

MINUTES

SARATOGA CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION – CODE OF ETHICS

JUNE 24, 2008

Mayor Waltonsmith called the meeting to order at 6:00P.M.

Councilmembers adjourned to Closed Session.

The City Council held a Code of Ethics Study Session at 6:45 p.m. in the Administrative Conference Room.

Mayor Waltonsmith called the Study Session to order at 6:45P.M.

Mayor Waltonsmith announced no reportable items from Closed Session.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Councilmembers Jill Hunter, Aileen Kao, Kathleen King, Vice Mayor Chuck Page, and Mayor Ann Waltonsmith

ABSENT: None

ALSO Dave Anderson, City Manager

PRESENT: Richard Taylor, City Attorney
Ann Sullivan, Acting City Clerk

REPORT OF CITY CLERK ON POSTING OF AGENDA

Acting City Clerk Ann Sullivan reported Pursuant to Gov't. Code 54954.2, the agenda for this meeting was properly posted on June 19, 2008.

Mayor Waltonsmith stated the Study Session was scheduled at the request of Council to discuss Code of Ethics.

City Manager Dave Anderson noted Council had listened to a Code of Ethics presentation at the April 2, 2008 Council meeting and at that meeting Council directed staff to schedule a Study Session for further discussion on this subject.

Council members viewed various hand out materials including:

- The Why's and How's of Campaign Ethics
- Campaigning Effectively for Local Office
- City of Santa Clara's Code of Ethics
- The Pledge of Fair Campaign Practices
- American Association of Political Consultants Code of Professional Ethics
- California Code of Fair Campaign Practices

COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON CODE OF ETHICS FOR CITY OFFICIALS -

Council discussed a number of matters pertaining to ethical norms and behaviors in City government and felt that the public does expect their elected officials to abide by ethical behavior and rules at all times.

City Attorney Richard Taylor noted that a League of California Cities studies show that the public doesn't have confidence in public officials. He stated that by having an adopted code of ethics for public officials is a way to let the public know you are interested in the ethics policy.

Council engaged in lengthy discussion about ethics and values, reviewed the hand outs and felt that the Code of Ethics adopted by the City of Santa Clara contained many of the ethics and values needed to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. In addition, Council stated an adopted Code of Ethics for the City of Saratoga included all elected and appointed officials, City employees, volunteers, and others who participate in the City's government are required to subscribe to this Code, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its core values in their work.

DISCUSSION ON COUNCIL POLICIES -

City Manager Dave Anderson stated currently the Saratoga City Council Policies does not have a section on decorum for its elected officials; however, there is decorum for the audience.

Council suggested the following council decorum rules should be implemented in the Council Policies:

- Be respectful to fellow council members when in public (do not make gestures, facial expressions, eye rolling).
- Try not to use acronyms; without explanation to the public.
- Insure council members or alternates attend council assignments.
- Councilmembers should not engage in debating with members of the public during public meetings.
- Be succinct and direct.
- Do not interrupt someone who is speaking.

DISCUSSION ON COUNCIL CANDIDACY ELECTION ETHICS -

The study session discussion also considered matters pertaining to ethics and City elections and agreed that the 2008 Council election candidate binders should contain a voluntary pledge of fair campaign practices. Because council candidacy papers for the November, 2008 election will be available on July 14, 2008, Council desired an expedited adopted resolution establishing a voluntary pledge of fair campaign practices and to make Council adopted election materials available to potential candidates by July 14, 2008.

Council considered three matters pertaining to ethics and standards for City elections:

Pledge of Fair Campaign Practices –

State law requires the City Clerk to provide each candidate with a blank form "Code of Fair Campaign Practices". Completion of the form is voluntary. The League of California Cities has prepared an alternative version of the code titled a "Pledge of Fair Campaign Practices" and recommends that cities consider invite candidates to complete this form as well; again, this would be on a voluntary basis. Council also discussed the contents of the Code of Professional Ethics for the American Association of Political Consultants.

Additional Candidate Forum –

Council discussed a program recently instituted by the City of Santa Clara. The City of Santa Clara sponsors two candidate forums during the election season. The last forum – known as the "Final Word Forum" – is held on the evening before Election Day. Council stated they would like that program implemented in the City of Saratoga as well and that staff should contact the League of Women Voters to see if they could increase the number of League of Women Voters candidate forums supported by the City from one to two on the condition that the second forum be held on the evening preceding the election.

Fair Campaigning Resource –

Council discussed the contents of "The Institute of Local Government" a guide to fair campaign practices that potential candidates for City Council could find useful. The guide is called "Campaigning Effectively for Local

Office: Good People Can Finish First”. Council noted the City Clerk could provide the table of contents to potential Council candidates and post a link to the guide on the City website or print out the entire guide and the City Clerk could include it in the council candidate binder.

COUNCIL DIRECTION TO STAFF:

- Prepare a staff report with a proposed code of ethics and standards for City elections for the next Council meeting; which is July 2, 2008.
- Return with a proposed code of ethics for city officials, city employees and city volunteers at the July 18, 2008 Council meeting.
- Contact the League of Women Voters regarding an additional candidate forum to be held the evening preceding the election.
- Add the *Code of Ethics* to the city website category “About Saratoga” once the City of Saratoga Code of Ethics is adopted.
- Consider including a link on the City website to The Institute for Local Government publication titled “Campaigning Effectively for Local office: Good People Can Finish First.”

Meeting adjourned at 8:55P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Ann Sullivan
Acting City Clerk