

Fresno, California

March 1, 2009

The Council of the City of Fresno, California, met in Special Session in Room 2165, City Hall, at the hour of 3:02 p.m. the day above written. Present were Councilmembers Borgeas, Perea, Xiong, and Council President Sterling. Also present were Fresno County Supervisor Larson, Congressman Schiff, City Attorney Sanchez, and City Clerk Klisch. Councilmember Caprioglio arrived shortly into the meeting.

Council President Sterling introduced those present and stated Congressman Schiff was present in order to obtain information regarding local concerns, and advised those present would be allowed to present specific concerns.

Congressman Schiff stated he works closely with local legislators and serves on the Congressional Appropriations Committee. He advised of concerns regarding the local drought, the impact of recent rain, and home foreclosure issues; advised of the need to learn about transportation and infrastructure issues; briefly reviewed his top priorities, and concluded by stating he would meet with the local representatives following this meeting and see how the area could best be served.

Supervisor Larson reviewed County statistics including: reductions in revenue, job loss, increased unemployment rate in nearby cities on the west side; elaborated on the impact the loss in water and jobs has on the County; and clarified concerns regarding the Endangered Species Act and its adverse impact on water allocations. He continued with a review of specific needs regarding transportation, listed agricultural crops that would not be planted this year and the resulting impact on other industries; stressed people did not want welfare but wanted to work, and responded to questions from Congressman Schiff regarding the impact of the Endangered Species Act. Supervisor Larson added his top two priorities were to amend the Endangered Species Act and the storage and conveyance of water.

Councilmember Borgeas thanked the Congressman for his recognition of the Armenian genocide and requested a synopsis of the political process required to get the Endangered Species Act lifted. Congressman Schiff stated he would meet with local legislators on the issue; responded to questions regarding farming subsidies as being proposed by President Obama; advised of the need for sacrifice by all involved, and stressed the need to preserve the agricultural base in Fresno County. He added he was unaware of the President having a specific plan for the farm bill. Brief discussion ensued regarding the possible re-designation of State Route 99 to an interstate designation. Councilmember Caprioglio arrived at 3:27 p.m.

Councilmember Perea reiterated statements regarding the importance of water to the County; advised of the creation of the Latino Water Coalition and his involvement, stated he felt all involved should be educated on the various issues involving water storage requirements, and elaborated.

Councilmember Xiong concurred with the importance of various water issues for the City, County and surrounding area; continued regarding the issue of poverty within the County; advised the City of Fresno had been proactive and had looked into housing issues on a local level and had

not simply looked to the State and Federal Government for assistance, and concluded. Congressman Schiff spoke to the current difficult times, stated the legislature was doing things to hopefully bring the country out of this crisis and added everyone was looking for a long term solution in order to produce something with lasting benefits. Discussion ensued regarding issues involving solar energy ventures and power plants.

Councilmember Caprioglio stated as a Member of the Council he was prepared to support the State and Federal legislatures in any way possible.

Council President Sterling used a map to display the magnitude of the foreclosure crises within the City of Fresno; continued regarding the issue of transportation, stated Fresno was ready with programs and would proceed immediately upon receipt of the best ways to implement those programs, and explained. City Attorney Sanchez clarified an earlier question regarding the Endangered Species Act and stated guidelines were already established, and explained.

Speaking to various issues were: Sandra Brock, P. O. Box 8074, Squaw Valley, CA, who submitted a letter with a request for repeal or modification of the Social Security System's Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset, on file; Steve Hayes, 34876 S. Jane Road, Auberry, regarding water and the Cal Fed Program; Howard Watkins, 1785 W. Dovewood Lane, regarding water storage and health care issues; and Sandy White, representing the Housing Corporation, who expressed concerns regarding the foreclosure crisis, and the lack of consequences of actions resulting in victims of crime from foreclosures.

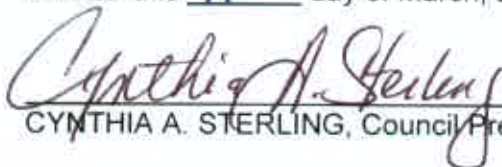
Congressman Schiff stated the foreclosure crises was very acute in this area, briefly elaborated upon proposed programs to provide a chance to assist with the problem; stressed the importance of feedback to local representatives, and concluded. Darius Assemi, 1396 W. Herndon, spoke in support of a program that would establish a four percent fixed interest rate home loan and encouraged Congress to look into that program.

Council President Sterling thanked Congressman Schiff for coming to meet with local officials and thanked those in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before the Council, the hour of 4:02 having arrived, and hearing no objections, Council President Sterling declared the meeting adjourned.

DATED this 12th day of March, 2009.


CYNTHIA A. STERLING, Council President

ATTEST: 
Rebecca E. Klisch, City Clerk

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