MINUTES
REGULAR PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019
CIVIC CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBER
73510 FRED WARING DRIVE, PALM DESERT, CA 92260

I. CALL TO ORDER - 3:00 P.M.

Mayor Weber convened the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:
Councilmember Jan C. Harnik
Councilman Sabby Jonathan
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly
Mayor Pro Tem Gina Nestande
Mayor Susan Marie Weber

Also Present:
Lauri Aylaian, City Manager
Robert W. Hargreaves, City Attorney
Rachelle D. Klassen, City Clerk
Lori Carney, Director of Administrative Services
Russell Grance, Director of Building & Safety
Ryan Stendell, Director of Community Development
Martin Alvarez, Director of Economic Development
Janet M. Moore, Director of Finance/City Treasurer
Tom Garcia, Director of Public Works
Ty Davis, Division Chief, Palm Desert Fire/Riverside Co. Fire Dept./Cal Fire
Bryan White, Battalion Chief, Palm Desert Fire/Riverside Co. Fire Dept./Cal Fire
Matt Martello, Asst. Chief, Palm Desert Police/Riverside Co. Sheriff’s Department
M. Gloria Sanchez, Management Specialist II

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - A (CLOSED SESSION ITEMS)

None
IV. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Request for Closed Session:

A. Conference with Real Property Negotiator pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8:

1) Property: Merle Street - 14 Self-Help Lots (APNs 624-441-014 through 624-441-022, and 624-440-032 through 624-440-036), Palm Desert

   Negotiating Parties:
   Agency: Lauri Aylaian/Janet Moore/City of Palm Desert/
   Palm Desert Housing Authority
   Property Owner: City of Palm Desert
   Under Negotiation: x Price x Terms of Payment

2) Property: Lease Property - 43900 San Pablo Avenue (APN 622-250-016), Palm Desert

   Negotiating Parties:
   Agency: Lauri Aylaian/Tom Garcia/Ryan Stendell/Johnny Terfehr/
   City of Palm Desert
   Property Owner: City of Palm Desert
   Other Parties: Kevin Kalman/Desert Recreation District
   Under Negotiation: x Price x Terms of Payment

B. Conference with Legal Counsel regarding significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2):

   Number of potential cases: 2

With City Council concurrence, Mayor Weber adjourned the meeting to Closed Session at 3:02 p.m. She reconvened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

V. RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING - 4:00 P.M.

A. REPORT ON ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION.

   Mr. Hargreaves reported that direction was given but no reportable actions were taken.

VI. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - Palm Desert Charter Middle School ASB Members Cameron Sacks & Venessa Cazares
VII. INVOCATION/INSPIRATION - Councilmember Jan C. Harnik

VIII. AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION, RECOGNIZING SCOUTS BSA TROOP 1973 - FOR REGISTERING THE FIRST CHARTERED FEMALE TROOP IN THE CITY OF PALM DESERT.

Mayor Weber presented the framed proclamation to Troop 1973, along with individual certificates to each of the members: Zephia Emma Renée Bock, Jade Grace De Jesus, Brianna Alexis Groat, Rachel Frances Sanford, Aaraya Dante Vizl, Essence Sierra Vizl, and Tea Vuksanovic.

Joining Mayor Weber in front of the dais for the presentation were Ms. Judi Pitchford, Chartered Organization Representative, who is a liaison between the Historical Society of Palm Desert and Troop 1973, Mr. Rob Pitchford, President of the Historical Society of Palm Desert, which chartered Troop 1973, along with Troop Leader Sandy Bock. Ms. Pitchford also noted that in the audience today was Mr. Jordan McCandless, Scouts BSA District Executive, who serves youth in this area with more than 700 Scouts. Ms. Pitchford went on to detail the mission of Scouts BSA, with a specific aim of nurturing, character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. She related that the Troop had already formed into a tight unit and named themselves the ‘Vans Patrol,’ experiencing multiple nights of camping, with more to come. Additionally, the Troop has participated in two service projects, one being highlighted on the local news after it was spearheaded by Scoutmaster Sandy Bock to work alongside 130 other Scouts and Scouters to help repair trails at the Coachella Valley Preserve that were damaged by recent rain. Ms. Pitchford noted that the Scouts were already all working on various merit badges ranging from Pioneering, Camping, Personal Fitness, Family Life, First Aid, and Emergency Preparedness, with one Scout having completed Aviation and Scuba Diving. At this meeting, the Troop was working on their Community Service Merit Badge and observing the City Council in action. She went on to credit the Historical Society of Palm Desert (HSPD) for their excitement as stewards of the City’s history, playing a role to ignite the same passion for the City in Troop 1973. They felt part of this aim is embedded in significance of the Troop’s number, ‘1973,’ purposefully chosen to coincide with the year of Palm Desert’s incorporation. She closed by expressing sincere appreciation for the Mayor’s recognition of the historical significance of forming the first female Scouts BSA Troop in the City of Palm Desert, with the hopes of more to come. The trailblazers in Troop 1973 are honored and will truly remember this occasion the rest of their lives.
B. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 2019 AS “BUILDING AND SAFETY MONTH” IN THE CITY OF PALM DESERT.

Mayor Weber presented the proclamation to Director of Building & Safety Russell Grance, who expressed appreciation for the recognition and thanked City Council for all of its continued support. Department staff came forward for a photo with the entire City Council.

C. INTRODUCTION OF JULIA SCHUMACHER AS NEW BRANCH MANAGER FOR THE PALM DESERT PUBLIC LIBRARY, A BRANCH OF THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM.

Ms. Sue Duran, Desert Zone Manager for the Riverside County Library System, said she is a regional manager for all 10 of Country Library branches in the desert, as well as the Museum and MakerSpace in La Quinta. She had started her career in Palm Desert in 2000 as a Page, returned in 2011 as the Young Adult Librarian, and following the renovation project in 2012, was asked to manage another library. Years later, she was now pleased to manage the managers and spoke about her personal philosophy in this regard. She said last year the Palm Desert Manager took ill, leaving staff there without much guidance and feeling a little lost; therefore, it was decided to place Ms. Julia Schumacher, a well-established Desert Zone Branch Manager, in the position on an interim basis until the Manager returned. After Ms. Schumacher was there only a week, she received feedback she was thrilled to hear - staff wasn’t just happy, but ecstatic. Sadly, the former Manager had to retire, and the position was put out to rehire, but she knew that they wouldn’t have to look far. She went on to relate that the Riverside County Library System/LSS honors four values: 1) Being caring; 2) being a partner; 3) being credible; 4) being positive – Julia Schumacher possesses and honors them all, in addition to displaying the 28 fundamentals that make up the company’s foundation. Namely, they were that she “brings it every day” (#19), “is a brand ambassador” (#22), and definitely “honors commitments” (#11). She offered that Ms. Schumacher has blossomed into one of the most respected managers on the team, including being awarded the first customer service star under Ms. Duran’s tenure, and she was pleased to introduce her to the City Council and community.

Ms. Schumacher greeted the City Council and all present today. She related that she started in public education and had been a school librarian for many years as a certificated teacher-librarian, with a Master in Arts in Teaching from Tufts University with a Library Science Endorsement. She worked for 24 years in public education, moving to the Coachella Valley in 2016 when her husband retired and made the switch to working in a public library. She said it had been a real joy, noting serving the public library gave her the same feeling of serving people every day as she’d experienced in education, with the community’s needs being great and varied. She commented that
she’d managed the Cabazon Library Branch the last two years, which was a great experience, followed by being able to step in as Interim Branch Manager in Palm Desert. In the few months she’s been here, she’d learned what an amazing staff was already in place, what great things were happening, and that all were excited to move forward. She and staff were here to serve the Palm Desert community and hoped all will come by to visit and be served. She looked forward to continuing to work with the City.

Mayor Weber thanked Ms. Schumacher and welcomed her to Palm Desert.

D. PRESENTATION OF RECAP FROM 2019 PALM DESERT FASHION WEEK AND FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL BY PALM SPRINGS LIFE.

Ms. Paulina Larson, Marketing Director, Palm Springs Life, provided a highlights recap of two of the City’s signature events, Fashion Week and Food & Wine Festival. Printed booklets were presented to City Councilmembers, which were received for the record and are now on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

Fashion Week:
– Total of 22 events held, including runway shows, lectures, trunk shows, exhibition, panel discussions, meet & greets, and more.
– Engaged with 23 stores on El Paseo, resulting in 123 in-store events, activities taking place the week of Fashion Week.
– Brought in more than 100 people – sponsors, talent, staff, models, to help create the Fashion Week experience in Palm Desert.
– Generated $60,000 in charity, noting that these were not dollars taken from sponsorship, but earned dollars from the charities.
– 2019 attendance was a record high of 13,650, with 40% coming from out-of-market. Demographics of attendees are very important – over 50% of them being in the age range of 45-64 with very high household income, meaning they have the power to come spend the night in local hotels, dine in the restaurants, and experience Palm Desert’s City events.
– Economic impact from the eight-day event was $5 million.
– Media & Promotional Value equaled $2.5 million. Noted a drop compared to 2018’s $13 million; however that was part of a strategy to remove the plan from traditional public relations efforts to more of a digital and social media effort, as well as leveraging the talent, including many of the designers talking about coming to Fashion Week on their own social or other digital platforms. This resulted in a really good impression value of more than one billion – the strategy being successful and pleasing organizers, since they are continually shifting the plan.
– One of the most important aspects is going back to ticketholders to ask about their experience during Fashion Week El Paseo. Since they have a very sophisticated ticketing platform, they are able to communicate with ticketholders via e-mail and realized a 32% response rate.
• Nearly 90% of attendees rated Fashion Week El Paseo from good to excellent.
• In response to question about their visit to the area, 54% of attendees stayed overnight in greater Palm Desert, and 69% of them visited the area for two weeks or more.
• Further, 24% of attendees came here specifically for Fashion Week El Paseo; 31% them extended their stay.
• 87% of attendees dined out during the event, and they dined out multiple times.
• Attendees also visited the El Paseo Shopping District (77%), with 70% of those making a purchase on the street.
• From 2019 attendees, 85% of them want to return in 2020.

Food & Wine Festival
– 175 events held in 2019, including celebrity chef demonstrations, book-signings, as well as the October event held in New York City to promote Palm Desert Food & Wine.
– Total of 500+ staff brought in to help animate, including the chefs, their talent, and back-of-the-house teams.
– This event garnered $20,000 in earned charity monies.
– Attendance growth achieved an all-time record with 6,440, which was a very big jump.
– 63% of Food & Wine attendees are from out-of-market, in keeping with studies showing that people will travel for such events.
– Demographic is very similar to Fashion Week, with over 50% of attendees ages 46-60 and very high household incomes.
– Economic impact from the three-day event was $2.4 million.
– Media/Marketing promotional value for Food & Wine very similar to Fashion Week; value of everything they were able to garner at $2.9 million, with a lot higher impression number achieved in 2019 due to shifting the strategy from traditional PR (Public Relations) to more digital/social and leveraging the talent.
– Food & Wine attendees were polled about their experiences, which were very similar to Fashion Week.
• Almost 90% said they experienced Food & Wine with a good to excellent rating.
• 80% of attendees stayed the night in greater Palm Desert, and many stayed here for two weeks or more.
• 30% of attendees traveled here specifically for Food & Wine, and 40% extended their days here.
• 79% dined out during Palm Desert Food & Wine, most of them dining out multiple times.
• They visited El Paseo, and 69% made purchases.
• 81% want to return in 2020.
Councilman Jonathan thanked Ms. Larson for the informative and comprehensive presentation, and for the great job with the events. With regard to the economic impact information, he asked how the figures were calculated and if they were done by an independent agency.

Ms. Larson answered that the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) conducted a study in 2017, resulting in the data presented here being relatively conservative, now that it’s 2019. She added that they are calculated based on how much an attendee, on average, spends on an event, including food, lodging, and ticket price, and she confirmed that was how most of the event economic impact was calculated based on the CVB’s third-party model. She went on to again thank the City for its support of Fashion Week and that they looked forward to continuing to work collaboratively and bringing a great event in 2020.

IX. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - B

MS. JAN PINZA, Nasturtium Way, Palm Desert, reported on a serious dog-on-dog attack that her neighbor’s dogs suffered recently at the University Dog Park. She said the offending dogs were pit bulls, which have been known to create problems for others at the Park. Further, the man whose dogs were attacked had to put up a $2,000 check at the veterinarian to ensure his injured dogs would be treated in intensive care. The neighbor called the City’s Parks & Recreation and was told that it’s a civil matter, there wasn’t anything they could do. He was referred to Animal Control and received the same response upon calling there, and she was outraged by it. She and her neighbor are part of the community, and City Council says they are here for the good of the community, which she assumed included safety at the City’s parks and dog parks. She believed the two dogs that attacked are vicious and weaponized, not unlike someone coming into any other park with a lethal weapon and waving it around. Meanwhile, people like her have worked hard to socialize their little dogs so they can come to the dog park and play, and then they get attacked; it was unacceptable and begged for a solution. She had spoken with Management Analyst Johnny Terfehr, who listened very carefully and suggested, again, that she call the County; however, he also asked for solutions. One of the ideas she thought about was having Citizens On Patrol (COPs) monitor peak hours at the dog parks. Additionally, since members of the public have fobs for everything else, a fob system could be tied to the Riverside County Licensing process that would be required for entrance to the dog park. For visitors, she suggested they could register with the City or County for this purpose. She said there were a number of ways it could be managed, but it was currently unacceptable for vicious animals to come in and wreak havoc on the dog parks. She said it was not about finances but humanity, and this occurrence was wrong. She hoped the City Council would take action in this regard.

Mayor Weber thanked Ms. Pinza for taking the time here today and for her remarks. She assured her that staff would be following up on the issue.
Councilmember Kelly asked staff if there were any procedures in place allowing residents to request an animal to be barred from the dog parks.

In response, Mr. Stendell there wasn’t anything like that for direct resident action. However, he said the first line of defense is for residents to call the Park Ambassadors (their number is posted in the Park) and then file an incident report with the Desert Recreation District. From that point, City staff gets involved, and he said staff has taken action on problems like this in the past, with City Manager authorizing temporary or permanent expulsion from the parks. He reiterated that it was important to have documented incident reports, acknowledging that there are always two sides to every story. Once there is documented history of one or two incidents, depending on severity, he said the City has issued a 30-day suspension in one case, the other resulted in a permanent suspension from the park.

Councilman Jonathan requested referring this matter to staff for report and recommendation on a future City Council agenda. Councilmember Kelly concurred and asked that it include addressing whether the City’s current procedures should be enhanced.

Ms. Aylaian agreed staff would make such a report in the future.

X. MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS & REMARKS TO THE COMMUNITY

A. Councilmember Jan C. Harnik Committee Reports and General Comments.

1. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) - attended the Annual Conference and General Assembly last week held in Palm Desert.
   - Announced the ‘Connect Southern California’ (ConnectSoCal.org) project that is focusing on guiding the region’s growth, including transportation improvements and land use ideas to shape the future of Southern California. Three upcoming opportunities to participate in workshops being held locally at the UCR Palm Desert Center for all interested persons. She asked staff to provide a link on the City website for this information as well. She urged people to attend, because there would be a lot of great information, and representatives would love to get the feedback.

2. Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) - received update at yesterday’s meeting.
   - State Route 60 will be affected by the upcoming widening project; preliminary work starting late this month, full project will run from late July - December 2019. One westbound lane will be closed for the project, with commuters and travelers being advised to anticipate delay. She hoped staff could help deliver more information about the project to the community through the website or any other means.
B. Councilman Sabby Jonathan Committee Reports and General Comments.

1. Desert Community Energy - as reported at the last meeting, DCE Board voted to move forward with the Community Advisory Committee, with a request for interested persons now being activated. Information and application can be obtained from the CVAG (Coachella Valley Association of Governments) website; City staff requested to also publicize on City channels and invite residents to apply. Alerted Councilmembers to keep in mind anyone who might be interested in serving there, particularly Mayor Pro Tem Nestande as liaison to the Citizens’ Sustainability Committee to invite its members to apply for this opportunity, because it would be good to have one of them there.

Mayor Pro Tem Nestande said she would ask for an e-mail to be sent to Sustainability Committee Members inviting them to apply.

2. CVAG Homelessness Committee - meeting coming up next week, and he will provide details afterward. Some good news on this front, the CV Housing First Program has achieved a record amount of funding, along with a record number of cities and other entities participating.

The Homelessness Point In Time Count draft report is out, although not public information yet. It will be discussed at next week’s meeting, and he will make a follow-up report at the next City Council Meeting.

C. Councilmember Kathleen Kelly Committee Reports and General Comments.

1. SCAG Conference - also attended in Palm Desert last week where one of the things she found most helpful was engaging with representatives from jurisdictions that are striving to use rideshare or van pools, or variations thereof, to help fill transportation needs where a standard trunk line bus route may be impractical. Coachella Valley’s SunLine Transit Agency is about to develop pilot programming for something very similar. Good to make connections with similarly situated communities to share new transit ideas.

2. Coachella Valley Animal Campus Commission - attended this morning’s meeting. Quite a few residents have expressed concern about the puppy store on San Pablo Avenue and whether or not their sourcing might include animals from ‘puppy mills.’ That store has recently closed and, as was confirmed at this morning’s meeting, had been the subject of pretty vigorous enforcement visits by the Riverside County Department of Animal Services seeking to enforce the new State law that prohibits puppy sales unless they have come
from a shelter or non-profit rescue group. However, it was also reported that in an effort to skirt California’s new law, some out-of-state suppliers with questionable business practices had become non-profit entities in order to supply pets under this guise. Local advocates are staying in close touch with Sacramento legislators to draft additional legislation that would close this loophole.

D Mayor Pro Tem Gina Nestande Committee Reports and General Comments.

None


With City Council concurrence, the Meeting Summaries Report was received and filed.

1. **City Thursday Night Spring Concert Series** - congratulated the brilliance of staff for arranging last week’s opening concert with the group Berlin. It drew an excited, standing-room-only crowd to Civic Center Park on May 2. Tonight’s concert begins at 7:30 p.m. with the Mighty Untouchables and their Motown sound that features both classic and contemporary hits.

   Staff confirmed that there would be food trucks present for tonight’s concert as well.

   Mayor Weber commended Management Analyst Vanessa Mager for her good work last Thursday as more and more people continued showing up and additional space had to be found for vehicles to park, which was a welcome problem.

2. **Fiscal Year 2019-2020 City Budget Sessions** - commended Ms. Aylaian, Ms. Moore, the entire Finance Department and City staff for two well-run sessions on Monday and Tuesday this week to discuss the proposed FY 2019-2020 City Budget. The information was very well laid out and all questions raised were professionally addressed.

F. **City Council Requests for Action**.

None

G. **City Council Consideration of Travel Requests/Reports**.
XI. STAFF REPORTS AND REMARKS

A. City Manager


With City Council concurrence, the City Manager’s Meeting Summaries Report was received and filed.

2. Corporation Yard Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration.

Ms. Aylaian thanked Corporation Yard staff for again hosting a wonderful event for all employees and City Council, this year held on Dos de Mayo (May 2). Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, especially the great food, and upon inquiry, she offered to find out and report back on winner of the employee salsa contest.

B. City Attorney

None

C. City Clerk

None

D. Public Safety

1. Fire Department

Chief Davis announced that this is “Wildland Fire Preparedness Week,” reminding everyone to be careful with rising temperatures, vegetation drying out and becoming fuel that is very susceptible to a spark. He encouraged residents to be prepared before a fire starts to protect each other’s lives and property. First thing to do is understand fire risks and take action before a fire starts. He urged residents to talk and meet with their neighbors, get a protective plan to minimize harm to businesses, properties, and community assets. He said fire-safe construction features are encouraged to safeguard homes, as is observing points of entry (e.g. attic spaces or vents) where embers could travel to in the wind, as well as clearing brush and debris from property. He said the biggest recommendation is to develop an evacuation plan for you, your family, and any pets, and sharing it with your neighbors so that they are aware of them when you’re not home.
Majority of wildland fires are human-caused, meaning they can be prevented.

Councilmember Harnik pointed out that she’d seen quite a bit of dry brush on the bare lot located near the intersection of Ocotillo Drive/Tumbleweed Lane in the City and asked staff to follow up.

Chief Davis added that as everyone was well aware, the Camp Fire was the most devastating wildland fire in California’s history. He reminded everyone that fires can blow through cities, whether or not there are buildings or little brush, it could even be in the adjacent city or unincorporated areas, urging everyone to be safe.

2. Police Department

None

XII. CONSENT CALENDAR

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL

A. MINUTES of the Regular City Council Meeting of April 25, 2019.

Rec: Approve as presented.


Rec: Approve as presented.

C. CITY COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION MINUTES.


Rec: Receive and file.
D. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL of a Reimbursement Agreement with County of Riverside for Construction of Washington Street Intersection Re-Wiring and Controller Assembly Upgrades (Contract No. C38550, Project No. 551-17).

Rec: By Minute Motion: 1) Subject to such minor technical changes as may be necessary, approve a Reimbursement Agreement with Riverside County for Construction of Washington Street Intersection Re-Wiring and Controller Assembly Upgrades; 2) authorize the Mayor to execute said agreement – funds are available in Measure “A”, Account No. 2134617-4400100.


Rec: By Minute Motion: 1) Award subject one-year agreement to Waterline Technologies, Inc., Santa Ana, California, in the amount of $73,488 for chemical acquisition at Palm Desert Aquatic Center; 2) authorize the Mayor to execute same - if approved, funds are available in Account No. 2424549-4211100 - Supplies-Pool Chemicals.


Rec: By Minute Motion, accept the work as complete and authorize the City Clerk to file a Notice of Completion for the subject project.


Rec: By Minute Motion, accept the work as complete and authorize the City Clerk to file a Notice of Completion for the subject project.

H. REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION to Release Cash Deposits for Tract Map 37292 for Faithful Performance and Labor and Materials, and to Accept Maintenance Deposit Therefor (Mi Casa Property, LLC, Applicant).

Rec: By Minute Motion, release cash deposits for Tract Map 37292 in the amount of $6,162.30 for Faithful Performance and $3,423.50 for Labor and Materials, and accept a Maintenance Deposit in the amount of $684.70, which will be held for a period of one year.
I. REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION to Release Cash Deposits for Garagetown, Parcel Map 37349, for Faithful Performance and Labor and Materials, and to Accept Maintenance Deposit Therefor (Spinell Homes, Inc., Applicant).

Rec: By Minute Motion, release cash deposits for Garagetown, Parcel Map 37349, in the amount of $10,125 for Faithful Performance and $5,625 for Labor and Materials, and accept a Maintenance Deposit in the amount of $1,125, which will be held for a period of one year.

SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO THE PALM DESERT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

J. MINUTES of the April 25, 2019, Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Successor Agency to the Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency.

Rec: Approve as presented.


Rec: Approve as presented.

PALM DESERT HOUSING AUTHORITY

L. MINUTES of the Housing Authority Meeting of April 25, 2019.

Rec: Approve as presented.

Upon a motion by Kelly, second by Harnik, and 5-0 vote of the City Council, Successor Agency Board, and Housing Authority Board (AYES: Harnik, Jonathan, Kelly, Nestande, and Weber; NOES: None), the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

XIII. CONSENT ITEMS HELD OVER

None

XIV. RESOLUTIONS

None
XV. ORDINANCES
A. For Introduction:
   None
B. For Adoption:
   None

XVI. NEW BUSINESS
A. REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION OF AN EXPENDITURE OF MARKETING FUNDS FOR A NEW TOURISM AD CAMPAIGN AS EXTRA WORK, PROVIDED FOR IN MARKETING CONTRACT WITH IDEAPEDDLER, LLC (CONTRACT NO. C37180).

Tourism & Marketing Manager Thomas Soule commented that at a Study Session two weeks ago, City Council had opportunity to hear results of the first market research study the City had ever undertaken. This study helped staff determine Palm Desert’s marketing position in relation to other cities in the Coachella Valley. Further, it helped explore how people in the drive market perceive Palm Desert, what attracts them to shop, dine, and stay here; it represented the first step toward creating a new ad campaign for the City. At its regular April meeting, the Marketing Committee also heard results of the research project, and based upon those findings, approved of direction for a new ad campaign. To that point, the staff report before City Council today requests authorization to create it.

Mayor Pro Tem Nestande said she attended and saw the complete demonstration at the Marketing Committee Meeting, which was repeated for City Council at the Study Session on April 25. She asked how much of the budget had been spent so far with Ideapeddler, LLC.

Mr. Soule didn’t have that exact number with him today, but upon further question, he replied that the subject request was to initiate creation of a new campaign. Next step will be to brainstorm and develop some concepts, staff will help narrow them down, and then they will be presented to the Marketing Committee for feedback. He anticipated being back before City Council for authorization to take the further-developed concepts for more research with people in the City’s drive market to see how they’re received. He added that there would be plenty of opportunity for City Council to weigh in on what is developed. He added that there was a lot of work before the team; this was the first step.
Councilmember Harnik moved to, by Minute Motion, authorize $135,750 for the development of a new tourism advertising campaign, to be performed by Ideapeddler, LLC, Austin, Texas, as extra work, defined and provided for in subject contract – funds are available in the Marketing Department, Fund 1104417. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Kelly and carried by 5-0 vote (AYES: Harnik, Jonathan, Kelly, Nestande, and Weber; NOES: None).

B. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE FORMATION OF AN AD HOC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

Public Information Officer David Hermann stated that City Council is being presented with a proposal for creation of an Ad Hoc Community Engagement Committee, part of the City’s ongoing efforts to enhance civic engagement across Palm Desert. If approved by City Council, this group would work with City staff to identify meaningful and effective ways to better communicate with and encourage civic participation by everyone in Palm Desert. He said creation of this committee, first proposed by the City’s civic engagement consultants, has been endorsed by the City Staff Civic Engagement Task Force. Task Force Members, some in attendance at today’s meeting, recognized that this type of group will be critically important to help ensure that the City’s engagement efforts are organic and rooted in the community. He continued that the Staff Task Force has worked with the City Manager to identify potential candidates for the Community Committee, based on recommendations from the civic engagement consultants.

Councilmember Harnik was happy to see this effort moving forward, and Councilmember Kelly noted that she inferred that there will be an effort to populate the subject group with representatives from entirety of the City’s population. Mr. Hermann confirmed that was absolutely the goal and that there is passionate commitment to it by all concerned.

Councilmember Harnik moved to, by Minute Motion, approve formation of an Ad Hoc Community Engagement Committee and authorize the City Manager to appoint representatives to the Committee based on recommendations from the Staff Civic Engagement Task Force. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Nestande and carried by 5-0 vote (AYES: Harnik, Jonathan, Kelly, Nestande, and Weber; NOES: None).

XVII. CONTINUED BUSINESS

None
XVIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST BY ALLIED AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LLC, TO EXTEND ENTITLEMENTS AND CONTRACT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARC VILLAGE PROJECT AT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY VACANT PROPERTY KNOWN AS APN 622-020-096 (JOINT CONSIDERATION WITH THE PALM DESERT HOUSING AUTHORITY).

Senior Management Analyst Jessica Gonzales stated that approval of staff’s recommendation will allow an extension to entitlements and ground lease for the Arc Village Project. She recalled that in August 2018 the City Council/Authority Board approved an extension that aligned both the entitlements and ground lease for the project, which are soon to expire on May 17, 2019. Developer Allied Affordable Housing, LLC, requested an additional one-year extension to May 17, 2020, so that they can seek and secure the financing gap necessary to develop the project, having identified new and existing funding sources coming available within the next month to assist with that gap. She said staff recommends approval and offered to answer questions, noting that Allied Affordable Housing’s representative, Ms. Yvonne Delgadillo, was also present today for that purpose.

MS. YVONNE DELGADILLO, Allied Affordable Housing, LLC, Santa Monica, CA, expressed appreciation for the City’s/Authority’s support over the past two years. She acknowledged that it’s been a frustrating process for all in trying to secure funds. However, the subject extension request was being made because they’re seeing some new resources opening up within the next few months to help bridge the financing gap. Originally, she said they were considering a 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Project through the State of California. Whereas, now they’re exploring using a combination of 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, which are non-competitive, with a combination of other Housing and Community Development grants and resources from the State of California. One of those was the Multi-Family Housing Program, which was due to come out any time now. Additionally, she said another round of Home Funds was expected, which Allied applied for in August 2018, and theirs would have been the next project funded if more resources had been available. Although in the interim, she noted that Allied secured six vouchers from Riverside County Housing Authority, shortening the gap they face in order to secure all needed financing. She said the past year for Allied will be the last opportunity for them to go out and bring the subject project to fruition. She stated that Allied continues communicating with Desert Arc, neighbors of the site, and the City/Housing Authority, because they’re committed to this important project, reiterating great appreciation for all the City’s/Authority’s support throughout the process.
Councilmember/Member Harnik thanked Ms. Delgadillo for the time she took the other day to provide a lot of valuable information. She went on to say that many know she’s quite passionate about this project, because it is one that will serve not only Palm Desert but is very important to the entire region. With all the effort that’s been put into it so far, along with a shift in thinking at the State Capitol, she hoped perhaps now there will be more support for the project and again thanked Ms. Delgadillo for all the work she was doing.

Councilman/Member Jonathan commented that he was in favor of the extension. However, when it terminates, it will have been five years that the two parties have been dancing together on this project, this being the third or fourth extension. Personally, he believed that Allied has the same concerns, that there are only so many resources they can expend on this project, especially after three denials. He clarified that he’s also passionately in favor of the project for all the benefit that it will provide Palm Desert and Valley residents. But after five years, he expects at this point if it’s not successful, all parties need to take another direction - barring any other compelling reasons for continuing - which will be at the end of this extension.

Mayor/Chairman Weber noted that she, Councilmembers/Members Kelly and Jonathan, and Mr. Stendell attended a meeting earlier today where related information was presented. Mr. Stendell went on to say it was an update from Daniel Carrigg, Deputy Executive Director/Legislative Director for the League of California Cities. Mr. Carrigg echoed many of the comments made by Allied today that there are different sources of funding out there, and the landscape for funding of affordable projects is different still. Mr. Stendell observed he didn’t recall in the recent past as much money being available for these projects as there was currently and hoped it would help get this project completed.

Mayor/Chairman Weber remarked the information from that meeting was what provided optimism for the subject project and request before the City Council/Authority Board today.

Mayor Pro Tem/Vice Chairman Nestande noted she was very supportive of this project and the Allied Affordable Housing group, and was impressed by Ms. Delgadillo when she had opportunity to meet with her approximately one month ago. Further, she was very optimistic about the project’s future.
Mayor Pro Tem/Vice Chairman Nestande moved to, by Minute Motion: 1) Approve the request by Allied Affordable Housing, LLC, Santa Monica, California, to extend Case No. PP/CUP 16-102 and Contract No. HA34970 through May 17, 2020, for the proposed development of the Arc Village Project at the Authority’s vacant property known as APN 622-020-096; 2) authorize legal counsel to prepare and finalize an extension contract; 3) authorize the Chairman and/or Executive Director, or her designee, to execute any necessary actions, including the negotiated extension contract and any documents necessary to facilitate the contract and the Arc Village Project. Motion was seconded by Councilmember/Member Kelly and carried by 5-0 vote (AYES: Harnik, Jonathan, Kelly, Nestande, and Weber; NOES: None).

XIX. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED PLAN FOR BOND ISSUANCE BY THE CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR THE SANDS APARTMENT PROJECT LOCATED AT 74351 HOVLEY LANE EAST (Lee Newell, New Cities Investment Partners, LLC, Applicant).

Principal Planner Eric Ceja stated this was a public hearing item for the Sands Project, approved by City Council in 2018. Subsequent to the Project’s approval, City Council also adopted a resolution that approved issuance of bonds to finance the project, with issuance of those bonds performed by the State’s Community Development Authority and are funds specifically used to finance affordable housing projects around the State. He reported that the Applicant has taken strides to obtain those bonds and anticipates their issuance later this summer; however, the State requires the City to perform a public hearing on the matter annually to show local jurisdiction support of the project. He noted that this action does not commit the City to financing the project, and staff recommended approval.

Mayor Weber declared the public hearing open and invited testimony SUPPORTING or OPPOSING the request. With no testimony received, she declared the public hearing closed.

Councilmember Harnik moved to: 1) Waive further reading and adopt Resolution No. 2019 - 21, recommending that the California Statewide Communities Development Authority issue bonds for financing of the 384-unit Sands Apartment project; 2) by Minute Motion, authorize legal counsel to finalize the Resolution, materially consistent with the approvals and take any action necessary to effectuate the Resolution. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Nestande and carried by 5-0 vote (AYES: Harnik, Jonathan, Kelly, Nestande, and Weber; NOES: None).
XX. ADJOURNMENT

With City Council concurrence, Mayor Weber adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

SUSAN MARIE WEBER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

RACHELLE D. KLASSEN, CITY CLERK
CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA