

MINUTES

Special Meeting of the
City of Huntington Park City Council
Friday, February 28, 2025

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Huntington Park, California was called to order at 6:03 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2025, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 6550 Miles Avenue, Huntington Park, California; Mayor Karina Macias presiding.

PRESENT: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and Mayor Macias

ABSENT: None

CITY OFFICIALS/STAFF: City Manager Ricardo Reyes; Eduardo Sarmiento, City Clerk; Cosme Lozano Police Chief; Finance Director Jeff Jones; Arnold M. Glassman City Attorney.

INVOCATION

Mayor Macias led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Macias led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATION(S)

1. NONE

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following people/ person provided public content:

1. Alexandra Melgoza
2. Linda Carballo
3. Rodolfo Cruz
4. Carlos Pando
5. Vicente Cadena
6. Albert Robles
7. John Doe
8. Ivonne Correa
9. Jas
10. Carlos Cordova
11. Valentin Amezquita
12. Veronica Rangel
13. Maria Cruz
14. Elizabeth Delgado
15. Emmanuel Carrera
16. Namir
17. Betty Retama
18. Esperanza Rodriguez
19. Mayra Covarrubias
20. Sandra Hutzo
21. Felix Romero
22. Veronica Ceja
23. Francisco Ramirez
24. Brianna Andrade
25. Lorena Vega
26. Kristi Austin
27. Luz Lopez
28. Maria Lopez
29. Alma Cristina
30. Rosa Maria
31. Jose Escamilla
32. Victor Medina
33. Brenda Lopez
34. Jane Doe #1
35. Jane Doe #2
36. Jane Doe #3

- 37. Jane Doe #4
- 38. Jane Doe #5
- 39. Jane Doe #6
- 40. Mylie Rodriguez

STAFF RESPONSE

None

CLOSED SESSION

- 1) None

CLOSED SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

None. There was no Closed Session Portion

CONSENT CALENDAR

CITY CLERK

1. CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINTUES

Approve Minute(s) of the following City Council Meeting(s):

- 1. Regular City Council Meeting held on February 24, 2025

FINANCE

2. CHECK REGISTER

RECOMMENDED THAT CITY COUNCIL:

- 1. Approve Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrant(s) dated February 28, 2025
MOTION: Council member Martinez moved to approve the consent calendar, seconded by Vice Mayor Flores. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

AYES: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and Mayor Macias

NOES: None

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

REGULAR AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL

1. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY INVESTIGATION INTO THE HUNTINGTON PARK AQUATIC CENTER PROJECT, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF LEGAL MATTERS RELATED TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY INVESTIGATION.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT CITY COUNCIL:

The City Council will consider the following actions in open session:

- 1. Waiver of Attorney-Client Privilege – Consideration of whether to waive attorney-client privilege to facilitate cooperation with investigative authorities; and
- 2. Delegation of investigative Authority – Consideration of turning over investigative authority to the City Prosecutor on behalf of the City; and

3. Approval of Conflict of Waiver- Consideration of a conflict of waiver allowing Attorney Andrew Sarega to represent City Manager Ricardo Reyes and Council Member Eduardo “Eddie Martinez” in matters related to the investigation.

MOTION: Vice Mayor Flores moved to waiver attorney client privilege consideration of whether to waive attorney-client privilege to facilitate cooperation with investigative authorities. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Sanabria. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

AYES: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and Mayor Macias

NOES: None

Motion: Councilmember Sanabria motioned to turn over investigative authority to the City Prosecutor on behalf of the City. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

AYES: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and Mayor Macias

NOES: None

*Prior to this motion. Councilmember Martinez and City Manager Ricardo Reyes escorted themselves out of the council chambers.

Motion: Councilmember Sanabria motioned to waiver the conflict allowing Attorney Andrew Sarega to represent City Manager Ricardo Reyes and Council Member Eduardo “Eddie” Martinez in matters related to the investigation. Attorney Sarega clearly stated in his statement that the City Attorney and Councilmember will be personally responsible for paying all costs associated with this case and their representation. Additionally, if any conflicts of interest are to arise in the future, then he will abstain from representing Councilmember Martinez and City Manager Reyes any further. Mayor Macias stated she was not comfortable with voting on this agenda item. Mayor Macias then proceeded to step off the Dias, opting not to vote. Vice Mayor Flores motioned to take over as chair. [At this point a member of the Public {Linda Caballeros}, stepped up and stated out loud that the Chambers do not have a Quorum, requesting the City Clerk clarify ‘it’]. Following this incident, Mayor Macias returned to the Dias. Vice Mayor Flores seconded the motion with the request that when not if a conflict of interest arises, then Mr. Sarega relinquishes all legal representation of Councilmember Eduardo ‘Eddie’ Martinez, and City Manager Ricardo Reyes. Motion carried by majority consent.

AYES: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Vice Mayor Flores.

NOES: Mayor Macias

END OF REGULAR AGENDA

Motion: Vice Mayor Flores motioned to reopen Public Comment a second time for individuals who arrived late, have not made a public comment, and wish to make a public comment. Councilmember Martinez Seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

AYES: Council Member(s): Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and Mayor Macias

NOES: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS (2)

The following people/ person provided public content:

- 1) Antonio Alvarenga
- 2) Jane Doe

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

City Attorney: Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council, after doing careful consideration this letter will serve to inform the city council of the city of Huntington Park that I individually and my law Firm Alvarez, Glassman and Colvin will be exercising our rights to terminate our services pursuant to section 12 of the agreement for City Attorney Services dated April 6 2015 which reads in part the firm may terminate its services at any time with the city for good cause, good cause exists if the city refuses to cooperate with firm refuses to follow firm's advice on material matters or otherwise made its representation unreasonably difficult. Over the recent months the circumstances surrounding activities and action taken meets the definition of good cause as it stands above. The current environment and lack of communication with my office has made our continued representation unreasonably difficult to continue to serve as City Attorney. Out of respect and obligation to the attorney-client privilege I will not articulate the facts or circumstances that led to this decision. Alvarez, Glassman and Colvin is proud of the excellent legal services that our firm has provided to the City for nearly a decade. I and my law firm will continue to provide legal services for the next 30 days or until a new city attorney or law firm is selected to take the position as your legal counsel. I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your city attorney. Very Truly yours Arnold M. Glassman managing partner at Alvarez, Glassman, and Colvin.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Sanabria: Thank you staff during the tumultuous time. In 2013, he was in the place of the public. He supported the change and wanted to see it be implemented in the city. He wanted to see real change in the city. We have only established a bare minimum base, which is good but not enough. We've only seen a change in vendors and not the quality of life of our constituents. He wanted to see rent control pass, which we saw and although it is not perfect it is a large step in the right direction. We also passed the lobbying ordinance. When he arrived, we saw a lot of these issues happening in our community. He is happy that this ordinance is bringing a lot of these issues to life. This ordinance is holding people accountable. He is in support of introducing term limits. We need to protect our infrastructure including our water systems. He doesn't want to see the water rights sold. We as councilmembers need to protect our water system and ensure rates don't skyrocket the community. This is a sanctuary city and wants to get the message out to the community. He finds it interesting how they [Councilmember Sanabria, Martinez, Vice Mayor Flores, and City Manager Ricardo Reyes] were served with a lawsuit; however, other people who have been written about taking money from vendors and has served for twelve years has not been served. He is disappointed with the aquatics center. During high school, he used to skate at the skate park in Salt Lake Park until 9pm sometimes. When the skate park was taken away, he got upset; however, he is hurt that the lot where the skate park used to be is still an empty lot. He has to take son out to parks in other communities because we don't have parks in this community. He would like for us to better understand the performance evaluation on some of the contracts that the city has been a part of. Especially those who appear on the Form 700s. He wants to let the public know that there are folks on the council who do stand with them. He would also like to know more about the CAL700 forms, and why is it that the City Attorney and other councilmembers appeared on this 'one' person's form.

Councilmember Martinez: Thank you to residents who came out. He didn't say much today because he was here to listen. His home was served with a search warrant, scary times especially for elderly mother. He is cooperating with DA office in the investigation. Yesterday, 2/27/2025 he had a 3 hour testimony. City should be giving any and all documents with the DA's office for cooperation. He is okay with term limits [2 terms]. We should begin to investigate the term limits, because essentially once an individual is in

office they just get rolled over to the next election until they retire. He doesn't agree with this. We should also begin to assess the PACs.

Vice Mayor Flores: Thank you to the residents and community. He wants the community to imagine getting paid 120,000 dollars for a few hours of work. A few months ago that is what he discovered when he was looking at payments that were going out regarding the pool project. Upward Solution was doing outreach work for the pool project. Robert Urteaga who is the owner of Upward Solution is leading his recall efforts, and his understanding that the financier is Effren Martinez. Luis Vecerra [Graciela Ortiz's nephew] was the individual who served him with the recall. The last council meeting there were several processors chasing him to serve him with the recall. There were individuals who were reporting his location and every move. His recall response: He is a marine and has served in war twice. He isn't scared to go to war with his community.

Vice Mayor Flores's official statement: I, Vice Mayor, Arturo Flores, categorically reject the misleading and defamatory allegations contained in this notice. This effort does not reflect my record of service but appears to be a politically motivated attempt to hinder transparency and accountability. This recall follows my commitment to investigating the Failed Pool Project, which has cost taxpayers approximately \$12 million over five years with nothing to show but an empty lot. I believe this recall is a retaliatory effort by those seeking to avoid accountability for mismanagement. Facts: Residency: I have lived in our city throughout my tenure on the Council; Investigations: No active investigation against me by the city; Confidential Plates: legally obtained and used for security purposes to protect myself and my family for any potential retaliation; Compensation: Salary adjustment for council members was implemented under California Senate Bill 329, after 17 years; False Allegations: The claim against me regarding misconduct are entirely false and baseless. Instead of wasting at least \$500,000 taxpayer dollars on an unfounded recall. Let's focus on: Investigating the Failed Pool Project; Tracing millions of unaccounted dollars; Restoring faith and trust in our local government.

Mayor Macias: Thanked all residents who came to public comment. She's confident in the process of the investigation. Thanked DA police for being cordial in the process of when he went to her home. Pretty confident in process of investigation. Thanks to employees and directors. We have very hard working employees. Assure them that as we continue process of investigation, that they are appreciated and cared for and that in the process of all of this it is easy to forget the humanity of employees, and directors that are just trying to provide a service to the community. Including Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and staff here tonight. She feels confident where she stands as a councilmember, resident, and woman on where she stands. She grew up and lives in the city. She's a caregiver. She is confident in the process, that an aquatics center is not an illusion for the community and can be a reality in the near future.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mayor Macias to adjourn the meeting of Friday, February 28, 2025 @8:38pm. Huntington Park City Council meeting to be held on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

Respectfully submitted


Eduardo Sarmiento, City Clerk

