

**CITY OF OXNARD COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2019**

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m., with the following Commissioners attending: Ruby Durias, Rene Campbell-Stewart, David Littell, Jose Negrete, Yukio Okano, Peggy Rivera, and Mayra Plascencia. Chairwoman Rivera presided. Staff members present were Steve Fischer, City Attorney; Jason Zaragoza, Assistant City Attorney; Emilio Ramirez, Housing Director; Mark Alvarado, Homeless Assistance Program Coordinator; Elsa Brown, Affordable Housing and Rehabilitation Manager; Karl Lawson, Compliance Services Manager; and Angelica Navarro, Administrative Secretary III.

2. **Public Comment:** On matters appearing on the Special Meeting agenda only, were heard during Commission consideration of the item on the agenda. There were six public speakers on agenda item 5. Commission Business.

1. Maria Collier- Read through the comments made at the previous meeting. Acknowledged the City, Emilio, all of his staff and all Commissioners' work to get to this place. She started with the Commission on Homelessness and remembers sitting in their place. It's exciting to see that we are so close, but yet still away and still having discussions is disheartening. May not be the perfect solution to what we want in the end, but a solution is needed. This is better than what has been seen in the past. It's worth moving forward to see how the City feels about this. Continue to receive information and input from the public. To stop this effort now would really be defeating as you would have to start all over again. Served on the commission thirteen years prior and having the same discussions. Encouraged them to consider her comment when deciding. Has worked with homeless individuals for five years and before that worked with displaced women who are victims of domestic violence. It is really difficult to find a place to live here in Oxnard especially for people who don't have the resources. Encourages the public to stop using terms like alcohol abusers, drug abusers, people that don't want to work in their comments about homeless individuals. The concern about alcohol being near a place. If someone is an alcoholic or using drugs, the behaviors don't change because of their location. They change when public perception is changed and we have to curtail the picture that we are painting for the public about our homeless. The individuals that she works with have been families, women, men that have lost their jobs, have become seriously ill, or have had crisis in their lives. It's rare to have a client come in who has an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Having shelter and a place to shower is a right everyone deserves.
2. Darlene Miller Gonzalez- Had to walk out of chambers to see if she was at the Commission on Homelessness meeting because it didn't seem like it. Sounded like the commissioners are not for homelessness, sounds like they are against housing the homeless. Talked about a blue print on how to support these programs. There's lots of ways to support the programs, sell coffee for example. There's lots of ways where the homeless can work and do things while they get their life together. A book called Rich Man and Poor Man is about where you get your advice and who is giving it to you. Is the commission for the homeless or against the homeless? Was part of St. Vincent de Paul where they helped a lot of people who almost lost their home. They weren't told we will help you in 3-4 months because they needed the help right away. No one has had the heart to say, these people are out there and they need help now. They need a place to stay, they can't wait for three months. Said she was homeless and down the road finds out she had cancer. If she hadn't gotten married she wouldn't have been able to get an exam. There are people out there who have these needs. Women wrap themselves up to appear like men and avoid getting raped. Pleaded to the commission to move forward now and think of the costs and how to come up with funding later. There are ways to pay for it because there are people in need with talent.
3. Lucy Cartagena- wants the commission to think about the fact that we don't need to leave the armory because it's City owned. So, shelter doesn't have to close, the City is not at that impact yet. So think about what you can and cannot do and where the City can be at. That site will not work because of so many variable reasons, we can't commit to it and it's not permanent. That's a big word, permanency. To take such

a task like that and wait for next year in case we have a new mayor and other councilmembers that may have a different agenda is extremely scary because we will by then be locked into an agreement and then the City will have to sue. Urges to think about what it looks like. Thanked Emilio for all the great work and his staff going above and beyond, but the difference is too that they don't know the dynamics and temperature of our City, which has had DA's coming through checking staff, having gone through mayors and councilmembers who have been shady and then not knowing what else may come up. It's scary to take on something that may or may not happen. Even though staff may have a big heart and a great vision for the City, they still don't live here and they still don't know the City. Next year, Aaron Star could be mayor and it's going to change so we really have to wonder about all of this. Don't jump ship, stay there and see what happens. We are Oxnard strong, I've seen during the Thomas fires, Oxnard came out strong. If they are going to close down the shelter, the community will not let that happen.

4. Sal Gonzalez- It's interesting to hear the discussion. The discussion is about money and cost. Where is the discussion about the homeless? We hear so much that it's a crisis. Shouldn't this body be acting like it is one? Instead it's being put off. If you put it off, it's not a crisis and you are not with all the other people who are acting like it is a crisis. Which side are you going to be on when this project moves forward? Because it will move forward. It has to move forward. There has to be a place for the homeless to go to. The City just approved those punitive measures. When they are at the park, they can't be there anymore soliciting. This item has been on the agenda since 2006. When is this commission going to move forward and decide. This body is not even talking about the number of people who are homeless. They are talking about the money. We need a place where people can look to the City as an example. This community can deal with the cost, but there has to be a place. No one will contribute until there is a place. Finally, Emilio has found a place, something that couldn't be done since 2006. Will the commission be on the supportive side? Or the side that tries to stop it?
5. Andres Flores- CalGisler resident. Homeless in the area will rise more than it already is. Asked for the list of properties looked at to see if the old T-Shirt Warehouse by Best Buy was on it. Main concern is at night, there's always somebody sleeping in the park. There was an RV that was there for about 3-4 days until it left. Was there to advocate for the mother/daughter walking at night trying to use the park. Against the people that are in and about, not necessarily the ones that are in the shelter, but the ones that don't make it in. Suggest putting the shelter somewhere else. Once it's in place find out what kind of homeless they are. For example: if they were fired from their job, put them on a path to get them another job. If they are mentally unstable put them on a list and get them the resources they need. One thing is to have a homeless shelter and the other thing is to find the problem once they're in there.
6. Richard Tucker- Passed out a written statement to each commissioner prior to the meeting. Says that it's not that no one is concerned about what is going to happen to them. That is not the issue. There are mental health issues, and alcohol issues. There are some that are in transition and we understand that. The amount of money that is going to be spent on a facility that the City doesn't own in a short period of time. Thirty to fifty thousand dollars a bed. We care. We asked for another meeting in January and this is the only item in the agenda. Not one business in the area, not one knew. Residents didn't know either, not one. Wrong place for this facility. Within 100 ft of the first residence. High density area with many generations living in one household. Two elementary schools within one mile and one middle school. Kamala recommends that it stays at their current location. We request that you deny this and find another location.

3. Information Consent Item

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting of November 4, 2019

ACTION: Commissioner Negrete moved, and Commissioner Durias seconded, a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Reports from Staff

1. SUBJECT: Commission By-Laws. This item was tabled until a future Commission meeting.
2. SUBJECT: Compliance with the Brown Act (California Open Public Meetings Act) City Attorney Steve Fischer and Assistant City Attorney Jason Zaragoza provided a presentation to the Commission on the Brown Act, and responded to questions from Commissioners.
3. SUBJECT: Rosenberg's Rules of Order
Compliance Services Manager Karl Lawson provided a presentation to the Commission on Rosenberg's Rules of Order. Mr. Lawson and Mr. Fischer responded to questions from Commissioners.

5. Commission Business

SUBJECT: Proposed site for re-location of existing Temporary Emergency Shelter

ACTION: Mr. Ramirez provided a presentation to the Commission on the staff's recommendation to City Council, and responded to questions from the Commission. Following discussion by the Commissioners, three motions were voted upon by the Commission.

First Motion: Commissioner Littell moved that the Commission recommend that staff return to the Commission within two months with a thorough written due diligence report on the proposed site, with cost estimates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Negrete. The motion failed by a vote of 3 in favor, and 4 against.

Second Motion: Commissioner Rivera moved that the City Council be encouraged to stay fast and hold firm, and not feel intimidated, threatened or coerced to sign the lease. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Camper-Stewart. The motion failed by a vote of one Commissioner in favor, and six Commissioners opposed.

Third Motion: Commissioner Littell moved that the City Council be advised that the consensus of the Commission is to not support, at this time, moving forward with the proposal for the 1258 Saviers Road site, until further information is provided. Commissioner Campbell-Stewart seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of one Commissioner in favor, and six Commissioners opposed.

- 6. Adjournment:** Commissioner Negrete moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Durias. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Karl Lawson/Angelica Navarro