



CITY OF NEWARK

CITY COUNCIL

City Administration Building, City Council Chambers

37101 Newark Boulevard, Newark, CA 94560 | (510) 578-4266 | E-mail: city.clerk@newark.org

Minutes

Thursday, January 13, 2022
7:00 P.M.

A. ROLL CALL

Mayor Nagy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Council Members Bucci, Collazo, Freitas, and Vice Mayor Hannon.

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction of employees

Mayor Nagy introduced Chief Building Official Matthew Farrell, Sergeant Matt Warren, and Recreation and Community Services Manager Nick Cuevas.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public requested to speak.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

Council Member Bucci moved, Council Member Collazo seconded, to approve Consent Calendar items D.1 through D.3, that the resolutions be numbered consecutively, and that reading of the titles suffice for adoption. The motion passed, 5 AYES.

1. Approval of Audited Demands
2. Approval of December 9, 2021, minutes

3. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a purchase order with ePlus Technology, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$62,000 and approving a budget appropriation of \$62,000 from the equipment replacement reserve fund to Information Systems Division contractual services for Rubrik.
Resolution No. 11302

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

F. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Adopt resolutions authorizing the application for Homekey Grant Funding and allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Recovery Plan and Housing Impact Fee Funds for the TownePlace Suites Homekey Project at 39802 Cedar Boulevard
Resolution No. 11303 authorizing application
Resolution No. 11304 assignment of funds

Community Development Director Turner stated that the owner of the Towne Place Suites Hotel at 39892 Cedar Boulevard is interested in selling the property to Allied Housing. Allied Housing and Abode Services would like to convert the 125 suites into residential units and community space through the State's Homekey grant program. The Homekey program provides affordable housing in existing hotels and other buildings to low-income California households and those who are experiencing or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Community Development Director Turner recommended that the City Council authorize a joint application with Allied Housing, Inc. to apply for Homekey Grant funding through the State and a \$1.5 million allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds, and \$4.5 million allocation of Affordable Housing funds to be used for site acquisition and resident services purposes for the Homekey Towne Place Suites project. Presentation on file with City Clerk

Louis Chicoine CEO, Abode Services stated that he was excited about the project because it would have a major impact on a social problem. This particular site would allow this project to be completed cheaper and quicker than other sites.

Public Comment opened:

Mr. Ghi outlined his concern that there was not enough public notification, the expense of the program, the negative impacts to retail and health services, and the attraction of more homeless to the community. He stated that he could support a project that helped teachers, restaurant workers, or low income with a work requirement.

Vishnu stated that he was concerned with the project near his home and the safety of the existing community. He requested that the City select a different location for this project.

Srini asked if an analysis of home values near the project was completed because it will reduce homes value. Safety of the community was a concern, noting that some homeless have drug abuse problems. Srini suggested moving the project to the city outskirts.

Charles Chen stated that Challenger School is close to the property and asked who would be responsible if children were hurt. The homeless around the plaza have mental issues. He stated that this project was not wise for the City. He would prefer to help homeless with jobs instead of housing.

Raza Jafri found out about project today and did not feel safe with this project. There is lots of trash in the area and shopping carts from the homeless.

Akshay stated that this project will have a negative impact, create a nuisance and they will lose their peace of mind in the neighborhood. The homeless go through their trash. He stated that the project was great idea, but a bad location.

Jay Naik stated that the community needs to be better informed when a project like this is proposed. There are homeless camping in the neighborhood who are threatening and the police do not do anything.

Sham stated resident security as a concern. The homeless in the area bring trash and the Police cannot patrol enough for this issue. Sham suggested that it would be better to empower the homeless to make a living.

Tamim stated that this site is not the right space for this project. This is about safety of children. Tamim stated that he thought the crime rates for the motel near Mowry Avenue were high.

Chirag Joshi stated his concern with the plan, the presentation, and children's safety. He stated that the police do not have enough resources and the addition of more homeless would not help.

Pardeep Gonzales stated that there is a large homeless population. She has been harassed by them and they have mental health issues. She asked: if there will be help with mental health, if data has been analyzed from other cities that have housed the homeless, will individuals be vetted, and can the data be presented to the community.

Radish Zoom stated that safety was his primary concern and did not want children to walk past the homeless on their way to school. He asked: how the location was chosen, what is the legal process to raise an objection, was there time to oppose the plan, and what were the plan deadlines.

Zhongli stated that based on negative online reviews, he did not think that Abode Services was the right organization for this project. He suggested that the City vet Abode Services and make sure there were no conflicts of interest.

Mike and Nicole Verdue stated that a mentally ill homeless man has gotten violent recently. The police have investigated him, but he will not leave. The homeless have tried to enter their home and they saw zero benefit to the tax paying residents.

Peggy stated that she was worried because she did not receive any notification for this project. She asked what the budget was for the homeless issue and would the city increase taxes.

Rutvik Choksi asked: what would happen when the grant money was depleted; what has been the impact in other communities with similar projects, was it necessary for Newark to do this, and what other locations were considered. He thought the presentation had a limited view of the problem.

Dhruvil stated that he moved to Newark in the last 8 months and has seen issues in the community. People become homeless by choice to some extent. When you help them, they harass people in the area.

Shivani stated that there were issues with homeless in the area. She did not feel safe to walk and was concerned that the project would depreciate the area. She requested additional funds for the police to help the community.

Ana Apodaca, former City Council Member, stated that she was excited to read about this project today. She stated that this was a great project for our community and our homeless. She added that she was a longtime supporter of Abode Services.

Andrew stated that the project would attract more homeless to the area. He asked if there would be drug/alcohol treatment for the residents and additional security for the surrounding area. He asked what type of notification was sent of the project.

Mike stated that housing alone did not solve homelessness, they need services such as mental health, medical care, career training, and security. The project will attract more homeless. He viewed this project as a money maker for the developer.

Puneet Aneja stated that the project will shatter the dreams of people like him who worked hard for their homes. There will be safety, hygiene, and mental torture issues for the current residents. He requested moving the project away from residential areas.

Poonam Daswani asked how the project will impact their investments. She did not think placing the project in a residential area was the right option. She asked how the City would take project input from all Newark residents.

Diane Shaw stated that she supported the project and was surprised by the

misinformation and fear of change. She noted that she resides within a mile of the area and thought it was a great location, near transit.

Nicole Izant stated that she would have appreciated housing help when she was younger. Some families experience temporary housing and need help. She hoped that the community could pull together and be supportive.

Ashley Mo stated that she moved here in 2020 and lives in fear. She frequently checks her security camera and has experienced package thefts. She did not see how this project would help the neighborhood.

Saurabh stated that she sees people who have mental health issues in the community every day. What analysis was done to select this location. Crime will increase in this area. There will be negative impacts to retail, housing, and tourism.

Seerath Basravi stated safety concerns and the need for a vetting process for who is approved to live in the building. Not enough information has been shared on what is going to happen.

Kai agreed with previous speakers regarding lack of notification, project process, and consideration of other locations. She requested community involvement to help choose the right location for the project. She stated that this project does not seem like the right fit with the plan to revamp NewPark Mall.

Debjani shares some of the concerns of previous speakers. How to vet applicants, get jobs for them, additional police funding.

Aditi asked if there will be a screening of the people and who can qualify for the housing units.

Janelle stated that she chose this location for a safe area to start a family. She has experienced package theft and her neighbors' cars stolen. She does not feel safe in this neighborhood. She stated that better notification could have been sent out to the neighborhood.

Vikram Moharir bought his home because he thought Newark has potential for the future. He stated that this project should have been communicated earlier. He asked if the city could guarantee the safety of the residents

Bryan stated that he was in favor of this project. He noted that you can be successful and still live under the poverty line. He stated that the previous speakers blamed crime on a project that does not even exist yet.

Tina stated that she was concerned with the project, crime, and mental health issues. She asked how the project would be managed for the safety of the community.

Theresa Ballard Dias stated that she was a former Planning Commissioner, former board member of Abode Services and currently worked in affordable housing development. She stated that we all have a responsibility to help the homeless and that Abode provides wrap around services and expertise.

Ayaan Faisal stated that he would not feel safe walking to the high school past the homeless project.

Public Comment closed.

City Council discussion ensued.

Louis Chicoine, Abode Services stated that they sent out 500 letters to the surrounding area inviting them to the community meeting. They will put together questions and answers and post it on their website. Every household will have a tenant lease. They will have 5 staff members to help the residents with their needs. They have projects in Fremont similar to this one, that include tenant leases so people have obligations to pay modified rent, services to support them, and expectations that they are good neighbors. They have 7,000 units across the Bay Area. They help families.

Community Development Director Turner stated that this meeting is the first step in the project to seek funds. There could be opportunities to do additional community outreach about the project.

Ken Smith, president Board of Directors of Abode Services and a realtor in the Bay Area, stated that property values often go up after an Abode Services project, because the homeless are no longer on the street. A lot of teachers and children are homeless and need help.

Council Member Bucci moved, Council Member Collazo seconded to adopt resolutions: 1) Authorizing joint application for participation in, and subsequent city council approval, receipt of Homekey Program Grant Funds for the development of affordable housing; and 2) Authorizing the assignment of: (1) up to \$1,500,000 of American Rescue Plan Act Recovery Plan Funds and (2) up to \$4,500,000 of City of Newark Affordable Housing Funds for development of affordable housing through the Homekey Program at Towne Place Suites located at 39802 Cedar Boulevard. The motion passed, 5 AYES.

G. CITY COUNCIL MATTERS

Mayor Nagy stated that he would adjourn meeting in memory of former City Council Member Louis Cortez, who served on the City Council from 1972 to 1991. The City Council members extended their condolences.

Council Member Bucci apologized to Louis Chicoine for the name calling at the meeting.

Council Member Collazo stated that Mr. Cortez was a friend of her father. She thanked the Newark Unified School District for allowing the Whiteford Preschool to be used as a COVID-19 testing site. Shop Newark.

H. CLOSED SESSION

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Nagy adjourned the meeting at 9:47 p.m. in memory of former City Council Member Louis Cortez.

Sheila Harrington, City Clerk