
- Council action: (1:04:34)
 - Vice-Mayor Bush, seconded by Councilmember Molina, motioned to approve items 9.1, 9.2, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.12, 9.13, and 9.15 on the consent agenda. The motion was carried by a unanimous 5-0 vote.

Agenda Item #9.3: Second Amendment to the Agreement with Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC for On-Call Consulting Services for the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (1:04:45)

- Presentation:
 - None.
- Public Comments:
 - None.
- Council Comments:
 - None.
- Council Action:
 - Councilmember Bush, seconded by Councilmember Yamane, motioned to approve item 9.3. The motion was carried by a unanimous 5-0 vote.

Agenda Item #9.5: Agreement with KMA for a Full Cycle RFQ/P Process for City-Owned Parcels to Create For-Sale Homeownership Opportunities (1:06:05)

- Presentation:
 - None.
- Public Comments: (1:06:23)
 - Edward Nieto questioned whether the Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) process may impede the creation of for-sale homeownership opportunities.
- Council Comments: (1:10:45)
 - Mayor Morrison asked if the homeownership model being considered includes rental equity in addition to for-sale options.

- Carlos Aguirre, Housing and Community Development Director of the National City Housing Authority, responded that staff is exploring rental equity as a potential path to homeownership for individuals with limited housing options.
 - Councilmember Rodriguez asked for clarification on the number of plots available for construction and the total amount of developable parcels. **(1:11:56)**
 - Aguirre responded that they are considering 6 plots of land for homeownership housing, with a capacity of 100 to 200 parcels.
 - Councilmember Molina asked whether the RFQ/P process will ultimately serve as a feasibility study or if developers will have the option to start building as soon as their proposals are accepted. **(1:14:45)**
 - Aguirre replied that the National City Council will be informed of the results of the RFQ and feasibility study ahead of the release of the RFP, ensuring feedback can be collected to guide the next steps.
 - Vice-Mayor Bush acknowledged that while the RFQ/P serves as a first step, it's a significant step in determining whether development is feasible and, if not, determining what pathway to best undertake next. "I hope we can continue to move forward because at 70 percent being renters, we definitely need to do more to increase our homeownership rate," he said. **(1:21:18)**
 - "You have me to support this project because this is what we said we are gonna do ... make sure we have homeownership in the city properties that we have," said Councilmember Yamane in support. **(1:22:19)**
- **Council Action: (1:22:33)**
 - Councilmember Rodriguez, seconded by Councilmember Yamane, motioned to approve item 9.5. The motion was carried by a unanimous 5-0 vote.

Agenda Item #9.6: Agreement with SuperC AI Inc. to Provide a Cloud-Based Software Program to Streamline the Management and Operation of Community Events and Activities (1:22:52)

- Presentation by Maayan Parnass, Strategic Account Executive @ with: (1:27:29)
 - **One Calendar** is a virtual one-stop hub that allows residents to access information about key events, activities, and programs in their communities through a single, unified calendar.
 - One Calendar covers all local events, from council meetings to fundraisers and festivals, and is highly personalized to match the interests of the user.
 - One Calendar aims to unite communities by connecting the various micro-communities within them, such as newcomers, students, young parents, business owners, and more.

- **Council Comments: (1:30:09)**
 - Councilmember Molina asked for clarification on how One Calendar categorizes individuals into micro-communities.
 - Parnass explained that One Calendar groups residents by tracking the various interests, hobbies, and events they register for.
 - Councilmember Molina asked whether One Calendar will reside on the city council website or require residents to download an app.
 - Parnass replied that no download is required as One Calendar can be embedded into the City's existing website and is fully mobile-friendly.
 - Councilmember Molina asked how One Calendar will interact with existing registration platforms.
 - Parnass replied that data from existing platforms can be incorporated into One Calendar to avoid beginning from scratch.
 - Councilmember Molina, Vice-Mayor Bush, and Mayor Morrison noted the importance of having further discussions and seeking input from staff on One Calendar before making a final decision.
- **Public Comments: (1:44:30)**
 - Edward Nieto expressed support for the proposed software and suggested it include a feature for recording meeting attendance and raising awareness of lesser-known meetings.
- **Council Action: (1:49:15)**
 - Councilmember Molina, seconded by Councilmember Rodriguez, motioned to withhold a decision on item 9.6 to allow for further evaluation. The motion was carried by a unanimous 5-0 vote.

Agenda Item #9.7: Agreement with Terra Realty Advisors to Provide Advice and Represent the City, in Connection with Various Real Estate Needs including Outdoor Advertising Billboard Sign(s) (1:49:42)

- **Presentation by Ben Martinez, City Manager: (1:50:03)**
 - This proposal aims to conduct a viability analysis on three sites along the I-5 near National City to determine the feasibility of constructing billboards for revenue generation. If construction is deemed feasible, an RFP will be issued for potential developers to respond.
- **Public Comments: (1:53:18)**
 - Edward Nieto raised concerns about homeless individuals potentially building encampments beneath the proposed billboards, citing similar encampments found near the I-805 freeway.
- **Council Comments:**

- “I would like to see the economic benefit of this project first before I approve this,” said Councilmember Yamane. **(1:54:35)**
- Councilmember Molina asked how the billboards would generate revenue for the city.
 - Martinez explained that the billboards would be placed on city-owned property along the freeway and require billboard companies to pay rent.
- “Despite the plus for us ... I wonder if that’s a good thing for National City aesthetically. I would prefer that we didn’t do this, so I’m not going to be supportive of this motion,” said Councilmember Molina. **(1:57:52)**

(2-hour time limit for notetaking reached)

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