

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
INCLUDING THE ANTIOCH CITY COUNCIL
ACTING AS HOUSING SUCCESSOR
TO THE ANTIOCH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Regular Meeting
7:00 P.M.**

**March 25, 2025
Council Chambers**

6:00 P.M. - CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Bernal called the Closed Session to order at 6:01 P.M., and City Clerk Rhodes called the roll.

Present: Council Members District 1 Torres-Walker, District 3 Freitas, District 4 Wilson, Mayor Pro Tem (District 2) Rocha and Mayor Bernal

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bernal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: CITY MANAGER.** This closed session is authorized pursuant to California Government Code section 54957(b)(1).
2. **CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS** pursuant to California Government Code section 54956.8; Property: Sycamore Square Police Substation 1084 Sycamore Drive, Antioch, CA; Negotiating Parties: City of Antioch Negotiators: Bessie Marie Scott, City Manager and Derek Cole, Interim City Attorney; Property Negotiator: Mike Korin, Property Owner; Under Negotiation: Rent and terms of payment.
3. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION** pursuant to California Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1): California False Claims – “Qui Tam” action in which City of Antioch is one of several agencies named as real party in interest, Alameda Superior Court [case filed under seal].

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Bernal adjourned to Closed Session at 6:03 P.M.

7:00 P.M. REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Bernal called the meeting to order at 7:55 P.M., and City Clerk Rhodes called the roll.

Present: Council/Agency Members District 1 Torres-Walker, District 3 Freitas, District 4 Wilson, Mayor Pro Tem (District 2) Rocha and Mayor Bernal

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bernal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITY ATTORNEY TO REPORT OUT ON CLOSED SESSION

Interim City Attorney Cole reported the City Council had been in Closed Session and gave the following report: **#1 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: CITY MANAGER**, no reportable action, **#2 CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS**, direction given to the Property Negotiators; and, **#3 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION**, no reportable action.

ON MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WILSON, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER TORRES-WALKER, THE CITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY SUSPENDED THE RULES AND MOVED PRESENTATIONS AS THE NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS.

4. PRESENTATIONS

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Vice Chairperson Seanzell Lewis and Committee Member Ami Odom who gave the Sales Tax Citizens' Oversight Committee Annual Measure W Report PowerPoint presentation.

Mayor Bernal thanked the Sales Tax Citizens' Oversight Committee for both the report and their dedicated service.

The Council received public comments from the following individuals who spoke on the Sales Tax Citizens' Oversight Committee Annual Measure W Report PowerPoint presentation: Leslie May and Nichole.

Mayor Bernal requested the crime statistics be evaluated for accuracy and adjusted if necessary.

Vice Chairperson Lewis expressed his gratitude to the department heads for supplying the necessary data and fellow committee members for their contributions to the report.

Councilmember Torres-Walker thanked the Sales Tax Citizens' Oversight Committee for the report.

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Public Safety and Community Resources Johnson who introduced representatives from Bay Area Community Services (BACS) who gave the Opportunity Village Program PowerPoint presentation.

The Council received public comments from the following individuals who spoke on the Opportunity Village Program presentation: Melissa, Andrew Becker, Nichole, Ashly Maha and Leslie May.

Councilmember Torres-Walker thanked BACS for the presentation and their hard work. She explained that this program was funded with America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars that led to the City securing encampment resolution funding. She suggested Council consider the number of nuisance abatement cases and calls for service associated with unhoused residents as this program approaches its conclusion.

Mayor Bernal thanked BACS for the presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ebony Gillam requested a leak adjustment for her water bill due to damage that existed prior to her living on the property. She expressed concern about the lack of action taken by the Antioch Police Department (APD) regarding her assault report.

Debbie Blaisure, Downtown Antioch Association, encouraged residents to shop local and announced a Downtown Antioch Association meeting would be held on March 26, 2025, at Smith's Landing.

Kimberly Kidd-Bailey requested the City consider installing a traffic signal near her residential development. She also suggested the City build a tiny home community for the unhoused. She expressed concern about the lack of action taken by the APD regarding a noise complaint.

Gavin Payton, NAACP Youth, advocated for youth services and their participation in the City's Boards and Commissions. He suggested the City support the development of an African American Wellness Hub in Antioch. He recognized community advocates.

Ronald encouraged the City to reestablish the Neighborhood Watch Program and expand the Economic Development Department.

Milan Reed, Antioch Council of Teens (ACT) announced they meet from 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at the Antioch Community Center. She also announced the following events:

- Teen Movie Night - March 26, 2025, at Maya Cinema
- Autism Awareness Month Campaign - April 9, 2025, Antioch Water Park

Nichole Gardner addressed comments made by an elected official at a previous Council meeting and advocated for the unhoused.

Cassandra Quinto Collins reaffirmed her support for funding Public Safety and Community Resources programs into the future.

Leslie May encouraged the City Council to be ethical in their budget deliberations.

1. INTRODUCTION OF NEW CITY EMPLOYEES, PROMOTIONS AND RETIREMENTS

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Acting Director of Public Works/City Engineer Buenting who introduced:

- Armando Cibrian, General Laborer
- Eric Strongman, Lead Facility Maintenance Worker

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Director of Public Safety and Community Resources Johnson who introduced:

- Dawn Schultze-Allen, Administrative Analyst I

2. PROCLAMATION

- Proclamation Honoring César Chávez Day, March 31, 2025

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Wilson the City Council unanimously approved the Proclamation.

Paul Ramirez and representatives from United Latino Voices of Contra Costa County, accepted the *Honoring César Chávez Day, March 31, 2025*, proclamation. He announced they would be holding a Rally on March 29, 2025, beginning at Pittsburg City Hall and César Chávez Awards at Los Medanos College on April 11, 2025.

Andrew Becker discussed the Multifamily Supernova and Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Program.

Councilmember Torres-Walker discussed the relationship between the Farm Workers movement and the Black Panthers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Joshua Price Executive Director of the El Campanil Theatre announced the following civic and community events:

- James Gardner A Johnny Cash Tribute Show – March 30, 2025
- Evening of Astronomy with Massimo Pascale and John R. Burr – April 18, 2025
- El Campanil Gala - June 7, 2025
- El Campanil Theatre Academy – Contact information was provided

Frank Sterling announced the following civic and community event:

- Kiwanis Club Cookout - March 29, 2025, at the VFW

Councilmember Wilson announced a District 4 Community Meeting would be held from 6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. on April 9, 2025, at the International Barber Shop.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF BOARD AND COMMISSION OPENINGS

City Clerk Rhodes announced the following Board and Commission openings.

- Board of Administrative Appeals
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Antioch Police Oversight Commission

For more information and to apply, visit the City's website.

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Freitas announced a Cannabis Standing committee meeting would be held at 1:00 P.M. on March 26, 2025, in Council Chambers.

Councilmember Torres-Walker announced a CDBG Committee meeting would be held on April 2, 2025, and a City/School Standing Committee meeting would be held on April 14, 2025. She reported on her attendance at the Green Empowerment Zone meeting and a meeting with Congressman Garamendi.

Councilmember Wilson reported on her attendance at the California Message Therapy Council meeting.

Councilmember Rocha reported he would be participating in the CDBG Committee meeting, City/School Standing Committee meeting and a Tri Delta Transit meeting.

Mayor Bernal reported on his attendance at the Contra Costa Transportation Authority meeting.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS - None

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously extended the meeting to 11:30 P.M.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR for City /City Council Members acting as Housing Successor to the Antioch Development Agency

A. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 11, 2025

B. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING/CLOSED SESSION MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 19, 2025

C. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 25, 2025

D. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 4, 2025

- E. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 11, 2025
- F. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 18, 2025
- G. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL WARRANTS
- H. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JANUARY 2025
- I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS: SARAH DYNE WHITMORE, JASMIN MORRIS-HUGHES, ALEJANDRO AND ROSA RIVERA
- J. RESOLUTION NO. 2025/44 FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR WEBMASTER SERVICES WITH DIGITAL SERVICES
- K. APPROVAL OF FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT SERVICES WITH BOB HALL AND ASSOCIATES IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$151,000
- L. RESOLUTION NO. 2025/45 NEW CLASS SPECIFICATION, ASSIGNING SALARY RANGE, ASSIGNING THE CLASSIFICATION TO THE MANAGEMENT BARGAINING UNIT

On motion by Councilmember Wilson, seconded by Councilmember Freitas, the City Council unanimously approved the Council Consent Calendar with the exception of Items H, J, K and L which were removed for further discussion.

Item H – Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Consent Calendar Item H.

Councilmember Freitas requested staff agendize presentations from the City Treasurer and City Clerk.

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Torres-Walker the City Council unanimously approved Item H.

Item J – Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Consent Calendar Item J.

Andrew Becker requested original contracts be included in staff reports when Council considers Contract renewals and extensions. He expressed concern with the quality of the live stream on the City's website and reported the agendas were difficult to download.

Leslie May expressed concern with the quality of the live stream on the City's website.

Director of Information Services Barton reported that the City was testing streaming on You Tube and anticipated going live in early April. He noted they had also purchased new equipment and were working to improve the quality of broadcasts.

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously approved Item J.

Item K – Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Consent Calendar Item K.

Councilmember Freitas requested staff disclose the positions being recruited and asked for clarification regarding the financial commitment.

Acting City Manager Helfenberger reported that the City would be recruiting for the Community Development Director and City Attorney. He noted the other two positions are to be determined as they were evaluating staffing needs and they were trying to limit the amount of information shared about personnel matters.

Director of Human Resources Cortez added recruitment fees were an average and based on the position. She confirmed that the City had several vacant positions and she would defer to the City Manager as to which positions would be recruited first.

Councilmember Freitas stated he did not support approving this item until Council was informed of which positions would be recruited.

Councilmember Torres-Walker commented Council should support moving the contract forward to allow City Manager Scott to actively restructure and recruit for the management level positions. She noted that some positions may be filled by current staff and making some information public may cause potential HR issues.

Councilmember Freitas stated it was Council's job to oversee expenditures, and he wanted full transparency of what was involved.

Director of Human Resources Cortez explained that the staff report would be giving Council an option to use this firm, to recruit for the City Attorney and Acting City Manager Helfenberger added that the recruitment for City Attorney would be done in consultation with the City Council.

Interim City Attorney Cole clarified that the approval of this agreement would authorize the City Attorney search and staff would facilitate that process so that it could be presented to Council for consideration.

Mayor Bernal recommended continuing Item K to the next meeting so the City Manager would be available to answer questions.

On motion by Councilmember Torres-Walker, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously continued Consent Calendar Item K.

Councilmember Freitas left the dais.

Item L – Leslie May suggested the City form a subcommittee to examine hiring practices.

Councilmember Wilson left the dais.

On motion by Councilmember Rocha, seconded by Councilmember Torres-Walker the City Council approved Consent Calendar Item L. The motion carried the following vote:

Ayes: Torres-Walker, Rocha, Bernal

Absent: Freitas, Wilson

Mayor Bernal declared a recess at 10:29 P.M. The meeting reconvened at 10:38 P.M. with all Councilmembers present.

PUBLIC HEARING

6. LONE TREE RETAIL PROJECT (PD2024-0001) (Continued from March 11, 2025, Council Meeting)

Interim City Attorney Cole gave an overview of the options for Council should they choose to reopen the Public Hearing.

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Wilson the City Council unanimously reopened the Public Hearing.

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Public Hearing Item #6.

Planning Manager Merideth introduced Associate Planner Tinclair who announced that the applicant had submitted a revised landscape plan. He stated he was available to answer any questions.

Paul Rothbard, Proponent, gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Lone Tree Way Development Project.

Andrew Becker, Opponent, expressed concerns about the safety and accessibility of pedestrian and bicycle pathways on the property. He discussed rezoning the property to residential and opportunities for other restaurant options. He requested the developer provide the listing for marketing the property.

Melissa Case stated she did not support this project because it did not complement the existing development, and it would create an oversaturation of these types of businesses in the area. She expressed concern for this project adding to congestion in the area. She suggested the City begin the process of creating a strategic Development Plan for the City.

Kris Johnson spoke in support of the project noting that development of this area would eliminate blight.

Carl Segal, Project Developer, discussed the benefits of the project. He commented on the positive attributes of Chipotle and Habit Burger and encouraged Council to approve the project.

Brian Heron, Commercial Retail Associates, provided a history of their efforts to market and lease the property. He noted the proposed project would be compatible and complimentary with existing development in the area. He reported that the tenants were making significant capital investments into these properties.

Victor Ramos and David Epstein representing In Shape Health Club, and Robin Agopian voiced their support of the project noting it would remove blight in the area and would be complimentary to the existing businesses.

Rod Alonzo, Project Architect API, stated they had worked with staff on this project, met all design guidelines and worked on consistency throughout the parcels. He clarified that they had addressed all accessibility items on the site.

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council extended the meeting to 12:00 A.M. The motion carried the following vote:

Ayes: Rocha, Freitas, Wilson, Bernal

Abstain: Torres-Walker

Mort Rothbard, ISHC Properties LLC., discussed his support for Habit Burger.

Mayor Bernal closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Rocha acknowledged the potential economic benefits of the project and supported providing the community with options.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rocha, seconded by Councilmember Torres-Walker to 1) Adopt the resolution adopting the Addendum to the 2004 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration demonstrating that the Lone Tree Retail project has been appropriately analyzed under CEQA, and 2) Adopt the resolution approving a Final Development Plan, Use Permit and Design Review for development of the Lone Tree Retail project.

Mayor Bernal speaking to the motion commented that he believed this project was architecturally attractive and acknowledged potential economic benefits. He thanked the developer for addressing his concerns and stated he would be supporting the project moving forward.

Councilmember Freitas reiterated his support for the original vision for the property and felt the developer could bring in higher quality tenants. He thanked the applicant for discussing the project with Council and stated that he would be voting no.

Councilmember Wilson stated she felt the developer should bring in higher quality tenants and she would not support the project as proposed.

Councilmember Torres-Walker thanked the applicant for the presentation. She discussed the demand for these types of businesses and based on revenue generation and access she stated she would support the project.

Interim City Attorney Cole explained that the motion on the table was to approve both resolutions; however, if Council preferred, they could consider each resolution separately.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/46
RESOLUTION NO. 2025/47

A vote taken on the previous motion to adopt the resolutions passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Torres-Walker, Rocha, Bernal

Noes: Freitas, Wilson

COUNCIL REGULAR AGENDA

7. BOARD OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS' APPOINTMENTS FOR (2) TWO BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES, EXPIRING MARCH 2028

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/48

On motion by Councilmember Wilson, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution approving the appointment of Jacquelyn Higgins to the Board of Administrative Appeals for the vacancy expiring March 2028.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/49

On motion by Councilmember Torres-Walker, seconded by Councilmember Freitas the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution approving the appointment of Melissa Case to the Board of Administrative Appeals for the vacancy expiring March 2028.

8. ANTIOCH POLICE OVERSIGHT COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS FOR (2) TWO COMMISSIONER PARTIAL-TERM VACANCIES, EXPIRING NOVEMBER 2026

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/50

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council adopted a resolution approving the appointment of Lisa Elekwachi to the Antioch Police Oversight Commission for one partial-term vacancy expiring November 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/51

On motion by Councilmember Rocha, seconded by Councilmember Freitas the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution approving the appointment of Susan Kennedy to the Antioch Police Oversight Commission for one partial-term vacancy expiring November 2026.

Councilmember Freitas requested future staff reports contain all the applications received for vacancies.

ON MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER FREITAS, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER WILSON, THE CITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY SUSPENDED THE RULES AND MOVED REGULAR AGENDA ITEM #10 TO BE HEARD AS THE NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS.

10. 2024 HOUSING ELEMENT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT, HOUSING SUCCESSOR ANNUAL REPORT AND PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

Acting City Manager Helfenberger introduced Regular Agenda Item #10.

Planning Manager Merideth presented the staff report dated March 25, 2025, recommending the City Council receive and file the 2024 Housing Element Annual Progress Report, Housing Successor Annual Report, and Progress Report for the General Plan.

Councilmember Freitas requested staff agendize a General Plan and Housing Element Study Session.

On motion by Councilmember Torres-Walker, seconded by Councilmember Wilson the City Council extended the Council meeting to 12:15 A.M.

Andrew Becker expressed concern regarding the timing of the item noting it was before Council on March 25, 2025, with a deadline of April 1, 2025.

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Torres-Walker the City Council unanimously received and filed the report.

9. RESOLUTION APPROVING AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE 2024-2025 VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Director of Public Safety and Community Resources Johnson presented the staff report dated March 25, 2025, recommending the City Council adopt a resolution approving the award of a Consultant Services Contract to Hope and Heal Fund, with fiscal agent New Venture Fund, in the amount of \$75,000 for the 2024-2025 Violence Intervention and Prevention Assessment and Strategic Plan, and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement in a form approved by the City Attorney. She explained the Violence Intervention and Prevention Assessment and Strategic Plan process.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025/52

On motion by Councilmember Wilson, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution approving the award of a Consultant Services Contract to Hope and Heal Fund, with fiscal agent New Venture Fund, in the amount of \$75,000 for the 2024-2025 Violence Intervention and Prevention Assessment and Strategic Plan, and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement in a form approved by the City Attorney.

11. REVIEW AND APPROVE THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF THE BICYCLE GARDEN PROJECT (P.W. 394-17)
12. AMENDMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND OPERATING BUDGETS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$225,000 FOR THE AMTRAK STATION UPGRADES (P.W. 708)

On motion by Councilmember Freitas, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously continued Regular Agenda Items #11 and 12 to the April 8, 2025, City Council meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrew Becker encouraged the City to form a partnership with the developer for the West Tregallas Road and Hillcrest Avenue project in an effort to seek grant funding for capital improvements.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS – None

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilmember Torres-Walker announced that the African American Wellness Holistic Hub Initiative would be going before the County Board of Supervisors in April, and suggested the City pass a resolution in support as well as have the consultant give a presentation to the City. She explained that the Council sometimes engaged in spirited debates; however, regardless of differences, they were committed to working collaboratively for the benefit of the community.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilmember Torres-Walker, seconded by Councilmember Rocha the City Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 12:13 A.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Kitty Eiden
KITTY EIDEN, Minutes Clerk