

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2015**

A. Roll call

The Special Joint Meeting of the City Council and the Lodi Senior Citizens Commission of July 8, 2015, was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 6:00 p.m., in the Holz Room of Hutchins Street Square, 125 South Hutchins Street, Lodi.

Present: Council Member Kuehne, Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, and Mayor Johnson
Absent: Council Member Mounce, and Council Member Nakanishi
Also Present: City Manager Schwabauer, Deputy City Attorney Fukasawa, and City Clerk Ferraiolo

Also in attendance from the Lodi Senior Citizens Commission were the following: Jill Hernandez (left at 7:15 p.m.), Pat Hill, Terri Whitmire, and Chairperson Robert N. Anderson.

B. Topic(s)

B-1 Discussion of Items of Mutual Concern

Mayor Johnson opened the meeting for public comments unrelated to the general topic concerning mutual concerns of the City Council and Lodi Senior Citizens Commission; no comments were received.

Mayor Johnson reported that the Commission expressed an interest in meeting with the City Council to discuss various concerns and that the Commission liaison provided Council with the Commission's minutes from the last 15 months to give Council an insight into what the Commission has been discussing.

Senior Citizens Commission Chairperson Robert N. Anderson presented a handout (filed) with background information on the Commission's activities, objectives, costs, and need for clarification from the City Council on the role and path of the Senior Citizens Commission.

Council Member Kuehne stated that it appears there is a large population of seniors in Lodi who could benefit from assistance from the Commission, particularly on the issue of affordable housing for seniors, which could include input from the Commission on viable locations and needs associated with such housing. Council Member Kuehne further suggested a comprehensive guide for seniors with information on services, activities, and agencies, to which Commissioner Terri Whitmire responded that the Commission produces such a senior resource guide; however, it is costly to print. Ms. Whitmire added that the National census shows that the senior population will see a significant increase over the next ten years. Council Member Kuehne stated that an affordable housing project should be conveniently located near shopping, access to regional transit, and senior-related services.

Mayor Johnson pointed out that there is a segment of the senior population that is not destitute, adding that some seniors need more assistance than others. Chairperson Anderson agreed, stating that seniors must qualify to receive assistance, but some in this category are underserved and need help advocating for their needs. Mr. Anderson reported that San Joaquin County also publishes a book on countywide senior services. Commissioner Whitmire stated that Lodi's directory is user-friendly, it differentiates between Lodi and Stockton services, and is devoid of advertisements. Mayor Johnson suggested a one-stop comprehensive directory for all County services, broken down by community, in order to avoid duplicative efforts and publications.

In response to Mayor Johnson, Chairperson Anderson stated he was unsure as to why the LOEL Center decided to vacate its satellite office at Hutchins Street Square. Mayor Johnson stated that the Commission minutes indicate that over the past year the focus, participation, and enthusiasm began to dissipate and he questioned if that had any impact on LOEL Center closing its satellite office. Commissioner Whitmire stated the Commission is struggling to adequately educate seniors about programs, services, and what the Commission can do for them, adding that many seniors are unaware there is a Senior Citizens Commission. Participation dropped after the Senior Center Coordinator retired, and the current liaison, Jennifer Winn, took over, but only 20 percent of her time was dedicated to the Senior Commission. Recreation Supervisor Jennifer Winn stated that she was originally hired as the Senior Center Coordinator and that 65 to 70 percent of her time was dedicated toward senior center duties; however, after a year and a half, she assumed additional responsibilities when another position merged with hers and she took on the duty of special events and other commissions.

Council Member Kuehne suggested better signage and marketing, stating the Farmers' Market would be an appropriate venue to promote the Commission. Chairperson Anderson stated that the Commission is advisory in nature by identifying issues and concerns important to seniors and that it needs staff in order to be successful in this endeavor.

Commissioner Whitmire stated that the previous Coordinator managed the senior information and referral center, which did not conflict with the LOEL Center, as well as the Hutchins Street Square pool, lifeguards, and classes.

Ms. Winn requested clarification on the role of the liaison, stating she believed the liaison served as the middle person between the Council, departments, and commissions, to which Mayor Johnson concurred. Ms. Winn stated she is able to assist the Commission with advocacy and quarterly reports, but the group is looking for staff to help with events.

In response to Council Member Kuehne, Commissioner Whitmire listed the Commission's past accomplishments including: advocating for and encouraging a functioning Dial-A-Ride transportation system versus a standard taxicab; promoting the Police Partners program; implementing a work group to coordinate services for seniors with minor home repair needs; coordinating educational events and succession seminars; publishing the senior resource guide; and meeting with the Recreation Commission to encourage senior-related activities, such as Bocci ball and a walking court. In response to Mayor Johnson, Ms. Whitmire stated that the attempt to encourage activities for seniors went no further than the meeting with the Recreation Commission. Mayor Johnson suggested it should be simple for the Commission to measure off a walking track for seniors at Hutchins Street Square. Commissioner Whitmire stated the facility previously had a senior walking program before the former Coordinator retired. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director Jeff Hood stated that the LOEL Center had a walking group when it operated at the Square, but the participation level declined significantly. Ms. Whitmire stated that various reasons contributed to the decline in participation and that Commissioner Williams was instrumental in getting the last portion of the walking track completed. City Manager Steve Schwabauer pointed out that Mr. Hood ensured the track was complete by pressing the Public Works Department to finish the project.

Commissioner Jill Hernandez stated she is concerned that the Commission does not hear from its target audience about their needs and concerns and suggested that, when Council hears about senior concerns, they are passed along to the Commission. Mr. Schwabauer explained that it is a continual struggle to encourage public participation.

Ms. Whitmire asked the attending public to express their concerns, which included the following comments from unidentified individuals: 1) Unaware that the Commission existed; 2) Request to maintain the current Hutchins Street Square pool schedule in light of the participants' efforts to increase attendance; and 3) Lack of adequate notification, advertising, and visibility for all of the City's boards and commissions.

Mayor Johnson expressed that the Council is committed to doing what is necessary to ensure the pool is utilized to its maximum.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, Mr. Schwabauer confirmed that all board and commission meetings are publicized with notices on the posting boards, website, and local newspaper, similar to that of City Council meetings. Mayor Johnson pointed out that it is also incumbent upon the public to become involved in the community's business and activities.

Ms. Winn stated that many of the other commissions she oversees are active in promoting their purpose by producing brochures, posters, and fliers. Chairperson Anderson countered that the other commissions, such as the Greater Lodi Area Youth Commission, have subcommittees and organizations that provide funding, to which Ms. Winn stated that the Youth Commission raises its own funds. In response to Mayor Johnson, Commissioner Whitmire confirmed that the Commission solicited advertisers to help offset the printing costs of the senior resource directory. Mayor Johnson questioned why the Commission does not raise funds, to which Ms. Whitmire responded that the Commission has no place to hold donated funds, such as the recent \$2,000 donation for advertising, and the Commission has entrusted the LOEL Center to hold its funding.

In response to Council Member Kuehne, Mr. Schwabauer stated the City can create a holding account for the Commission's donations, similar to that of the Youth Commission. Mr. Hood added that it may be simpler for the Commission to secure sponsors who can directly pay invoices for needed services instead of recognizing a revenue and expense. Mr. Schwabauer added that the Lodi Community Foundation is another option for housing larger donations.

In response to Commissioner Pat Hill, Ms. Winn stated that the Senior Citizens Commission was budgeted \$500 annually for a number of years, but it was decreased to \$300 and ultimately eliminated due to the fact that it was untouched by the Commission. Ultimately, \$1,500 was placed into a common account for boards and commissions to use for office supplies.

Council Member Kuehne suggested the Commission has the ability to make the group as active and visible as it wants, but the members have to put in the time and effort.

In response to Commissioner Whitmire, Ms. Winn confirmed that she previously reported to the Commission that it had an available budget, that it was reduced, and that it was ultimately eliminated; that Mr. Hood mentioned it in a meeting; and that it was discussed with the Mayor as well. Ms. Winn further reported that the Commission used money from the general commission fund in the past for printing.

In response to Commissioner Hill, Ms. Winn confirmed that Commissioner Williams was reimbursed from the City's general commission account for her expenses associated with advertisements and bulletins for its October training session.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, an unidentified member of the public stated that most seniors use the local newspaper as its form of communication media and she further suggested that Commissioner Williams, who is the LOEL Center director, advocate, distribute, and present information to LOEL Center participants, which is free advertising for the Commission. Commissioner Whitmire responded that Ms. Williams includes Commission information in the LOEL Center newsletter.

In response to Council questions regarding events, Ms. Whitmire stated that event fliers are posted at the hospital and various senior facilities; the Commission hosts the Aging with Grace seminar annually, as well as other seminars; and the events are typically very well attended.

In response to Commissioner Whitmire, Mr. Hood confirmed there is available funding in the general commission printing budget. Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler suggested that printing companies may also be willing to donate services toward the Commission's endeavors.

Mayor Johnson reported that he had a conversation with retired Senior Citizens Commissioner Mark Sey, who suggested the Commission could be folded into the LOEL Center's board to become an educational adjunct of the board and compliment LOEL's vibrant programs and activities. Commissioner Whitmire expressed concern that the LOEL Center, which is a private,

not-for-profit organization, could discontinue operating in Lodi at any time, adding that the County's Meals on Wheels Program was discontinued, as was her Early Memory Loss program that she turned over to the LOEL Center. She believed the Commission should continue, even if it opts not to raise funds, by advocating and planning for ways to meet seniors' needs. She further stated that it is the City's responsibility to buy units for low-income seniors; not the LOEL Center's. Mr. Schwabauer pointed out that the City invested millions of dollars into building low-income housing for seniors, including the future Tienda Drive project, as well as funding construction costs for the LOEL Center. In further response, Mr. Schwabauer stated that the City routinely relies on partnerships with non-profit organizations, such as the Lodi Salvation Army, LOEL Center, and Lodi House, to be successful because it does not have the resources to exclusively handle the magnitude of these projects.

Mayor Johnson stated that many agencies rely on private, non-profit organizations to fill in the gaps they cannot handle and suggested that the Commission could be duplicating the LOEL Center's efforts. Commissioner Whitmire disagreed, stating that the Commission is still necessary to oversee the Center, just as the San Joaquin County Commission on Aging oversees County agencies. Mayor Johnson suggested that an association be formed of the two groups, with the Commission promoting educational programs and the LOEL Center offering services. Chairperson Anderson stated that he believed the Commission's role is to identify and advocate the full spectrum of senior services for the community and he could not see how the LOEL Center would fill that role. In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Anderson stated that the LOEL Center is lacking in areas relating to health, isolation, and transportation issues, and those are matters that should be addressed by the Commission.

Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler expressed support for continuing the Commission with a greater focus on fundraising and communication.

Mayor Johnson requested the City Manager and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director research the feasibility of funding and assigning a staff member to work on senior-related issues, which could determine the future direction and success of the Commission. In response to Mr. Anderson, Mayor Johnson explained that the Commission stated it experienced declining success once the Senior Center Coordinator retired, and his suggestion is to ascertain whether there is funding available to hire an individual to run the on-site program during the day while the Commission continues to advocate and begin its fundraising efforts.

Council Member Kuehne expressed support for continuing the Commission and agreed with Mayor Johnson that it was worthwhile to see if staffing is a viable option.

In response to Ms. Winn, Mayor Johnson stated that at this point it is a question of whether or not a position can be funded. Once that is determined, further discussion is necessary to decide the duties and responsibilities of that position and where it fits into the organization. Mayor Johnson summarized that the Commission has experience in dealing with senior issues, but it needs to develop a working product to bring that effort to fruition, and that the groups meet again once staff reviews the feasibility of adding a position.

Pat Patrick, President/CEO of the Lodi District Chamber of Commerce and member of the LOEL Center board, stated the board has no plans to expand its services to address the growing senior population and he believed the LOEL Center would be unable to meet that demand exclusively.

C. Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer M. Ferraiolo
City Clerk