

CITY OF EMERYVILLE MEMORANDUM



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Patrick D. O’Keeffe, City Manager
SUBJECT: Progress Report –January 2012

The following provides the City Council and staff with a summary of the activities of each department for the prior month.

CITY MANAGER

- With the late December announcement of the State Supreme Court decision to abolish redevelopment, staff started in January on what will be a multi month scramble to begin winding down the affairs of our redevelopment agency including disposing of over \$100 million in assets. Although we are a small city measured by population, our redevelopment budget ranked in the top 25 statewide and unwinding our many projects will prove to be time consuming and complex. Substantial amounts of time in the City Managers, City Attorney, City Clerk, Administrative Services, Public Works and Economic Development departments was devoted in January to preparing state mandated reports for the redevelopment agency assets.
- Per Council direction executive staff spent time in January preparing for the City Council Vision session to be conducted on February 28th to set the stage for the discussion of the next two year operating budget, and completion of the delayed Capital Improvement budget.
- Staff met with the President of the Board of the Emeryville Center for the Arts to discuss the impact of the dissolution of the redevelopment agency on the funding for this project. This was one of several meetings conducted in January with various project partnerships that were funded by redevelopment. The Agency no longer exists and cannot sell bonds to finance the construction of the ECA as originally envisioned. The ECA Board did, however, express interest in continuing on with the project by acquiring the property from the RDA (which we are now required to sell) and creating a phased improvement of the property as private funds can be raised over time.

The board feels that ECA ownership of the parcel will assist in fund raising. Since the property now has a General Plan designation as a civic use it makes sense to continue to work with ECA on creating an exhibit space with minimal low cost improvements as a first phase.

- Staff also met with Wareham development concerning the Transit Center project which the RDA was committed to assist with funding for the toxic clean up (EPA grant funding) and the construction of bus bays and parking (State Capital Corridor funds and RDA funds). We were assured that Wareham remains committed to continuing the project even with the loss of RDA funding, and we will mutually seek a solution to the new funding gap for the project.
- The Mayor and City Manager traveled to Sacramento with EUSD School Board President Cheryl Webb and Superintendent Dr. Debra Lindo to meet with state legislators regarding saving redevelopment funding for the Center for Community Life project. We met with Assembly member Nancy Skinner and staff for Senator Loni Hancock , and were assured by both offices that they fully support the completion of the project using redevelopment funds for the City portion of the project, and that they will assist us with State agencies if need be to preserve funding. Recall that Nancy Skinner sponsored State legislation to allow a joint facility of this nature to be constructed and operated by the City and EUSD.
- The Mayor and City Manager gave the annual State of the City Address to the Chamber of Commerce in late January, and at the Mayor's request, will follow up with an address at a February Council meeting for the entire community. This will be followed further by a city -wide mail out of the address and individual presentations to homeowner associations.
- Due to the resignation of Planning Commissioner Art Hoff, there is an unscheduled vacant position on the Planning Commission for a term ending June 30, 2012. The City Clerk's Office posted an unscheduled vacancy notice on the City's bulletin boards, in the ENEWS, on ETV-Channel 27, and the City's government cable access television station. Staff will request that the City Council make a new appointment to the Planning Commission at the February 7th City Council meeting.
- City Clerk staff began the transition from a paper-based manual process for developing the City Council agenda packet to an electronic- based automated process starting with the January 31st Special City Council meeting. After working out a few remaining bugs in the process, the next step will be establishing the option for agenda packet recipients to download the packet on an electronic computer tablet/notebook instead of receiving a paper copy.

- City Clerk staff also has been working on a detailed City profile to submit to the Strong Cities initiative of the League of California Cities. The profile will provide a showcase for the City – including a narrative of what makes Emeryville unique, including recent success stories, such as the Emeryville Greenway and will include summarized as well as detailed narratives, photos, and links to supporting documents and contacts.
- The January 10 ENEWS, the City’s electronic newsletter featured articles about the State’s elimination of redevelopment agencies, the role that redevelopment has played in the economic vitality and quality of life in Emeryville; and the impact that the demise of the Emeryville Redevelopment Agency will have on the City; announced an unscheduled vacancy on the Planning Commission due to the resignation of Art Hoff; and had an article about free job training through the North Cities One Stop Shop. Both newsletters announced that the Emeryville Child Development Center was accepting applications for enrollment. The January 24th ENEWS featured an update on City actions related to the elimination of the Emeryville Redevelopment Agency, effective February 1, 2012; announced that the City had received a \$450,000 Safe Routes to Transit Grant; announced an unscheduled vacancy on the Public Art Committee; and announced workshops regarding the proposed Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) and home refinancing/mortgage assistance. Interested community members can read the electronic newsletter on-line from the City’s website: www.emeryville.org or subscribe and have the newsletter sent directly to their email address. Information on how to subscribe/unsubscribe is listed at the bottom of each ENEWS. As of December 30, the ENEWS has 947 individual subscribers and is also sent to the Park Avenue Neighborhood Association (PANA), Oliver Lofts, Key Route Lofts e-trees, all City employees, and is posted on the City’s website homepage.
- City Clerk staff continues to work on several other organizational improvement projects, including the following: developing an “Emeryville 101” interactive workshop for City staff; developing an electronic tracking system for public records requests; expanding and improving the City’s community outreach initiatives and procedures; and converting the City’s paper-based records management system to an electronic-based system.