

CITY OF GARDENA  
GARDENA ECONOMIC BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL (GEBAC)

**MEETING MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019  
City Hall Downstairs Training Room

**Members Present:** Jules Laross Kanhan, Steve Rogers, Robert Kwon, Carlos Lifosjoe, Gene Hale, Moe Shemirani, Wanda Love, and Naresh Solanki

**Members Absent:** Victor Amenta, Edward Yoon, and Zoraida Hernandez

**Staff Present:** Assistant City Manager Clint Osorio, Community Development Manager Raymond Barragan, Economic Development Manager Spencer Dela Cruz and Administrative Aide Alejandra Alvarez

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by GEBAC Chairperson Steve Rogers

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**GEBAC Minutes:** Steve Rogers made the motion to approve the July 17, 2019 minutes and it was seconded by Jules Laross Kanhan. The July 17, 2019 minutes were approved without change by the following votes:

**Ayes:** Jules Laross Kanhan, Steve Rogers, Robert Kwon, Carlos Lifosjoe, Gene Hale, Moe Shemirani, and Wanda Love

**Noes:** None

**3. CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATION:**

Assistant City Manager Osorio informed members that City Manager Medrano could not attend today's meeting since he was at a SBCOG meeting. He informed everyone that Medrano's last day is Thursday, September 19; he will be joining the California Department of Justice as Chief of Law Enforcement. Assistant City Manager Osorio will be replacing City Manager Medrano on an interim basis effective Friday, September 20.

Assistant City Manager Osorio began to discuss updates on the Lucky Lady Casino. He pointed out that rumors about the time it would take to rehab the Lucky Lady Casino are false; they are working as diligently as possible and do not expect the rehab to take anywhere near one year. They predict the rehab to take somewhere between 4-5 months, at the low end. There was some discussion about the financial impact on the City due to the loss of revenue. Assistant City Manager Osorio reassured members that staff in the Finance Department are working thoroughly to bridge that gap.

**4. STAFF COMMUNICATION:**

- A. LAEDC:** Economic Development Manager Spencer De La Cruz shared that the City of Gardena had entered to compete for the award of Most Business Friendly City, a competition held by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. Out of the 88 cities in the county, 31 applied for the award. Gardena is one of six finalists amongst cities with populations over 50,000 and is competing against Bellflower, Pasadena, Lancaster, Rosemead, and Norwalk. The award ceremony will be held on November 8<sup>th</sup>. There was discussion about what criteria the panel uses and how each city is graded.

- B. Gardena Restaurant Week:** Economic Development Manager Spencer De La Cruz updated members on the progress of Restaurant Week. The main focus has shifted to going out to the city, meeting with business owners, and sending out sponsorship forms to get businesses participating. Mr. Hale asked if any businesses had signed up already. Mr. De La Cruz gave a big thanks to Mr. Shemirani and South Bay Auto Auction for sponsoring. Other confirmed participants in Restaurant Week are Guiliano's, The Pan, Fish Bone, Lomeli's, El Pollo Inka, Oh My Burger, Yo-Way and Ricos Tacos El Tio. The deadline to register as a sponsor is October 4<sup>th</sup> before all marketing material has to be printed and distributed.

Overall, the feedback from business owners has been really positive. They appreciate the City hosting an event like this and that the City is also taking the time to use the opportunity to hear out their concerns and needs. Mr. De La Cruz wanted to stress that even though not every restaurant he visits will sign up, at least he can make every visit positive and use the occasion to meet the City's businesses.

Mr. De La Cruz brought up a discussion he had with Wanda Love. Together they came up with an idea to host a joint event between the City and the Chamber of Commerce where they can each give clarity on the roles as to what the City and Chamber can provide. It can also be a networking opportunity for some of the businesses to connect with various resources that we have. Yesterday, Mr. De La Cruz attended a meeting with the California Manufacturing Technical Council (CMTC). They provide a lot of financial resources, training, and funding to manufactures in California – primarily geared for the manufacturers looking to leave California for other states.

Since 2014, CMTC has worked with 61 Gardena businesses and have generated an additional \$75 million in revenue for these businesses. CMTC wants to work closer with Mr. De La Cruz on bridging the gap and getting in touch with the many other businesses in the city. Ms. Love pointed out that she constantly finds herself educating people about the difference between the City and the Chamber. The goal of this community event is to connect business owners and with the appropriate personnel for their needs.

- C. Community Development:** Community Development Manager Raymond Barragan presented newly approved projects by the Planning Commission. The first project approved was for 114 townhomes by Melia Homes and will replace the RoadEx trucking facility. It still requires City Council approval for the zoning change. The second item approved was mixed use project at the former Firestone building on Gardena Blvd.

Mr. Barragan informed members that a new business came to the city: Clean Water Technologies located at 13008 Western Ave. This new business will bring 20-30 new jobs to the city. Planning staff was able to process their application in one day and have already completed one round of plan check. They are expected to open by end of this year or early next year.

A new application for a Raising Cane's restaurant was submitted and will be presented to the Planning Commission in the coming weeks.

Mr. Barragan gave an update on the two current projects by G3 Urban within the city. For the project located on Van Ness Blvd., all of the units have been sold or reserved. The project located on Marine Ave. is still going through the environmental process. There were questions on what caused the contamination, the remediation process, and cost. Lastly, G3 Urban has submitted an application for 105 residential units, mixed use project

located on Rosecrans Ave., next to the U-Haul site. The project is in the environmental stage and is expected to be brought up to Planning Commission by March 2020. Developers have expressed their pleasure with the environmental consultant and the City's short turn around.

Gene Hale asked about the developers' hiring practices and whether they are hiring locally. Mr. Barragan stated that there is currently no data or methods to track those numbers but there is likelihood developers can provide general numbers. There was a discussion between members and staff about promoting local businesses to the developers, possibility of including a requirement in development agreements, and the economic impact of hiring locally. Steve Rogers proposed providing developers contact sheets with information on companies and various trades located within the city. Assistant City Manager Osorio suggested offering incentives for developers to hire locally. Mr. Osorio pledged to look into other municipalities' agreements and pattern our future development agreements in order to stimulate local hiring.

**5. COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Steve Rogers requested city staff to come up with an action plan to generate alternative revenue outside of casino revenue. Economic Development Manager Spencer De La Cruz will prepare and present a plan to reduce reliance on casino revenue during the next GEBAC meeting.

Wanda Love reported she has noticed a lot more food truck vendors. Ms. Love inquired about the City's municipal code allowing street vendors.

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

Steve Rogers asked for an update on the direction the City is taking to offset some of the loss revenue due to the casino closure. Mr. De La Cruz pointed out that the City is looking for other tax producers such as hotels. The former Cintas property located on Normandie Ave. has a lot of potential for either a manufacturing or distribution type business. Mr. Rogers asked what would be the key revenue generators for a metropolitan city. Both Mr. De La Cruz and Assistant City Manager Osorio agreed hotels, car dealerships, and big box retail stores are key drivers for revenue. There was a discussion about the future of big box retailers and their presence in cities.

**7. NEXT MEETING:**

Next meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. at City Hall.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Rogers', is centered within a light pink rectangular box.

Steve Rogers, Chairperson