



MINUTES SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 28, 2023

City of Watsonville
City Council Chambers
275 Main Street Top Floor

5:30 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Mayor Montesino, Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter and Council Members Clark, Dutra, Orozco, Parker, and Salcido were present.

Staff members present were City Manager Mendez, City Attorney Zutler, City Clerk Ortiz, Assistant City Manager Vides, Interim Public Works & Utilities Director Vides, Police Chief Zamora, Fire Chief Lopez, Community Development Director Merriam, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Library Director Martinez, Airport Director Williams, Assistant Police Chief Sims, Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes, Principal Planner Meek, Division Fire Chief Avila, Fire Battalion Chief Vojvoda, Traffic Operations Manager Gonzalez, Police Officer Travers, Police Officer Rodriguez, Deputy City Clerk Pacheco, Interpreter Jauregui, and Interpreter Landaverry.

1.a. MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT COUNCIL MEMBERS (If any) – None

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS, ORDINANCES, & APPEALS

3.a. GENERAL PLAN MAP & ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS, & SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TO ALLOW PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF A 525-STUDENT CHARTER SCHOOL LOCATED AT 215 LOCUST ST (APN 017-161-51)

1) Staff Report by Community Development Director Merriam, Principal Planner Meek, and Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes

2) City Council Clarifying & Technical Questions

Principal Planner Meek answered questions from Member Parker regarding current and previous zoning of the area where Ceiba College Preparatory Academy (Ceiba) was located, permitted uses, and when the zoning was introduced. He spoke about situations in which zoning could be amended.

Community Development Director Merriam, in answering Member Dutra, spoke about reasons housing was located in industrial zones and challenges with making changes to zoning.

In answering Member Dutra, Community Development Director Merriam spoke about Jacob's Heart's special use permit and zoning amendment. She stated Ceiba's zoning amendment request would not impact Jacob's Heart.

In answering Member Salcido, Principal Planner Meek spoke about the approximate number of residences that were located within 300 feet of the school and stated there were no vacant buildings or additional special use permits in the vicinity.

Community Development Director Merriam added there were other special use permits throughout the City's industrial zone.

Principal Planner Meek, in answering Member Salcido, stated the zoning amendment was only for the specific parcel where the school was located and said he did not foresee a negative impact on current or future businesses conducting their regularly permitted activities.

In answering Member Parker, Principal Planner Meek spoke about the concerns that were raised by business owners in the area that wrote in opposition to the zoning amendment request.

Community Development Director Merriam, in answering Member Parker, stated she was not aware if staff had knowledge of an agreement entered into by Ceiba and Pájaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD).

In answering Member Parker, Principal Planner Meek stated the previous special use permit issued to Ceiba allowed for an increase in enrollment for a total of 525 students.

Principal Planner Meek answered Member Parker's question regarding Ceiba's pedestrian crossing updates. He spoke about ways the City collaborated with PVUSD to address pedestrian safety and traffic concerns, and established tools to assess compliance.

In answering Member Orozco, Principal Planner Meek spoke about conditions of approval included in the special use permit in relation to addressing area residents' concerns including litter, bad odors, improper student behavior, and traffic congestion. She suggested quarterly updates to Council in order to track compliance efforts.

Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes, in answering Member Salcido, spoke about establishment of the Safe Routes to School Plan and stated City staff met with Ceiba officials to identify potential improvements.

Community Development Director Merriam stated improvements were typically not made until the special use permit was approved. She spoke about other measures that had been taken by the school to improve safety and traffic flow.

In answering Member Salcido, Principal Planner Meek spoke about ways in which complaints could be addressed by both City staff and Ceiba, and what steps could be taken in the event the school did not comply with the conditions of the special use permit.

Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter disclosed her previous employment at Ceiba and stated she had applied to serve on Ceiba's board of directors but did not move forward with the application, resulting in no existing conflict of interest.

Principal Planner Meek, in answering Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter, spoke about the time frame for Ceiba to meet the City's Conditions of Approval of the special use permit, including the sidewalk improvements.

In answering Member Dutra, Community Development Director Merriam stated the City did not request Martinelli's move from one of their locations. She added that was a decision made by the owner.

Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes answered a question from Member Dutra regarding traffic congestion in various school locations across the City.

In answering Member Parker, Principal Planner Meek spoke about the zoning of Pájaro Valley High School and stated it was overseen by PVUSD.

Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes answered Member Parker's question regarding the number of PVUSD schools that were located near highways.

Applicant Presentation by CEIBA Head of School Josh Ripp

Principal Planner Meek, in answering Mayor Montesino, spoke about the reasons that delayed the item from being taken to Council for consideration.

In answering Mayor Montesino, Mr. Ripp explained why the school purchased nearby property and the potential for building a gym at that location.

Mr. Ripp answered Mayor Montesino's questions regarding the reasons the Gottschalks building was not suitable for Ceiba's operations.

In answering Member Clark, Mr. Ripp spoke about reasons Ceiba moved out of the Porter Building and steps taken by the school to address parking and traffic congestion concerns at their new site. He stated Ceiba had no additional expansion plans beyond a nearby property that had already been purchased.

Mr. Ripp, in answering Member Dutra, spoke about safety in the school and stated there had not been issues with guns brought to campus.

In answering Member Dutra, Mr. Ripp spoke about the importance of sports programs and the potential for having sporting fields and other amenities in the future. He stated all of Ceiba's teaching positions were filled.

Mr. Ripp answered Mayor Montesino's question regarding steps the school was taking to address resident concerns with traffic congestion.

In answering Member Parker, Mr. Ripp spoke about members of Ceiba's Board of Directors.

Member Parker expressed concern with language used to describe other local schools in a letter sent to Council by a Ceiba student.

In answering Member Parker, Mr. Ripp spoke about cost of the property purchased by the school and its prior use.

Principal Planner Meek explained the property purchased by Ceiba had been vacant for several years, and spoke about efforts to address soil contamination and potential related health hazards.

Mr. Ripp answered questions from Member Parker regarding potential for additional parking spaces on the property Ceiba purchased, the costs and funding sources of repairs and upgrades made to the building the school was occupying, and addressing of environmental concerns.

In answering Member Orozco, Mr. Ripp spoke about the extensive process the school would have to engage in should it wish to increase its student capacity, and stated there were no plans to do so.

Mr. Ripp answered Member Orozco's question regarding timing of Ceiba's traffic studies.

In answering Member Orozco, Mr. Ripp stated there had been one traffic incident involving pedestrians near Ceiba.

Mr. Ripp, in answering Member Orozco, stated students were not permitted to park their vehicles at the school site.

Member Orozco suggested exploring a ride sharing program to help alleviate traffic congestion.

In answering Member Clark, Mr. Ripp spoke about the various sites that had been explored for relocating the school and stated PVUSD did not have a physical location available for Ceiba to move to.

Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes, in answering Member Clark, spoke about the dimensions of the bulb outs that would be placed on roads near the school.

Principal Planner Meek added that Second Street and Locust Street were not part of designated trucking routes, and that bulb outs could be designed to not interfere with trucks.

In answering Member Clark, Principal Planner Meek spoke about one of the proposed drop off locations, its proximity to a business' driveway, and the potential for exploring alternative options.

Mr. Ripp, in answering Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter, spoke about Ceiba's response to student behavior concerns, efforts to engage with the community to resolve issues, traffic congestion and safety concerns including security measures and weapons on campus.

In answering Member Clark, Mr. Ripp stated Ceiba did not have plans to expand beyond the property it had recently purchased.

Mr. Ripp answered a question from Member Parker regarding Ceiba's site search for alternative locations.

In answering Member Parker, Mr. Ripp stated he was made aware of the school's agreement with PVUSD regarding site usage at the beginning of his employment.

Member Parker expressed concerns with the agreement signed by PVUSD and Ceiba not being made readily available to the Council and public.

3) Public Comments

The following speakers spoke in support or opposition of Ceiba's special use permit application and zoning amendment request:

John Martinelli	- in opposition
Paulina Gonzalez, Ceiba Athletic Director and P.E. Teacher	- in support
Emmanuel Ponce, Ceiba student	- in support
Isaias, Ceiba student	- in support
? female	- in support
Julian Castillo, Ceiba student	- in support
? female Ceiba parent	- in support
Karina Escobedo Ceiba parent	- in support
Grant Johnston, traffic engineer	- in opposition
Denise Sanchez	- in support
Adrian Jacob Gallardo, Ceiba student	- in support
Farris Sabah, County Superintendent of Schools	- in support
? male Ceiba student	- in support
Oscar Serrano, Ceiba student	- in support
Anahi, Ceiba student	- in support
Becky Clark, District 1	- in opposition
Carimey Maldonado, Ceiba student	- in support
Leonardo Torres Reyes, Ceiba student	- in support
Max Davis, Ceiba student	- in support
? male Ceiba parent	- in support
Blanca, Ceiba parent	- in support
Glenni Rankin, Ceiba English Teacher	- in support
Pete Bobeda	- in opposition
Tom	- in opposition
Mike Rich, Ceiba Director of Data, Assessment, and Accountability	- in support
? male	- in opposition
Jose Luis Sanchez, Mizkan Americas, Inc. Plant Manager	- in opposition
Imelda	- in support
Israel Alcantar	- in support
Leonardo Santiago, Ceiba student	- in support
Marta Bulaich District 1	- in opposition
Isaias, Ceiba student	- in support
Samuel Lopez García, Ceiba student	- in support
Jonathan Escobar, Ceiba student	- in support
Henry Schrandt, Ceiba English Teacher	- in support

Mayor Montesino recessed the meeting at 9 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 9:10 p.m.

Erika, Ceiba parent	- in support
Liana Espinoza, Ceiba student	- in support
Ashley De la Torre, Ceiba student	- in support
Rogelio Bernal Cárdenas, Ceiba parent	- in support
Jeffrey García, Ceiba Substitute Teacher	- in support
Melanie Larsen Ceiba Art Teacher	- in support

Gabriela Maya-Rodriguez, Ceiba student	- in support
Jacob Castillo, former Ceiba student	- in support
Amber Ceiba student	- in support
Graciela Meza, former Ceiba student	- in support
Roberto Gutierrez	- in support
David Machuca Ceiba P.E. Teacher	- in support
Adrian Camacho, Ceiba student	- in support
Angel Zavala, Ceiba Paraprofessional	- in support
Noemi Priteo, former Ceiba student	- in support
Rachael Pedley, Ceiba Human Resources Director	- in support
Miguel Camacho, Ceiba parent	- in support
? female, Ceiba parent	- in support
Ana, District 1	- in support
Takashi Mizuno, District 7	- in support
Sandra Gutierrez, Ceiba MTSS Director	- in support
Carlos García- Ceiba Campus Supervisor	- in support
? male Ceiba student	- in support
Nick Bulaich	- in opposition
Maura Leonor, Ceiba parent	- in support
Steve Wozniak	- in opposition
Clarissa, Ceiba Student Activities Coordinator	- in support
Nathan Winchell, Ceiba MTSS Director	- in support
Andrew Tapia, Ceiba student	- in support
Ilia Bulaich	- in opposition
Emily Chavez, Ceiba Office Assistant	- in support
Megan Campos, Ceiba staff	- in support
Mrs. Cuevas, Ceiba parent	- in support
Janet, Ceiba student	- in support
Maria Ibarra, Ceiba Cafeteria Supervisor	- in support
Athena Raney, Ceiba Science Teacher	- in support
Marilu Silva, Ceiba student	- in support
? female	- in support
Luisa Torres, Ceiba parent	- in support
? female	- in support
María Martinez, Ceiba parent	- in support
Francisco Chavez, Ceiba student	- in support
Janet Uribe, Ceiba parent of former student	- in support
Jose Tejeda, Ceiba parent	- in support
Barry Kyle, Ceiba Math Teacher	- in support
Alice Bankhead, District 1	- in opposition
Ana Leonor, Ceiba former employee	- in support

4) Motion

In answering Member Dutra, Community Development Director Merriam stated she was unaware if Martinelli's location on East Beach Street utilized ammonia.

Community Development Director Merriam, in answering Member Dutra, stated staff had made findings recommending support of the project based on its findings.

Member Dutra spoke about the possibility of granting Ceiba an extension on the current permit to allow them time to engage with business owners that had expressed concerns.

Member Salcido thanked the public for their attendance and input. She stated the reasons she was in support of the zoning amendment and issuing of the special use permit, based on provisions of the City's General Plan.

Member Parker spoke about Council's process for making and discussing motions during public hearings.

Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter expressed concern with not having sufficient time to determine whether Ceiba's traffic mitigation measures would work on a long-term basis. She stated the reasons why she would support a temporary permit but not a permanent one at that point in time.

Member Clark spoke about a petition received by Council submitted by residents that opposed Ceiba's requests. He expressed concerns with Ceiba's current location and traffic issues, and stated he would support issuing the school a permit extension.

In answering Member Orozco, Community Development Director Merriam stated only granting Ceiba a permit extension could potentially prevent them from making the improvements outlined in the special use permit.

Member Orozco stated she would support Ceiba's request provided there was enforcement of timelines set for the school to meet the conditions of the special use permit, a clear complaint process, and that Ceiba reached out to the businesses that expressed concerns.

Member Parker expressed concern with the business community not having sufficient time to provide input or collaborate with the school. She stated she could support a compromise, but would not support a permanent special use permit. She mentioned her concerns with PVUSD not providing support to the school.

Member Dutra stated he would support a multi-year extension of the special use permit or issuing it permanently.

Mayor Montesino stated the reasons he would support staff's recommendation if Member Orozco's previous suggestions were included as conditions of the special use permit.

MOTION: It was moved by Mayor Montesino, seconded by Member Orozco to approve Items 3.a.6. through 3.a.8 listed below, with additional conditions for the special use permit as listed below:

- a. Ceiba will make available through its website a form for neighbors and residents to use for complaints. Ceiba will respond to the complainant within 7 days.
- b. Within 60 days of approval, Ceiba will hold a meeting with business owners to discuss any outstanding issues. Ceiba will continue to have community meetings biannually thereafter.
- c. For three years from the date of approval, Ceiba will provide a quarterly update to the City, including information such as the City complaint log, updates on conditions of approval, outreach to the business community and residents, any training provided or certifications for crossing guards, status of implementation for safe routes for schools.

The City will provide the information to Council. After three years, reports will be provided on an annual basis.

In answering Mayor Montesino, City Clerk Ortiz stated the ordinance included with the item would be taken back to Council for a second reading and adoption during the next regular Council meeting.

Mayor Montesino recessed the meeting at 10:34 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:50 p.m.

5) City Council Deliberation on Motion

City Attorney Zutler read the additional conditions that would be added to the special use permit.

In answering Member Dutra, City Attorney Zutler spoke about the City's process in the event Ceiba did not meet the conditions outlined in the special use permit.

Community Development Director Merriam answered Member Dutra regarding the duration of certain conditions on the special use permit.

In answering Member Dutra, Principal Planner Meek spoke about different mechanisms that could be used to determine whether Ceiba had met the conditions listed in the special use permit.

Member Dutra spoke about the importance of support from the business community for the school.

In answering Member Parker, City Manager Mendez spoke about ways the City could track and verify the school's compliance with conditions and timeframes for certain conditions.

Member Parker expressed concerns with issuing a permanent special use permit to Ceiba and spoke about the importance of receiving input from the business community.

City Attorney Zutler stated that the special use permit could be revoked if the conditions outlined in it were not met.

Member Orozco spoke about the possibility of extending the special use permit for multiple years to allow Ceiba time to foster a relationship with the business community and the importance of the City having a clear and accessible complaint process for the community independent from the school's process.

In answering Mayor Montesino, City Attorney Zutler stated the special use permit would follow the same procedure as all the City's special use permits.

Member Parker expressed concerns with issuing a permanent special use permit and having it reviewed by the Planning Commission in the event it was determined any of the conditions were not met.

City Manager Mendez, in answering Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter, spoke about the timeframes for various conditions to be met.

Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz listed reasons she suggested quarterly reports be an added condition of the special use permit.

Mayor Pro Tempore Quiroz-Carter re-stated the additional conditions for the special use permit for clarification.

Member Parker stated the reasons she would not support a permanent special use permit.

MOTION: The above motion carried by the following vote.

AYES: MEMBERS: Dutra, Orozco, Salcido, Montesino
NOES: MEMBERS: Clark, Parker, Quiroz-Carter
ABSENT: MEMBERS: None

6) RESOLUTION NO. 41-23 (CM)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TWENTY-EIGHTH (28TH) AMENDMENT TO THE WATSONVILLE 2005 GENERAL PLAN TO RE-DESIGNATE ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 017-161-51 LOCATED AT 215 LOCUST STREET, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA FROM (I) INDUSTRIAL TO PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC TO ALLOW THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF A 525-STUDENT CHARTER SCHOOL FOR GRADES 6-12 IN AN EXISTING 27,000± SQUARE FOOT BUILDING WITH AN 8,500± SQUARE FOOT MEZZANINE ON A 2.1± ACRE SITE

7) BY MOTION, INTRODUCE FOR FIRST READING, BY TITLE ONLY, WAIVING THE FULL READING OF THE TEXT, AN UNCODIFIED ORDINANCE APPROVING REZONING ON ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 017-161-51 LOCATED AT 215 LOCUST STREET, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, TO ALLOW THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF A 525-STUDENT CHARTER SCHOOL FOR GRADES 6-12 IN AN EXISTING 27,000± SQUARE-FOOT BUILDING WITH AN 8,500± SQUARE-FOOT MEZZANINE ON A 2.1± ACRE SITE, AND DIRECTING CHANGES TO BE MADE ON THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE

8) RESOLUTION NO. 42-23 (CM)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (APP #1737) TO ALLOW THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF A 525-STUDENT CHARTER SCHOOL FOR GRADES 6-12 IN AN EXISTING 27,000± SQUARE-FOOT BUILDING WITH AN 8,500± SQUARE-FOOT MEZZANINE ON A 2.1± ACRE SITE LOCATED AT 215 LOCUST STREET, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA (APN 017-161-51)

4. EMERGENCY ITEMS ADDED TO AGENDA – None

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 p.m.

Eduardo Montesino, Mayor

ATTEST:

Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk