

NOTE: These minutes are subject to Council approval and are not verbatim; however, tapes are available for public review.

**MINUTES OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL**  
**IN REGULAR SESSION,**  
**COMMUNITY CENTER, 1249 MARIN AVENUE**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2009**

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**8:00 p.m.**

Mayor Atkinson, who led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, called the regular meeting of the Albany City Council to order on the above date.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Council Members Javandel, Lieber, Thomsen, Wile & Mayor Atkinson  
Absent: None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Beth Pollard, City Administrator; Robert Zweben, City Attorney; Jacqueline Bucholz, City Clerk; Judy Lieberman, Assistant City Administrator; Charles Adams, Finance Director; Ann Chaney, Community Development Director; Jeremy Allen, Youth Services Supervisor.

**3. REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION, IF ANY**

Mayor Atkinson reported that no action was taken but directions were given.

**4. GOOD OF THE CITY/PUBLIC FORUM/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Atkinson opened the Good of the City/Public Forum/Announcements and the following person spoke: Brian Parsley, Albany resident.

A summary of the comments is as follows: Asked that the Council and the community to stop blaming Magna for all of the problems and noted that Golden Gate Fields is very profitable and gives a lot of money to the City and the School District. Noted that the State and East Bay Regional Park District has not taken accountability for the Eastshore State Park and stated that it is time for the City to move on.

There being no one else wishing to speak Mayor Atkinson closed the Good of the City/Public Forum/Announcements.

## **5. STUDY SESSION**

### **5-1. Economic Development**

(File No. 470-40)

The Assistant City Administrator reported that in 2007 Council identified economic development as a high priority goal and in 2008 a contract was approved with Neil Mayer and Associates and Darlene Rios-Drapkin of Urban Transformation, as a sub consultant.

A mid-year interim report has been completed and is intended to provide both an update and a framework for future action and/or study for the remaining six months of the consultant contract.

The interim report provides a focused analysis of the City's overall economic condition and then addresses the separate geographical sections of the City's commercial/industrial activity. The Assistant City Administrator noted that the data available at this time might not be indicative of the trend for the upcoming year or the results of the fourth quarter of 2008.

The Assistant City Administrative commented that it is important to assess the City's commercial and industrial sector for two vital reasons. Business and industry provide direct revenue to the City to support services for the public and a healthy commercial sector provides a vibrant contribution to the overall attractiveness of the City and sense of community.

Neil Mayer, Neil Mayer Associates, spoke to the Council and went over the interim status report. Mr. Mayer noted that signage is very important to a vital commercial district and that the City should continue in the green business direction and that the City needs to build on the success of Target and Petsmart. Mr. Mayer noted that the mix on Solano Avenue and San Pablo Avenue is very different.

Darlene Rios-Drapkin, Urban Transformation, spoke about the Main Street approach and that the streetscape needs to be kept clean and attractive and reiterated the need for signage especially at the entrance to the City. It was also noted that the City should make an effort to partner with the community on this project.

The following people spoke: Brian Phipps, Albany resident; Peter Goodman, Albany resident; Allan Maris, Albany resident; Nick Pilch, Albany resident; Brian Parsley, Albany resident; Bob Outis, Albany resident.

A summary of the comments is as follows: Noted that the City needs a comprehensive identity, which he believes is larger than the streetscape and landscape. Believes that the City needs to think about the role of art in the public spaces noting that art could be the reason people come to Albany. Suggested that members of the Art Committee be appointed to an advisory committee on economic development. Noted that the City's unreinforced masonry program needs to be enforced and that a City motto needs to be developed. Asked that people think outside of the box regarding funding and to look at long term and long range plans. Agreed that public art on Solano Avenue would be a good idea, which might help with the graffiti problem that the City is dealing

with at this time. Also the City needs to work on the beautification and economic development for San Pablo Avenue. Spoke to certain data in the interim status report and disagreed with the comparison of Solano Avenue and main street America.

The Council discussed the report and a summary of the comments is as follows: It is very important to recognize art in the City and agrees that signage is also very important. Believe that the data for the last quarter of 2008 is very important to get a sense of the economy of the City. Agreed that signage and City motto is a good idea and also suggested that a business directory be put on the City website and thought be given to the idea that the Chamber of Commerce and Solano Avenue Association provide a card that can be taken around to businesses in the City that is punched each time it is used and maybe after the 10<sup>th</sup> punch the consumer receives something free. Suggested that the area on Cleveland have a theme and that maybe a good business would be one that deals in windmills to generate electricity. Agreed that beautification is very important and likes the idea of beautifying the trashcans and noted that parking and restroom availability is also very important to shoppers. Agreed that the focus on Cleveland Avenue should be green. Suggested that the list of various mottos the City received be given to the Arts Committee for them to review and make a recommendation.

**6. OTHER BUSINESS, REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED, ANNOUNCEMENT OF EVENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.**

**6-1.** The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 8:00 p.m.** due to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on January 19<sup>th</sup> and the Albany Unified School District Board of Trustees meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

9:45 p.m. There being no further business before the City Council it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Jacqueline L. Bucholz, CMC, City Clerk.

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MARGE ATKINSON  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

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JACQUELINE L. BUCHOLZ, CMC  
CITY CLERK

# City Council Minutes