

Minutes

City of Soledad
City Council
Special Meeting

February 24, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fred Ledesma called the City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited.

ROLL CALL

The Following Councilmembers were present when the meeting was called to order:

Mayor	Fred J. Ledesma
Mayor Pro Tem	Alejandro Chavez
Councilmember	Christopher Bourke
Councilmember	Patricia Stephens
Councilmember	Richard Perez

The following Councilmembers were absent:

None.

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This special meeting is scheduled for informational purposes. The City Council may provide feedback to Staff on the agenda items. No City Council action is required.

City Manager Gonzalez welcomed everyone in attendance. She stated that staff had planned this Strategic Planning Workshop with the City Council in order to obtain some guidance and priorities from the City Council.

Community & Economic Development Director Slama explained to the City Council that most business people already have their demographics picked out. He stated it was staff's job to facilitate the process for them.

Craig Kaufman gave an overview of the contents inside the Soledad Visitors & Gateway Center that will be opening to the public soon.

Council Discussion:

Mayor Ledesma stated he hopes someone will soon see the need for a hotel in Soledad.

Councilmember Stephens stated she would like the focus of catering to be family oriented, instead of single adults that go to the wineries and the City of Monterey. She would like to see middle class families stopping by the City on their way to the Pinnacles National Park.

Mayor Ledesma stated he felt there was no set plan on which the focus would be. He feels everyone had their own ideas and visions. He hopes to be surprised as to what actually happens.

Rolando Bonilla added that the City of Soledad and Pinnacles National Park appeared in hundreds of news articles.

Councilmember Perez stated that Monterey offered more of an adult entertainment. He would like for the marketing for Soledad to remain more family oriented.

Rolando Bonilla explained that the first phase was to get to City of Soledad to be known. He stated he had to be explained where in California it was located.

Councilmember Bourke stated he doesn't want to compete with tourist places like Monterey, but would like a share of the visitors to come to Soledad. He would like the City of Soledad to be one of their stops.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez stated he feels great about the Visitors Center being here but also feels that the next step is finding a connection to the Peninsula. He stated his idea was making Soledad a "Cousin City" to a place like Carmel. He believes that both Soledad and Carmel have great restaurants and wine.

Mayor Ledesma stated that his wife Gloria Ledesma is part of the Art Council. He suggested having a day trip and bringing people to Soledad to do some wine tasting, have dinner at a local restaurant and visit the Visitors Center.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez stated he had only mentioned Carmel because he had a conversation with the Mayor from there and they were interested in the idea of becoming a "Cousin City" with Soledad.

Councilmember Stephens mentioned that she sees tour buses at the Shopping Center but she feels there needs to be a way they can come downtown.

City Manager Gonzales stated she would like to see another national story about Soledad. She asked if the new Visitor Center can make national news.

Councilmember Stephens asked if new tables can be placed out front of the Visitors Center for people to have their lunch.

MEETING RECESS

Mayor Ledesma recessed the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Mayor Ledesma reconvened the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Community & Economic Development Director Slama stated that the City needed to start investing into infrastructure.

Mayor Ledesma stated he wants to focus on getting a hotel to come and that would start a synergy.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez stated that infrastructure impresses and staff should work on that.

Councilmember Stephens stated she didn't want the City's Downtown Specific Plan to get lost in all of this. She understands that ours is hard to read, but would like for us to still look at it.

Councilmember Bourke asked that based on the discussion does staff need Council direction to continue.

Mayor Ledesma thought that the City should approach merchants or restaurant to have food named after the Pinnacles, such as the "Pinnacles Burrito" or the "Pinnacles Burger". He thanked the City staff for their hard work.

City Manager Gonzalez summarized the ideas for moving forward:


- Create more "Downtown" family-oriented events
- Focus on existing businesses
- Pursue improved high speed connectivity
- Work with TAMC and the County for grant opportunities for the Pinnacles Parkway
- Market the Visitors Center

- Recognize the tourism and a regional conversation is an essential part of our future
- Work with legislators to allow hotel related uses for Los Coches Adobe
- Improve traffic flow within the City

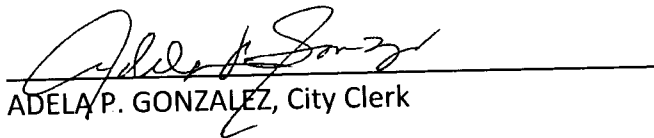
ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the Council, Mayor Ledesma adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Approved: May 6, 2015.



FRED J. LEDESMA, Mayor



ADELA P. GONZALEZ, City Clerk