



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

AGENDA REPORT

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Councilmember Lucius
Date: September 17, 2014
Subject: Receive a report on the League of California Cities Annual Conference
CEQA: Does not constitute a "Project" under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines

Recommendation:

No action is required. This report is for information only.

Discussion:

The 2014 League of California Cities (LoCC) Conference took place in Los Angeles September 3-5. I did not attend September 3rd due to our city council meeting, and the LoCC conference consisted primarily of committee meetings, tours and orientation. Instead, I arrived in LA on Thursday morning in time to attend the General Session at 9:45am. This included presentation of awards (Palo Alto won the Beacon Award) and keynote speaker, Michael Pritchard. The General session also highlighted the National League of Cities priorities: 1) transportation, 2) jobs and the economy, and 3) getting kids outdoors. Following the General Session, I attended a luncheon with the Monterey Bay Division members of LoCC. Of note, there is currently a vacancy on the Monterey Bay Division board. If anyone from the PG Council is interested in filling the vacancy left by Stephaney Aguilar who was elected to become the LoCC Vice President, you can contact Council member Aguilar at 831-227-3789.

In the afternoon, I attended a depressing session on how to budget for storm water runoff (also being called urban runoff). The bottom line is that every city in CA is currently out of compliance with state standards. CASQA is working with the SWRCB on a permit process to protect jurisdictions until they are able to come into compliance. Generally, it was acknowledged that the compliance standards are not practical. Based on total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) standards, the state's trash amendments, sediment quality objectives, toxicity policy, nutrient (NNE) loads, the clean water act, and other water quality standards, a formula was developed to determine how much each city should budget to pay for urban runoff capital infrastructure, maintenance, permitting, and compliance. Generally, the formula is

city population x 100. For PG, this would be around \$1.6 million each year. Based on number of households, the figure is around \$300 per year. The discussion included possibilities for fees added to the water or sewer bills; we discussed the 218 process, and other funding mechanisms (AB2403 declared storm water is subject to the 218 protest hearing). It was noted, that this figure should be considered a storm water liability (similar to a pension liability) and should be disclosed, but it could have an impact on access to the bond market. The LA Chapter of LoCC is considering how to make storm water a “utility” which would not be subject to 218 protests.

The day concluded with another depressing talk on the drought. There was an interesting presentation by Toby Goddard of Santa Cruz. He spoke about the Santa Cruz water shortage contingency plan (does PG have one? If not, we should think about developing one). Their contingency plan includes five phases and includes drought conditions and priorities for water use within each phase. The Santa Cruz council can declare a water shortage emergency based on the conditions set out in the plan. They have had a public outreach and education campaign associated with the plan. They also established a 14-member committee to study alternative sources of water (no desal).

This tied into another session on communicating complex issues in which the speaker from Cerrell Associates, recommended designating one person who would speak for the city. This person would be able to tweet, post, alert the media, etc. about complex issues and would be able to articulate a clear direction and clear goals for the city. One area where this may be helpful is in reminding residents of our Council goals. Each agenda or each meeting should begin with a reminder (for both the council and the public) that one of our goals includes infrastructure. Beginning this communication now will help later if we do initiate a 218 fee process to fund the sewer system master plan.

On Friday, I attended a session on transforming cities into welcoming places to live and work. This presentation was based on “America in Bloom.” The idea is to have the city, volunteers, and local organizations work together to beautify the city. This includes water conservation initiatives, recycling, trash pickup, heritage preservation, planting gardens, landscaping, pulling weeds, urban forestry, etc. A starter kit is available by emailing aib@ofa.org. Also, a good model can be seen at www.morrobayinbloom.org. I really love this idea because it includes so many of the volunteer initiatives and commissions we already have in PG. If we were to have a PG in Bloom program, it could include Sustainable PG, BNRC, the Heritage Society, and others. Generally it was recommended that the city should not be the lead organization, but should be a partner and offer support. A 501c3 would be appropriate to take the lead, so they can collect donations and organize volunteers. Other cities have included school children, PTA groups, garden clubs, rotaries, chambers, etc. They set aside two hours each Saturday morning to take on small beautification projects. They have gotten tools and trailers donated by local businesses. It was such an encouraging presentation about how to build pride and

ownership in a community, without having to rely on city workers or city funding. My hope is to present this idea to Sustainable PG and to the BNRC to see if there is a champion to take this on to develop a "PG in Bloom."

I attended another interesting and encouraging session on using social media. There were significant overlaps between this session and the earlier communications session in that any city who wants to focus on social media and messaging really needs to have a designated person (protocol officer, communications director) who would maintain a Facebook page, a twitter site, city website, manage public comments online, and send out press releases. These sites could include information about upcoming council meetings and include an option to allow for public comment even before the meeting. It would also be an opportunity for the city to post pictures and information about PG history, post local news, and inform residents about what each city department is doing, and what each council member, and board/commission is working on.

Finally, the conference ended with a luncheon for delegates and general assembly in which delegates voted. There was one resolution regarding the growing of illegal marijuana and its impact on the environment. Per Council direction I voted in favor of the resolution urging the CA Legislature to study this issue and determine environmental impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the LoCC conference and represent Pacific Grove. The event was interesting and informative. It was a great opportunity to meet with the members of the Monterey Bay Division and continue to highlight areas of future collaboration.

Fiscal Impact:

Total amount the city paid was \$1,085. (\$294 airfare; \$500 conference registration; \$213 conference hotel; \$78 for parking, shuttle, and one meal)

Respectfully Submitted:

Casey Lucius