



## Minutes of Ridgecrest's City Organization and Services Committee

City Council Chambers  
100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, California 93555

November 8, 2007  
5:00 p.m.

### CALL TO ORDER – 5:10p.m.

**PRESENT:** Council Members: Mayor Chip Holloway and Vice Mayor Tom Wiknich  
Planning Commissioners: Lois Beres

**ABSENT:** Nellavan Jeglum

**STAFF:** Mike Avery, Assistant City Manager; Director; Dennis Speer, Public Works Director;  
Ron Strand, Deputy Chief of Police; Bob Smith, Code Enforcement Officer; Eva  
Peterson, Executive Secretary

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Nathaniel Lidle, Daily Independent; Frank Nicholson; William Dale Howard;  
David Glazier, Adam Graehl, George Bertrand

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Moved by Vice Mayor Wiknich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mayor Holloway

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Moved by Vice Mayor Wiknich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mayor Holloway

### ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES:

**Rules of Council and Decorum at Public Meetings** – M. Avery began by stating the current rules of Council and Decorum at Public meetings in the municipal code provides limited use such as no threats, no physical violence and no disturbances. The question to Council is whether they wish to update the code? We are here as starting points to discuss this issue and what changes we would like to see to the code.

M. Avery mentioned that he has seen municipalities where the Chief of Police is the Sergeant of Arms or those responsibilities can be delegated out. T. Wiknich stated we are currently doing things informally during City Council meetings.

D. Glazier asked, why are we discussing this topic, did someone complain? D. Glazier commented that someone will always get offended. M. Avery stated that recently things have gotten to the point where threats and intimidation have come close to misdemeanors. D. Glazier stated he occasionally refers to people as “welfare stiffs” and basically where would that fall into this topic?

C. Holloway used the \$20.00 bill analogy – where a store posts they will not take anything over a \$20.00 bill. He stated if a customer came in with a \$100.00 bill, of course that currency would be accepted by a business owner, it’s there to keep the high bills to a minimum. It’s the same with this code – it’s there to keep unruliness to a minimum.

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T. Wiknich stated that in the course of a good discussion, you do not have to insult others and you maintain professional decorum. A determination has to be made when a meeting is getting out of hand and that determination is made by whoever is heading up the meeting whether it's the Mayor or chair of the committee.

W. D. Howard reviewed the "Rules of Council and Decorum at Public Meeting" handout and commented that he hopes the handout regulations are passed as is because if it is so unconstitutional, he'll be a millionaire.

T. Wiknich stated for everyone to review the handout and it will be brought back for further review and comments.

**Big Rig Parking Ordinance** – M. Avery began by discussing the latest version of the recommended ordinance which he stated addressed some of the concerns, not all, that were brought up at the special meeting. There was some additional clarification made to the latest version based on questions raised by George Bertrand. George Bertrand also asked about dump trucks and bob tail trucks and M. Avery replied this ordinance is for vehicles with a gross weight rating in excess of 26,000 pounds. George Bertrand asked about trucks parking by hotels and M. Avery replied that this ordinance is for vehicles parking in residential areas. George Bertrand asked about big rigs dropping their load and M. Avery replied that issue will be addressed with another ordinance. Frank Nicholson and Lois Beres stated they liked this ordinance. C. Holloway asked if there will be signage and D. Speer replied, yes. The ordinance was approved and will go to City Council.

**Nuisance Abatement Services with P.A.C.T. Uses** – B. Smith stated that it has come to his attention that people in the community feel Code Enforcement needs help. He initially thought there was no need for additional help in Code Enforcement when he looked at the ratios of employees in Code Enforcement in cities like Bakersfield. B. Smith thought the numbers in Ridgecrest were low in comparison for additional employees. However, after conversations with P.A.C.T. and the Chief of Police he sees how he can have a working relationship with P.A.C.T. Although P.A.C.T. has minimal people to tap into, those that are available, it has been determined that safety is critical. When B. Smith enters a home, he as a Code Enforcement Officer takes a risk. Across the nation, Code Enforcement Officer's are being killed. B. Smith stated he has 20 years of experience as a law enforcement officer and that experience helps him when he encounters someone who is agitated – his training helps him to determine whether to continue talking to the homeowner or walk away. B. Smith stated he is trying to find a happy medium and initially P.A.C.T. can start by providing office services. They can field calls, take photos of people using areas as dumping sites or report abandoned vehicles and enter the information into the database. Nancy Young, Rick Smith and Sgt. Fowler will also be assisting B. Smith. T. Wiknich stated this discussion is not directed at B. Smith's performance, however, calls left unanswered is not good and people deserve a call back. B. Smith stated that his phone has now been forwarded to the department secretary and she is now fielding all calls. However, many times when people call they don't leave a phone number or their number is unlisted and is unable to call them back. M. Avery mentioned that B. Smith did not have a City issued cell phone and it was the City's responsibility to issue him the tools to do his job. B. Smith has been

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issued a cell phone. C. Holloway asked where we're at with Administrative citations. B. Smith answered that if there is no improvement after 21 days, a citation is issued after going to the Planning Commission. Compliance usually takes place within 21-45 days. B. Smith stated that in 840 cases – only 2 citations have been issued. T. Wiknich brought up overgrown weeded lots and that they are a fire danger to the community therefore, what can we do to make the process faster? B. Smith stated that according to the SOP we must give the homeowner 21 days. D. Speer stated that weeds only have to be cleared 10feet off of the property line. Adam Graehl agreed and added that mountainous areas are the areas they concentrate on – not city lots. Adam stated you may contact the property owner regarding clearing his lot and the owner will complain, stating that clearing vegetation will cause dust erosion. However, weeded areas around the fence line, property line, and propane tanks need to be cleared. David Glazer asked B. Smith if his pay were increased would his production increase? B. Smith stated, no, he would still have to follow due process and allow the homeowner 21 days to get his property in compliance. Adam Graehl stated some municipalities in California require 50 or even 100 feet of clearing from the property line. B. Smith stated that as a Code Enforcement Officer he cannot look under, over or through someone's fence – only what is visible from public view – including animal waste. Frank Nicholson asked about weeds around fire hydrants and if he could take a look at the hydrant map? Adam Graehl stated hydrants should be cleared and welcomed Frank to stop in and view the hydrant map. B. Smith stated working with P.A.C.T. will be a blessing in disguise and it will be an enormous asset for the Code Enforcement Department. T. Wiknich stated in no way does he want to put any one in danger. L. Beres complimented B. Smith stating he's doing a good job.

**Next Meeting - December 13, 2007 at 5:00pm.**

**Adjourned - 6:25 p.m.**