

**CITY OF CASTROVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR CALLED COUNCIL MEETING**

**1209 Fiorella**

**City Council Chambers**

**April 08, 2025**

**Tuesday**

**5:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Darrin Schroeder called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present:

Mayor Darrin Schroeder

Scott Dixon, City Administrator

Mayor Pro Tem Sheena Martinez

Debra Howe, City Secretary

Councilmember Houston Marchman

Councilmember Phil King

Councilmember David Merz

Councilmember Robert Lee

Others in Attendance:

Daniel Santee, Attorney, DNRBS&Z

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEIGENCE**

**IV. INVOCATION**

Pastor Doug Steinert, of the Discover Church gave the invocation.

**V. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

*The City Council will hear comments from any citizen or visitor. Speakers must address their comments to the presiding officer rather than individual council members or staff; stand at the podium, speak clearly into the microphone, and state your name and residential address before speaking. Speakers will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes for testimony. Speakers making personal, impertinent, profane, or slanderous remarks will be given one warning before losing the privilege to speak or may be removed from the room. In accordance with the State Open Meetings Act, the City Council is restricted from discussing or taking action on items not listed on the agenda. Action can only be taken at a future meeting.*

Arnie Dollase, 109 River Bluff, spoke on Tour de Castroville event held the previous weekend. Mr. Dollase said there were 40 sponsors, registration was up from previous years for 5K – 200, 10K – 73, 30 mile – 180, 60 mile – 79. AVA – 5 and 10K combined – 61. Mr. Dollas said there was 70-80 volunteers and wished to thank the sponsors and volunteers for their support. Mr. Dollase showed the shirt designed by Darin Hamm for the event. The next event was scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Tammy Alexander, 516 Vienna, spoke an open records request she had submitted and felt the information she had received was not enough to support what the city had been saying on responses for the UDO. Ms. Alexander said she felt the Simplecity contract on the agenda for discussion should be terminated. Ms. Alexander said the contract was for \$500,000 and was now up to \$523,000 and should stop.

Joe Holzhaus, 602 Berlin, spoke to the Simplecity contract and asked the city council to stop the contract and allow the city staff to finish.

Valarie Jungman, 218 Alvina/512 Paris Street, spoke on the Simplecity contract saying the city had over paid and ask the city council to stop the contract.

Claudia Holzhaus, 306 Madrid, spoke the city council on her being against high density and ADU's, asking the city council why they were in support. Ms. Holzhaus said she had not been sent any letters on the recent changes and wanted to know who had asked for any of the changes.

Nicole Schriener, 118 Karm, spoke on her wanting Castroville to be a city in which she could work and live in. Ms. Shriener said she saw density as more housing and jobs in the future. Ms. Schriener felt there were good layers proposed and if the citizens did not want growth then the city would have to look at raising taxes and could lose services at some time in the future.

Mickey Holzhaus, 514 Washington, spoke on the Simplecity contract saying it had started out at \$250,000 not to exceed \$500,000 and needed to be stopped. Mr. Holzhaus asked why the ADU's were being allowed with a Special Use Permit and not by going through the variance process. Mr. Holzhaus asked if any studies had been completed on the city utilities and if they could handle the ADU's.

Jeanie Andermatt, 201 Alamo, spoke on the Simplecity contract and said the city council should not continue the contract.

## **VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **a. Minutes for February 25, 2025 Regular Called Meeting, Minutes for March 17, 2025 Special Called Meeting, and Minutes for March 25, 2025 Regular Called Meeting**

City Secretary Debra Howe requested the March 25, 2025 meeting minutes be pulled for additional information to be included by Councilmember Lee and GrantWorks. Councilmember Lee requested February 25, 2025 minutes be removed for typos.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Martinez and duly seconded by Councilmember Marchman to approve March 17, 2025 Special Called Meeting Minutes. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.**

Councilmember Lee said on Pg. 7 b. the word "this" be removed and inserted "with" that update and in c. change 1030 to 1930's.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Martinez and duly seconded by Councilmember Marchman to approve the February 25, 2025 minutes with noted corrects. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.**

## **VII. MAYOR'S REPORT**

### **a. Mayor's Report on Financial State of the City**

Mayor Schroeder briefed the city council on the financial health of the city providing data on the

General Fund. Mayor Schroeder provided information on sales tax starting with 2014 (\$663,796) (\$1,109,577), and 2024 (\$1,889,356). Property Tax information was also shown for 2014 (\$784,197), 2019 (\$1,122,756), and 2024 (\$1,993,032), both showing healthy increases for the city. Mayor Schroeder also spoke on general fund savings, general fund debt, investments made in new equipment, software, police department adding additional officers, Lion's Park improvements by adding the Splash Pad, Regional Park improvements with lighting for the soccer fields, community center build, road repairs and planning efforts. Mayor Schroeder said there had been \$80 million worth of needed drainage improvements with only a \$6 million dollar budget. Mayor Schroeder was pleased that the city was in really good financial health. Councilmember Lee asked what caused the difference shown revenues vs. inflation. Mayor Schroeder said it was showing grant funds and park funds.

## **VIII. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS**

**Airport - April 7, 2025**

**Library - April 3, 2025**

**HLC - March 18, 2025**

**Park - March 19, 2025**

**P & Z - March 17, 2025**

Councilmember Martinez briefed the city council on the airport board meeting saying the Airport Manager Haley had provided a presentations on drones, the old poles had been removed, discussion on budget input for the next year, and was informed the military was interested in partnering with the airport for training. Ms. Martinez said the airport had \$200,000 of unspent grant funds and they would be working with Representative Gonzales to reappropriate the funds. Ms. Martinez said the farmland lease was coming up in December. Councilmember Lee said the Library had two meetings – March 13 and April 3<sup>rd</sup> and installed new members. Mr. Lee said the board discussed budget proposal for the following year. Mr. Lee said he was very impressed with the new Library Director Beth Farley and the library board members. Mr. Lee felt Ms. Farley had stepped up and gotten the Library accreditation reinstated and the board had worked on revising the library policies. Councilmember King said the Historic Landmark Commission had met and reviewed two requests and approved COA's for both. Mr. King said the board had also discussed compliance/enforcement of the ordinances. Councilmember Merz briefed the city council on the Library Advisory Board meeting saying the board discussed the Development Agreement Policy and recommended adding language about land grants be included in the Development Agreement Policy.

## **IX. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

### **a. Discussion and take appropriate action on city branding by adding signage to downtown historic corridor with a focus on Fiorella Street and Paris Street**

Mayor Schroeder briefed the city council on his request for this item. Mayor Schroeder felt anytime signage was changed in the downtown area it should be a city council decision. Mayor Schroeder said at the last council meeting the Downtown Master Plan had been adopted and signage was a part of the plan. The presentation provided by Tourism/Business Development Director Darin Hamm showed two different styles of logos, one that was more of a "challenge coin" type and one with a stork version. The city council wanted to get more information on the designs along with cost and funding for the new signage. Valarie Solis was recognized and asked about the logo with the stork being confused with the

downtown business group's logo. Ms. Solis said it was very similar. Mayor Schroeder said they could look at something to be in-line with them. The recommendation was to go to HLC and P & Z for approval first. Councilmember Lee did not want to use the stork design, but to look at other images such as the St. Louis Church, Alsatian Dancers, or one of the other landmarks in town. Councilmember Merz liked the official city seal image, not the "challenge coin" design. Councilmember King disagreed with Councilmember Lee and said the stork was part of the Alsace culture but was not in favor of the stork drawing shown, but with a better image could go hand in hand with the current wayfinding signage. Mr. King thought it would be a good idea for the Historic Preservation Officer to review during the process. Mayor Schroeder felt the Castroville Conservation Society should be invited to review. Councilmember Martinez said she had also been confused about the bird and did like the idea of the Alsatian Dancers or another landmark. Ms. Martinez said the city could use the city seal and have the stork as a sub-sign. Councilmember Marchman suggested adding a QR Code to the new signs. No action was taken.

Mayor Schroeder reopened the citizens' comments to allow board application Julianna Renner-Ramirez to give a brief introduction of herself to be considered for a position on the Library Advisory Board. The agenda wording for discussion on her application for Library Advisory Board had inadvertently been left off. This allowed her to introduce herself, and be considered at the following meeting for a position. Ms. Renner-Ramirez introduced herself and gave a brief background on her education and love for the library.

**b. Discussion and appropriate action on continuing the Simple City contract for the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)**

Mayor Schroeder briefed the city council on the hiring of Simplecity and the city working with them on the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and the Unified Development Ordinance. City Administrator Scott Dixon said the contract with Simplecity was over budget and staff was trying to get a time line of when the UDO would be ready for adoption. Mr. Dixon said the city council and P & Z had met several times separate and together with multiple public hearings and community meetings. Mr. Dixon said the contract was for \$500,000 and expenditures had reached \$520,374.00 that was approximately 5% of the contracted amount. Mr. Dixon said the concerns was the city still needed to get the finished document and if the city council wished to cancel the contract staff would need to receive the hosted documents, and build a website for the public to review, but staff would need to still have a consultant for answers staff could not provide. Mr. Dixon said they could finish out on a task order basis with hourly rates or look at a limit with cost estimate. Councilmember Marchman felt some of the additional charges might be from time spent correcting Simplecity mistakes found by city council or members of the P & Z and should not be charged to the city. Mr. Marchman said he felt Mr. Lewis had been disrespectful to the citizens during the community meetings and the city should have a credit not owe anything. Mr. Dixon said he would go back and do the research and contact them. Councilmember Martinez asked why the contract and overages had not came back to city council before now. Mr. Dixon said the contract went out in December and that was when the overages occurred. Mr. Dixon said he could approve up to \$25,000 and was now bringing back for council direction since it did not look to be finalized and being more. Mayor Schroeder said the additional interactions had added to the cost. Councilmember King agreed with Councilmember Marchman on his observation and had spoken with

Mr. Lewis on his attitude in the past. Mr. King felt it would be a disaster if the city stopped the process now, it needed to be finished. Mr. King recommended going back to Simplecity and looking at the cost to finish. Councilmember Merz said the city council gave Mr. Dixon the authority to approve up to \$25,000 and the overages were caused by the city council, not Simplecity. Mr. Merz said the additional meetings and comment periods had contributed to the overages. Mr. Merz was in favor of paying the incurred costs and if not finishing soon, paying the supplied 'a la carte' rates. Councilmember Martinez said she just wanted information ahead of time. Councilmember Lee was not in favor of continuing the contract without more information.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Marchman and duly seconded by Councilmember Martinez to deny the contract extension.**

Councilmember Lee asked for more discussion before the vote was taken. Mr. Lee suggested getting more information on what was needed to complete the document. Councilmember Marchman recommended Mr. Dixon to go back and negotiate the fees and the final cost. Councilmember Merz agreed on finding out cost of close out and any additional cost for approved directives. The city council gave direction to Mr. Dixon to speak with Simplecity and negotiate the costs. Mr. Dixon asked if the city council wanted Simplecity to come to the P & Z meeting the next evening as first planned. Mr. Dixon's concern was if they did not come there could be questions staff could not answer. City Council did not want Simplecity attending the next evening.

**Councilmember Marchman agreed to resend his motion to deny, instead to direct staff to negotiate the fees. Councilmember Martinez agreed to resend her second. No other action was taken.**

**c. Consider and take appropriate action on an application submitted for an open seat on the Historic Landmark Commission**

City Secretary Debra Howe briefed the city council on the application submitted by Mary King for the open position on the HLC Board. Ms. Howe said Ms. King had submitted her application back in September when a position was open and city council had chosen Lori Marchman and her application had been kept for a future opening. Ms. Howe said she was still interested in being on the board. Mayor Schroeder said this would be considered at the next meeting.

**X. Discussion on Future Agenda Items**

No items were discussed.

**XI. Adjourn**

Mayor Schroeder adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Darrin Schroeder  
Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Howe  
City Secretary