

TRACY CITY COUNCIL - SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 30, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Tracy City Hall, 333 Civic Center Plaza, Tracy, CA.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Roll call found Council Members Arriola, Bedolla, Evans, Mayor Pro Tem Davis and Mayor Young present.

1. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – Karen Moore stated in the past during an agenda item there will be discussion from Council then the public and then a motion, second and vote. Last meetings Council voted differently. Ms. Moore added it is becoming less transparent and asked to go back to the way Council previously voted.

Gabriela Machucca, owner of Johnny’s Diner stated she spoke at the October 18, 2022 Council meeting and requested amending the mobile food ordinance. Ms. Machucca stated she now only has a food trailer and needs to seek special approval from Development Services to see if they will approve the land use to existing operating restaurants to serve as her commissary per the Health Department and Development Services. Ms. Machucca shared her experience with Development Services and facing red tape regarding land use and added it needs to stop, it is harassment and hoped Council could help address some of the problems she is having.

Council Member Bedolla requested to move Council items before the regular items as he had to leave early due to a prior commitment. Council Member Bedolla made a motion to amend his prior motion of the acceptance of 16 acres of land based on the Offer of Dedication be moved from February 7, 2023 to a meeting before the next case management conference on April 12, 2023. Council Member Evans supported the request. Council Member Bedolla shared he coaches a basketball team.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 2.A Adopt a Resolution Authorizing: 1) The Display of the Pan-African Flag in honor of Black History Month on the City Flagpole Located Outside of City Hall, for the Month of February, Each Year; 2) Use of City Resources to Conduct A One-Time Flag Ceremony on February 1, 2023; and 3) Waiver of the Requirement Set Forth in Section 2.3.1 of the City of Tracy Flag Policy that Requests be Made by May 1st of Each Year, as related to the Foregoing Actions

Midori Lichtwardt, Assistant City Attorney provided the staff report.

Bobby Bivens represents NAACP of Stockton, showed the Pan African flag and explained what the colors represent and shared the importance of recognizing the work African American people have done, and the value and benefits brought to America. Asked Council to fly the flag during Black History Month starting February 1.

Ameni Alexander urged support of a waiver for this resolution stating it is important to bring the City together. If Council leaves off this flag it will be a disservice and urged Council to look at the Pan African flag, it should be represented.

June Yasemsky shared her support for raising the Pan African flag in recognition of Black History Month and provided some history on Black History Month.

Melvin Lagasca stated the Pan African flag symbolizes more than Black History Month. Ever since the Civil War black Americans have served in every branch of the military service in all levels, symbolism of American history.

Richard Voss stated he was born and raised in a racist segregated town in California, did not become racist. Mr. Voss shared he met his African American wife, began to study black history in America and discovered how privileged he is. Mr. Voss spoke to other white people to spread the word of equality. The flag is a symbol and supported raising of the flag.

Yolande Barial Knight, TAAA, Democratic Club and NAACP asked Council to approve the resolution authorizing the display of the Pan African flag for the month of February annually, use of City resources for ceremony to honor Evelyn Tolbert and a waiver for the annual May request to the flag policy and a one time event scheduled on Wednesday, February 1, 2023. Ms. Knight shared her concerns regarding the display of the flag annually for Black History Month not being adopted by resolution previously and stated we all represent your constituents and asked Council for support of the amendment.

Karen Moore stated she was in support of rectifying the resolution and do fly the flag.

Gurtej Atwal stated he supported and urged Council's support of the Pan African flag in honor of Black History Month and for the month of February each year. Including the Pan African flag will solidify our city's vision towards inclusiveness and take the opportunity to embrace and honor diversity.

Victor Silva stands for unity and solidarity and tomorrow is a great opportunity to celebrate the black Americans who have contributed to American history. This is a time for change. Mr. Silva stated he is tired of seeing U.S. flags half-mast on Government buildings. It is time to make a positive change and join other cities to fly the Pan African flag and asked for approval of an amendment to allow the display.

Lisa Roth supported the flag raising and spoke about solidarity and appreciation for African American history as well as the respect and courtesy and also the celebration of first African Americans elected and Police Chief in Tracy. This should be an easy vote for Council to support because it is the right thing to do.

Kevin James, Pastor of New Creation Bible Fellowship stated since 2007 it has been our City's focus to affirm all people who strive for inclusion. Mr. James spoke about Black History Month, and about a previous meeting when flags were approved and this flag was not. Council has an opportunity to get it right. Appealed to Council to do the right thing.

Veronica Vargas hoped the error can be corrected and stated let's bring the community together, do the right thing and bring all the minorities that we have, the challenges and opportunity to show case the trail blazing people that we have in Tracy, and celebrate the diversity of our town. Ms. Vargas has hope and faith Council will do the right thing.

Luana Johnson Bivens, President the oldest African American Sorority which represents educated black women urged celebration and inclusion of Black History Month because it is important that we celebrate Black History Month which provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of our history. Ms. Bivens shared she was proud Evelyn Tolbert will be celebrated and urged Council to vote to include the raising of the Pan African flag this year and every year.

Chris Cannon stated he was in full support of the flag being raised, it does not have fiscal impact so there is no cost. The City wants to be inclusive and not exclusive.

Gwendolyn White, TAAA President stated she was raised in Columbus, Ohio in a segregated neighborhood and did not even know it and learned because of history that she was in a segregated community. Children here need to know about the Pan African flag, that they did what was necessary to get this country going. This goes further than Tracy and there is more to be done. Ms. White stated for the sake of solidarity fly the flag.

Elizabeth Baker, Chapter President of a Sorority stated the symbol of the flag is an opportunity for the City of Tracy to tell children that your race matters. The ceremony on February 1<sup>st</sup> recognizes affluent or prominent African Americans in Tracy, but let's do better than those that are trying to suppress us and fly the flag and have a sense of pride and stand together.

Ron Tait, African American President for Chamber of Commerce in Stockton stated the City of Tracy is a gateway city and culturally is a melting pot and has the opportunity as the flag is raised to create a standard and a narrative for different cultures that don't understand.

Mr. Bivens shared his concerns regarding the City Attorney not being at the dais during the public comment.

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Council Member Bedolla and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Davis to adopt a **Resolution 2023-018** authorizing: 1) The display of the Pan-African Flag in honor of Black History Month on the City flagpole located outside of City Hall, for the month of February, each year; 2) Use of City resources to conduct a one-time flag ceremony on February 1, 2023; and 3) Waiver of the requirement set forth in Section 2.3.1 of the City of Tracy Flag Policy that requests be made by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, as related to the foregoing actions.

Council comments followed.

Roll call found all in favor; passed and so ordered.

Mayor Young announced there was an email received from Victor Silva regarding the item. Mr. Silva also spoke virtually.

Council Member Bedolla left at 7:38 p.m.

3. COUNCIL ITEMS AND COMMENTS – Council Member Evans stated last Friday he and Mayor Pro Tem Davis visited the temporary homeless shelter and came back with a list of bulletized items. There are eight new portable shelters on site that have been there for a number of weeks. Each have four bedrooms so potentially 42 rooms available. Also, the day before went to El Pescadero Park and counted approximately 30 tents so

about the right number of rooms to get that park cleaned up. Council Member Evans added he came back with list of items remaining to get those units open and houseable and drafted a letter to the City Manager and is hopeful those items are being worked on along with the request that City Council receives an ongoing report every week of all the critical items to get those units into shape so they can be used as housing. Council Member Evans stated he was lucky to be there when the gas generators were being fueled, burning approximately 150 gallons a day of diesel so there is approximately 500 gallons of diesel on site at any given time which is a big environmental risk on site, and he is concerned. There is a possibility of getting electricity out there and the City Manager is in receipt of a company that he knows that can get temporary power on site in an expedited fashion. Looking forward to a staff report on getting those items checked off so we can get the unhoused housed in El Pescadero Park and get the park cleaned up for our kids and move the city forward.

Mayor Young stated she will present her updates at next meeting. Mayor Young stated in the ten years being on the Council she has never not been here in person. The last meeting was, and the next Council meeting will be run by Mayor Pro Tem Davis as she will be in Cancun for her son's wedding. Mayor Young also wished her daughter Lydia a happy birthday next week.

4. ADJOURNMENT – Time: 7:43 p.m.

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Davis and seconded by Council Member Arriola to adjourn. Roll call found all in favor; passed and so ordered.

The above agenda was posted at the Tracy City Hall on January 26, 2023. The above are action minutes. A recording is available at the office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk