

**CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA
CITY COUNCIL**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Byrne called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. at the Sunset Center.

Roll call: Councilmembers Jeff Baron, Hans Buder, Alissandra Dramov, Mayor Pro Tem Delves, and Mayor Dale Byrne were present.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

Item 1 - Strategic Priorities Workshop – Review, Discuss, and Provide Direction on the City Council’s Strategic Priority Projects

City Administrator Chip Rerig presented 24 City Council’s strategic priorities, categorized under five refreshed key themes, 1) Financial sustainability, accountability, and transparency, 2) Stewarding the natural environment, 3) Maintaining public safety and infrastructure, 4) Preserving the Village character, and 5) Providing effective, reliable, and friendly government services.

He also presented priority projects developed by staff that align with the Council’s guiding principles for Council consideration.

Council discussed whether to keep, remove, or defer each of the 24 priorities listed below. Council invited public comment on each of the priorities to receive input.

RECESS

Council took a recess at 11:35 a.m. and resumed the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

1) Explore street addresses

Council discussed adding street addresses to an upcoming City Council meeting to revisit costs and process for a ballot measure, with discussion on whether to amend the previous Council’s direction.

- **Direction:** keep on the priority list.
- **Priority Category:** Preserving Village Character.

Public comments:

Joe DiNucci

Linda Caliofiore

Donna Jett

Karen Ferlito
Nancy Twomey
Carolyn White
No name
No name
Karyl Hall
Andi Carr
Collen Logan
Linda

2) Transient Occupancy Tax

Council discussed removing this item off the list, as staff gave a summary report to the City Council in May 2024, and ultimately opted not to pursue a 2024 ballot measure. Council may revisit this topic in the future.

- **Direction:** Remove from priority list, place on "parking lot" list

Public Comment:
Tasha Witt

RECESS

Council took a recess at 12:47 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 1:17 p.m.

3) Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) Bridget to Everywhere Project

Council recognized the Bridge to Everywhere Project as a regional project and discussed whether initial lease negotiations should be public.

- **Direction:** Keep as a priority
- **Priority Category:** Stewarding the natural environment

Public Comment:
Ken White
Laura Bolling
Robert Knight

4) Board and Commissioner Training

City Clerk Romero noted that Council had previously postponed the adoption of a new handbook in the summer of 2024. Councilmember Baron suggested bringing back the previously prepared staff report regarding updating the Commissioner handbook for Council consideration.

- **Direction:** Remove this item from the Priorities list, as it is a routine item for staff.

5) Develop and Implement a Social Media Plan

Staff reported that the Social Media Policy development is complete and ready for Council consideration at the March 3rd Council meeting. City Administrator Rerig noted that the city has started using Instagram, and the Police Department also plans to launch an Instagram once the policy is adopted.

- **Direction:** remove this item from the Priority list, as it is essentially completed, and is now a routine staff item.

6) Explore Parking and Traffic Management Program

City Administrator Rerig reported that a presentation to the Council with community feedback and options was planned for a future date but has been put off due to staff capacity. Traffic Management updates related to Assembly Bill (AB) 413 and California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22500 were implemented. Chief Tomasi highlighted the need for a parking and traffic management program.

Council acknowledged the need to address this, and suggested the Traffic Safety Committee take next steps to explore this.

- **Direction:** Keep on the priority list
- **Priority Category:** Financial sustainability, accountability, and transparency

Public comment:

Linda Califiore

No name

Bonnie

Ken Spilfogel

7) Review/Reformulate Approach to Reserves/Update Financial Policies

City Administrator Rerig noted that this is an ongoing item that is currently being explored, and Council recently created a Financial Stewardship Workgroup consisting of Councilmember Buder and Mayor Pro Tem Delves.

- **Direction:** keep this item on the priority list, and the Financial Stewardship Workgroup will continue their review of financial processes.
- **Priority Category:** Financial sustainability, accountability, and transparency

8) Explore Opportunities for Flanders Mansion

Council said this project does not currently rise to the level of a high priority, and once it does, it will require lots of money and staff resources.

- **Direction:** remove from priority list and move it to the “parking lot” list

Public Comment:

Mike Buffo

Kristin Tibbits

Robert Night

Jim Grossett

9) Review Barriers to Construction of Affordable Housing (Housing Element Adoption)

City Administrator Rerig reiterated that the adoption of the Housing Element has been completed, although the implementation phase and potential amendments to the Housing Element are currently in progress.

- **Direction:** remove this item from the priorities list as completed and continue to focus on an amendment to remove city owned sites from the Housing Element.

Public Comment:

Karen Ferlito

Tasha Witt

Bonnie

10) Explore opportunities for alternate affordable housing sites and amend Housing Element to move units from City owned sites.

- **Direction:** keep this item on the priority list.

11) Develop Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance

Staff reported that the ADU Ordinance is planned for Planning Commission review in April or May, and Council review in the summer of 2025. Council agreed this is a high priority and is near completion.

- **Direction:** keep on the priority list
- **Priority Category:** Preserving the Village character

12) Update Zoning Code and Design Guidelines (Residential & Commercial) AND Explore Reinstatement of the Design Review Board (DRB)

Staff reported that significant progress is being made, and assured Council that the draft design guidelines should be ready for the public to review by Memorial Day.

- **Direction:** keep on the priority list
- **Priority Category:** Preserving the Village character

13) Explore Opportunities for Permanent Outdoor Dining/Downtown Master Plan

Council discussed adding an additional bathroom at Piccadilly park to the CIP project list.

- **Direction:** remove from the priority list and move it to the “parking lot” list.

Public comment:

Mark

Kelly Brezoczky

14) Housing Element Implementation

- **Direction:** remove from the priority list, as it is a routine or “hygiene” item for staff.

15) Outdoor Wine Tasting Ordinance

- **Direction:** remove from the priority list, move to the “parking lot” list.

16) Review Opportunities for Enhanced Fire/Ambulance Service

Staff reported this is actively under discussion in closed session and near completion.

- **Direction:** keep this on the priority list until it is completed
- **Priority Category:** Maintaining public safety and infrastructure

17) Police/Public Works Building Project

Council noted that this project remains a high priority, and another special meeting on the police building project is scheduled for March.

- **Direction:** keep this item on the priority list
- **Priority Category:** Maintaining public safety and infrastructure

18) Develop a plan to ensure that the City’s natural areas, as well as private property, are properly maintained to reduce risk

City Administrator Rerig noted that the Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) was adopted in September 2024, and the City continued to focus on additional fire safety initiatives. Councilmember Dramov requested the city host another community workshop in the summer focused on how to harden homes against fires.

- **Direction:** remove from the priority list, as this is a routine or “hygiene” item for staff.

Public Comment:
Karen Ferlito

19) Develop & Update Tree Ordinance

Staff noted that the Staff noted the that the Urban Forest Master Plan has been renamed as the “Carmel Forest Master Plan”.

- **Direction:** none specified

20) Underground Utilities Rule 20A

Staff reported that the establishment of the Rule 20A Underground district was completed, securing funding credit, but clarified that while the district is established, there is no active project to underground the power lines at this point.

- **Direction:** remove this item from the priorities list as complete; implementation of the plan is a routine staff item.

21) Coastal Engineering Study and Climate Committee

City Administrator Rerig reported ongoing progress on the Fourth Avenue outfall and beach staircases, with updates scheduled for an upcoming Council meeting. Councilmember Baron proposed separating beach infrastructure repair from climate adaptation strategies as distinct priorities. Council also requested adding the repair of the beach ramp south of 8th Avenue to the CIP project list and including it in an upcoming coastal engineering contract.

- **Direction:** separate this priority into two items - Beach Infrastructure Repair and Climate Adaptation Strategy; move forward with adding the beach infrastructure repairs to the CIP project list through an upcoming contract.
- **Priority Category:** Maintaining public safety and infrastructure and Stewarding the Natural Environment

Public comment:
Kelly Brezoczky

22) Stormwater Ordinances Update

- **Direction:** remove from the priorities list as it is essentially completed (waiting for coastal commission approval).

23) Explore Opportunities for Scout House

- **Direction:** remove this from the priorities list and move to the “parking lot” list.

24) Undergrounding Power Lines (separate from Rule 20A)

- **Direction:** remove from the priorities list.

Public Comment:

No name

Will Rei

Tamara Michie

At the beginning of the meeting, City Administrator Rerig presented several potential priorities for the Council to consider adding to the strategic list or designating as routine staff tasks, and noted which of the refreshed priority themes they would fall under:

Financial sustainability, accountability, and transparency

- Refine financial policies improve City's bond/financing position for future projects.
- Tune up investment portfolio
- Find revenue enhancements
- Implement a new HR & payroll system for efficiency

Public Safety and Infrastructure Maintenance

- Assess all city buildings to get current on maintenance.
- Make Police/Public Works Building safe
- Survey and repair sidewalks and tree wells, ensuring ADA compliance.
- Construct a city-owned data conduit system to replace reliance on Comcast.
- Develop an IT Strategic Plan, including cybersecurity measures.

Providing effective, reliable, and friendly government services

- Upgrade permitting software with AI integration.
- Digitize all historic city records for online accessibility.
- Expand public Wi-Fi to parks and key areas as part of the "Smart Village" initiative.
- Implement new technologies to streamline staff tasks and improve customer service.

The Council agreed that due to lack of time, future discussion on these potential priorities is needed to decide whether to incorporate these items into the priority list or direct staff to handle them as routine staff responsibilities.

ADJOURNMENT:

Council adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Dale Byrne, Mayor

Nova Romero, MMC, City Clerk