

MINUTES
CORONADO TUNNEL COMMISSION

Thursday, June 10, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.

Police Department Community Meeting Room
700 Orange Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118

1. ROLL CALL: Commissioners Sut Clark (Chair), Steve Clarey, Margaret Meadows Pimpo (Vice Chair), John Moutes, Darrell Sarich; City Council Representative Al Ovrom

Absent: Bill Huck

Consultant: Brian Pearson, PB Americas [PB]

City Staff: Ed Walton, Rhonda Cruz, Tom Ritter, and Recording Secretary Nancy Reynolds.

2. MINUTES: The May 13, 2010 minutes were approved unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Blair King, the new City Manager, introduced himself. He explained that the Registrar of Voters has a period of time to canvass the election results before they provide the official results to the City. After the results are canvassed the City Council will have to certify them. Although people generally know what the election results are they are not official until we get the real word from the Registrar. The City Council meeting on June 15 will be before the Registrar provides results and the July 6 meeting has been canceled, so the first meeting that we expect to have the results will be July 20. He said that the City Manager's weekly update on the City's website talks a little bit about this schedule. The agenda for the 20th will be written in such a way that the Council will certify the election results and then, if they want to, provide direction to staff on a variety of issues. At the staff level, what we're working on right now is to identify what issues the Council may want to give direction on regarding consultants, expenditures, etc. Staff wants to give the Council as much flexibility as possible.

Lorre St. Germain said she believes the consensus of the populace is that they do not want the study continued and want to cease spending the City's money on this venture.

Mr. Clarey said that one of repeated criticisms of a tunnel project is that an estimated \$600 million becomes one billion or more. There's some misinformation out there; the tunnel was not designed by Parsons Brinckerhoff, but by one of the world's leading tunnel construction and design firms, Hatch Mott McDonald. Last November the 7.2 mile extension of the Metro Gold Mine Tunnel in Los Angeles was opened. It involved two bridges, a double-bored tunnel, 1.7 miles in length, and 4.4 miles of track and other structures, including stations. The total cost was \$709 million; it came in on budget and ahead of schedule. He offered that as one small bit of information that projects do not necessarily grow to a billion dollars and also to point out that our \$600 million estimate which was validated by Caltrans for the twin-bored tunnel was \$598 million, escalated to 2012, and that includes a 30% reserve.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Update

1. Project Report & Environmental Document (PR/ED)

- Draft Project Report and Draft EIS/EIR Status – Mr. Pearson said the preliminary draft Project Report and the administrative draft of the Environmental Document are on schedule for a July 26 completion and if the City so chooses it may submit these documents to Caltrans to begin the review and approval process. The supporting technical reports will be submitted on July 26 as well.
- Agency Coordination – Navy/Caltrans – Mr. Walton said City staff met with the Project Development Team today and the major discussion was the election results and the possibilities of what happens on July 20 when the Council makes a decision and provides any direction to staff.

2. Ballot Results – Mr. Ritter reported that the Registrar’s website shows that 69% voted no and 31% voted yes. The Council will certify this on July 20. There are 9,869 registered voters in the City. Mr. Clarey said he had hoped that the election would have had a broader turnout; less than one-third of the registered voters voted in this election and less than a quarter of the registered voters voted against the proposition. He thinks that’s a pretty small number on which to make a rather momentous decision regarding a project that’s been funded by federal and local funding. It was regrettable that Caltrans would not release the study documents to the public which he feels would have answered a great number of questions about ventilation towers, safety, property acquisitions, earthquake faults, etc. He was also disappointed that this was not a facts-based discussion but more, a lot of misinformation made its way into the debate. For example, he quoted from the official argument against Proposition H:

- The only available tunnel route begins at the toll plaza and ends in the J Avenue to Alameda neighborhood – That is not true; there are currently four active tunnel alternatives and only one of them stops at J; two of them are on Navy property.
- The City may invoke its powers of eminent domain to condemn many homes in order to accommodate tunnel entry, tunnel exit and tunnel exhaust fan towers – That is purely a misinformation statement and the public unfortunately did not have the information available.
- The tunnel must cut through an active earthquake fault. An inevitable earthquake will magnify property damage and the loss of lives. – We spent a considerable amount of money examining earthquakes issues concerning this tunnel. All of the tunnel options do cross a fault at Fourth and A which has not been active in over 10,000 years. A trench was dug 15' deep and a soil analysis was done and it validated that had not been an active fault, so the statement that it is an active fault is purely false.

With that in mind, Mr. Clarey recommended to his fellow commissioners that they pass a resolution to recommend that the City Council continue to complete the PR/ED, including agency and public review as scheduled. Less than one-third of the citizens in Coronado voted on whether to suspend a \$14 million, 14-year effort, in a campaign where there was unfortunately a lot of misinformation and the public did not have access to information regarding the size of the tunnel, the safety features, and emergency access.

He read a draft of the resolution:

“In consideration of the small voter turnout for the June 8, 2010, advisory vote on Proposition H, the unavailability of the project report and environmental documents (PR/ED) on the State Routes 75/282 Transportation Corridor Project, and the considerable misinformation promoted by the opponents of the Proposition, the Coronado Tunnel Commission recommends that the City Council exercise its leadership responsibility to complete the PR/ED and agency/public review as scheduled.”

Mr. Clarey moved to recommend to the City Council that the PR/ED and agency/public review be completed. Mr. Moutes seconded the motion with Mr. Clarey, Mr. Clark and Mr. Moutes voting aye and Mr. Sarich and Mrs. Meadows voting nay.

3. Resignation of Commissioner Lou Smith – Suggestions for his Replacement – Mr. Moutes had some generic suggestions. He looked at the composition of the Commission and where they live. If the Village were divided into quadrants along Orange and Sixth, there are two members who live in the northeast, one in the northwest, two in the southeast, none in the southwest and one in the Cays. It is his opinion that the Commission should probably look at the southwest quadrant for a representative. That would be south of Sixth and west of Orange. In addition to looking for the most qualified candidate he suggested also looking hard at a female representative. Mr. Clarey suggested waiting until hearing from the City Council on July 20 before spending any effort on this.

B. Reports and Discussion from Commission Members or Staff on Current Issues

1. Bulbouts – Mr. Walton said a survey on private property is being conducted this week and into next week to ensure if bulb-outs are installed that when a storm event hits it doesn't flood onto private property. A 10-year storm event was used in the analysis. The data will be mapped and submitted to Caltrans; hopefully, Caltrans will bless it and let the design be finished.

2. General Information Update – Ms. Cruz said that Mr. Sarich had asked for some information on the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal improvements and she distributed a fact sheet put out by the Port of San Diego. The project is still in the planning stage; they got \$100 million for construction out of the Trade Corridor Improvement Fund which was from the Stimulus Program, but they also have the requirement of having \$100 million matching funds in order to use that money. We hear they're still searching for that \$100 million to move forward into design and construction. Mr. Sarich asked if there will be an off-ramp that goes to 32nd Street onto Navy property and Ms. Cruz said a portion would be Navy property. Mr. Clarey says that the statement that the Navy will not allow the tunnel to daylight on their property is not persuasive when you look at the numbers of freeways that daylight onto Navy property, like the I-5/64 off ramp in Norfolk onto Admiral Taussig Boulevard that crosses Navy property and ends at the gate. There's a spur off of H-1 in Hawaii between the Air Force Base and Pearl Harbor that crosses Navy property and ends at the main gate. Mr. Clarey said someone in an earlier meeting had commented that even with a tunnel, traffic leaving Coronado would still stack up on the bridge because of the confines of the off-ramps leading to I-5, north and south. He asked that that be looked at and whether the number of off-ramps could be expanded. It's bad enough today with 87,000 trips; think about it when it's 117,000. He thinks it would be an excellent idea to combine that with the tunnel project.

The following speakers commented but did not identify themselves:

- “It seems inappropriate that some statements were made that I found rather offensive to people in the audience who voted against the Proposition and it is insulting. I appreciate what you’ve done but I also think you ought to respect the voters.”
- “I would like to echo that as well. I think the voters went two to one against the tunnel, no matter what your count is. Voters went directly to the sources that were available in the library and in fact, misinformation actually came from the City and I found that very offensive and an attempt to manipulate the voters. (A) The wording of the measure was extremely confusing and misleading and (B) The pros that cons that came out on that extremely expensive handout that was included in the Eagle was also not the truth. We can go down it and we certainly point out to you what parts of the information was misleading to voters. I think it’s offensive that you should try to manipulate voters. I think that by the techniques you used to get this on the ballot, I think the voters have spoken incredibly loudly, I find it extremely offensive that you say now, afterwards, ‘Well, we didn’t have enough voters, they don’t count, it’s not significant enough.’ I think the voters have spoken. I think the honorable thing for any commission to do is to acknowledge that and I don’t understand why this committee would not do that. I honestly do not. I know you spent a lot of time, but we all have a lot of things in our lives that don’t turn out the way you think they’re going to turn out and you have to know when to graciously say ‘We’ve given it our best, we’ve done our best for the community,’ which I think probably you have but the voters have spoken; you are a committee that’s been formed at the will of the voters and I think you have no business, four of you, compared to how many thousands showed up for the vote, to be submitting this to the City Council. I find that very, very offensive and I think once this gets out to the community there’s going to be an awful lot of outrage because people did take it upon themselves to become informed because they were not getting two sides from the City. It’s very clear that four members of the City Council were all in favor of this tunnel, but the citizens said ‘no.’ It’s a joke.”
- Addressing Mr. Clarey: “You made several remarks about misinformation; I assume you have a military background. [Inaudible] . . . access to different bases around the world. You should know this better than I do because you’re much smarter than I am, that 9/11 has changed a heck of a lot. I have security access and 9/11 has changed the attitude of what goes on and off that base. I mean, you guys think that all of us were stupid when we analyzed this but we’re not. It’s not that we’re against you; it’s the idea that maybe it’s time to put it on the shelf and say ‘Maybe we can come back and address it [inaudible].’ To get negative at you is not the right thing to do because I know you’ve spent a lot of time and effort in trying to make this thing work. We’ve got other priorities [inaudible].” Mrs. Pimpo commented that she was not always a tunnel person, but she was a transportation corridor, let’s get the project done, person. She mentions this because of the comment about maybe getting back to it later. In not getting the study completed we would have to start the study over because if you haven’t completed it you can’t amend it. So we just can’t come back to it later; if you go back and study it 15 to 20 years from now when it’s even worse than now, you have to start the study over and that is not \$13 million; it’s \$38-40 million, whatever it is at that time. Her concern was to get the study done and later on we could go back to it as a tunnel or whatever you ended up doing as a city. At least

you have the study done and you can amend it. But now, by not having it completed, you can't just go back [inaudible]. An audience member said "That was presented well to the voters. They did hear that. Every day for the last year and a half I have walked and talked to people in Coronado and listened to them. What they don't want is a tunnel. Yes, they want some other alternatives; they don't want a tunnel. They're very specific about that. They heard the message, they thought about the message and they said 'No.'" Another person said "We want to spend the \$2 million on other alternatives for traffic. What if we go back to the traffic study that was done about 10 years ago?" [Inaudible discussion; several people speaking at the same time.] Mrs. Pimpo said the project was a transportation corridor project study and it takes the most time and money to study tunnels, but all of the other options were part of that. Mr. Moutes said that Alternative 2 is the transportation management alternative so when you vote to terminate the study you're voting to terminate the study of the transportation management alternative too.

Mr. Ritter said it's important not to get into a lengthy discussion of things that aren't on the agenda and the back and forth conversation is not conducive to what this meeting is for, but if people want to talk individually with commissioners they can do that after the meeting.

C. Future Meeting Schedule:

1. The next meeting will be Thursday, July 8, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.

5. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Sut Clark, Chairman

Nancy Reynolds, Recording Secretary