

WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION
RENO CITY COUNCIL
SPARKS CITY COUNCIL

JOINT MEETING

TUESDAY

9:00 A.M.

MARCH 19, 2002

PRESENT:

Pete Sferrazza, Washoe County Commissioner, Chairman
Joanne Bond, Washoe County Commissioner, Vice Chairman
Jim Galloway, Washoe County Commissioner
Jim Shaw, Washoe County Commissioner
Ted Short, Washoe County Commissioner

Jeff Griffin, City of Reno, Mayor
Dave Aiazzi, Reno City Councilmember
Sherrie Doyle, Reno City Councilmember
Pierre Hascheff, Reno City Councilmember
Jessica Sferrazza-Hogan, Reno City Councilmember
Dave Rigdon, Reno City Councilmember

Tony Armstrong, City of Sparks, Mayor
Geno Martini, Sparks City Councilmember
John Mayer, Sparks City Councilmember
Phil Salerno, Sparks City Councilmember
Ron Schmitt, Sparks City Councilmember

ABSENT:

Toni Harsh, Reno City Councilmember
Michael Carrigan, Sparks City Councilmember

The Board and Councils met in joint session in the Council Chambers of Reno City Hall, 490 South Center Street, Reno, Nevada. Also present were Washoe County Manager Katy Singlaub, Deputy District Attorney Paul Lipparelli, County Clerk Amy Harvey, Reno City Manager Charles McNeely, Reno City Attorney Patricia Lynch, Reno City Clerk Don Cook, Sparks City Manager Shaun Carey, and Sparks Deputy City Clerk Lenda Azcarate. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerks called the roll for their respective entities, and the Commission and Councils conducted the following business:

02-287 **AGENDA**

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Councilmember Martini, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that the agenda for the March 19, 2002, joint meeting be approved.

**PRESENTATION – NEW YORK FIREFIGHTERS TO CITY OF
RENO FIREFIGHTERS AND CITIZENS**

Mayor Griffin welcomed everyone present to participate in the occasion of the visit of three New York City Firefighters representing the City of New York and the New York Fire Department. Reno Fire Chief Chuc Lowden and City Manager Charles McNeely joined Mayor Griffin at the podium. Mayor Griffin introduced the following dignitaries: Senate Majority Leader Bill Raggio and Executive Assistant Dorothy Souza; Senator Randolph Townsend; Pam Matteoni, representing Senator John Ensign; Anita Sullivan, representing Senator Harry Reid; Chief of Staff Susan Fink and Assistant Judy Cox, representing Lt. Governor Lorraine Hunt; City of Sparks Fire Chief Lee Leighton; Sparks City Manager Shaun Carey; County Manager Katy Singlaub; Bob Knudsen, Bureau of Land Management; Washoe County Sheriff Dennis Balaam; Mike Brown and Steve Fradey, Nevada Division of Forestry; State Fire Marshall Doyle Sutton; Jeff Beckleman, President and CEO, Reno Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority; Mike Hendersen, representing Congressman Gibbons; and County Clerk Amy Harvey. Mayor Griffin thanked Sak 'N Save for providing the refreshments for the reception held prior to the meeting.

Mayor Griffin presented congratulatory letters and certificates from Senator Harry Reid, Senator John Ensign, Governor Kenny Guinn, Congressman Jim Gibbons, and Lt. Governor Lorraine Hunt. He read and presented a proclamation from the City of Reno on behalf of all citizens and governmental entities of Northern Nevada in recognition of the impact of the September 11 event on the firefighters and families of the Fire Department of New York and to honor and express appreciation for the visiting representatives of Battalion 57 of the Fire Department of New York who lost 15 firefighters. Mayor Griffin welcomed New York Fire Department firefighters Lt. Ed Hueter, Brian Gibbons and Frank Ardizzone.

Fire Chief Lowden reviewed some of the local events planned in honor of the firefighters. City Manager McNeely said it was an honor to host the firefighters and thanked them for all they have given to New York and the entire nation. Mayor Griffin presented the firefighters with the Nevada State Flag on behalf of Governor Guinn and several gifts on behalf of the community.

Lt. Ed Hueter thanked the Reno firefighters, the citizens of Reno and the elected officials. He said he was overwhelmed by the efforts of the Reno firefighters' boot-drive to collect funds from motorists, and the generous contributions made by the citizens. He advised that the Battalion 57 firefighters were direct recipients of those contributions. Lt. Hueter then presented a plaque on behalf of the New York Fire Department to the Reno Fire Department and the citizens of Reno in appreciation for their support and generosity after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center September 11, 2001. After the presentations, the firefighters left the meeting to go to their next scheduled event.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, expressed appreciation for policemen, firemen, the armed forces, and the people of Reno. He then sang *God Bless America*. Aaron Schumacher, area citizen, expressed appreciation for the sacrifices made by the firefighters, police and ambulance service of New York for the horrible act of September 11. He said, as a service of the Citizens Against Corrupt Government, he would be giving plaques to the fire stations that lost members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, discussed issues concerning parking problems downtown that make it difficult to attend government meetings.

02-289 REGIONAL FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

Paul Urban, Washoe County Flood Control Manager, presented a brochure entitled *The Living Truckee River*. He conducted an overhead presentation and discussed the contents of the brochure, including the Truckee River Challenge, the Community Coalition, the Major Coalition Concept Plan Elements, the Environmental Impact Study, and the Plan Timeline. He advised that, since the Coalition was launched in April 2000, over 340 meetings have been held with volunteers and regulatory agencies, representing over 11,500 hours of volunteer work. He stated this is a multipurpose project combining community safety with river restoration and the Coalition used a living water approach to have natural river functions perform flood control as much as possible. Mr. Urban discussed the four alternatives developed by the Coalition to proceed into further studies of the EIS, which included No Action, Setback Levees and Floodwalls, Setback Floodwalls and Levees with Detention Basin, and the Community Coalition Plan. He discussed issues relating to the restoration of downtown bridges and said because they are historic and cultural resources the Section 106 legislative process would be required. He reviewed key Coalition Plan features along the river, emphasizing that they are recommendations and a historic review process would be required. Mr. Urban said the Coalition unanimously thought staff was going in the right direction and should concentrate on the four alternatives. Staff would like direction from the joint board members to focus on the four alternatives and conduct more completed studies on economic financial issues, environmental impact, and historic and cultural resources that are required in the EIS, in order to start answering issues relative to benefits, costs, affordability, impacts, etc.

Discussion was held about financial issues and Mr. Urban responded to questions of the Board. He advised that the cost of the local government share for the project is estimated to be \$97-million, and approximately \$65-million would be derived from the 1/8-cent sales tax imposed in 1999 for public safety and flood prevention. He said, when the economic studies are done, more detailed cost and funding information will be available. Katy Singlaub, County Manager, stated that a special assessment district is contemplated for a portion of the construction of the flood project, which was identified in the initial phase of the financing plan as those property owners who directly benefit from the project; and that the exact amount and boundaries have not been

adopted, which issues will be refined as the design phase moves forward. She noted that the financing requirement is primarily for construction of the flood project including the environmental restoration, but an operating and maintenance requirement would also be needed, which would be addressed in the financing studies. Ms. Singlaub advised that a report on financing matters relating to the flood control project would be brought forth at the next joint meeting.

Commissioner Short thanked everyone for the volunteer hours expended on the project. He said he believes a realistic project has been identified and noted that some work will need to be done in Storey County. He advised that he and a Storey County Commissioner would suggest that a public workshop be held in the Rainbow Bend area to discuss the issues.

Ron Schmitt, City of Sparks, commented that a lot of work has gone into the project and staff and the Community Coalition have done a very good job. He said this is a great plan and the community has been involved.

Councilmember Aiazzi requested that staff present information relative to the actual purchase of the property needed between Greg Street and McCarran, noting it would be less expensive to purchase the property now. He said active work should be done to purchase any properties that are needed for the project. Councilmember Aiazzi said he would like staff to move ahead on the Section 106 legislation regarding the downtown bridge issues.

Councilmember Hascheff asked if rehabilitation of the downtown bridges could start immediately. Mr. Urban advised that the timing of those projects would depend on where the funding would come from. County Manager Singlaub advised several components are involved in the flood control project and the County has retained a federal lobbyist in Washington that is very effective on water issues; and staff is working with the federal delegation on securing the maximum federal funding and appropriation for the project in a timely manner.

Councilmember Doyle suggested that staff work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine whether state and federal grants might be available for preservation of the downtown bridges. Mr. Urban said a separate process deals with historic and cultural resource issues, and the Corps of Engineers would be the federal agency responsible for the coordination with SHPO. Councilmember Doyle requested that the three governmental entities be advised when contact has been made with SHPO.

Upon inquiry of Mayor Griffin, Steve Varela, City of Reno Public Works Director, advised that the City of Reno had a program with the Nevada Department of Transportation for bridge replacement; and that the program and funds were put on hold until the flood control project was completed. Mayor Griffin requested a breakdown of the tax revenues and bonding capacity. Ms. Singlaub advised that information could be submitted at next month's joint meeting.

Further discussion was held concerning the downtown bridges. Mr. Urban said the final decision on the entire project lies with the elected officials and the Corps of Engineers, but the recommendation of the coalition was that bridges that have piers and structure in the channel should be replaced with bridges that completely span the channel in order to have better visibility and access to the river, the lowest floodwalls, the least chance of debris catching, and the least chance of problems with flooding. A separate process would be required that looks at the historic issues of the existing bridges and to evaluate what would happen if those bridges were improved. Mayor Griffin said that issue probably rests with the Reno City Council and he thinks the bridge evaluation process should be started now.

Discussion was held relative to sales tax funding for the project. John Sherman, Washoe County Finance Director, advised that approximately \$21-million in bonds were issued for three public safety and flood control projects; that the balance of those bonds have been spent on this particular project, but the approved financing plan contemplates another bond issue to round out the funding as part of the local share. He advised that the revenue stream from the 1/8-cent sales tax could only be spent on the approved projects. Commissioner Sferrazza commented that when he was elected he made a commitment to request a vote of the people on the implementation of the sales tax for these projects, which failed. He said he realizes his position is a minority view, but would request the opportunity to vote for having a vote of the people regarding expenditure of the remaining sales tax revenues.

Shaun Carey, Sparks City Manager, said he believes the process is at a good point to send the four alternatives to the federal process. Funding and financing are critical elements for Reno, Sparks and Washoe County, and many numbers will be better known once the EIS process is started. He commended the Community Coalition on a job well done. Commissioner Shaw said he supports the restoration of the downtown bridges and looking at land acquisition. Councilmember Schmitt said he believes staff and the Coalition should move forward and get the project into appropriations, the process of land acquisition should be accelerated, and the bridge studies should commence. County Manager Singlaub agreed that the four alternatives should move forward. She noted that endorsement of the four alternatives does not commit to the building of anything, but provides that the process move forward to gather additional information that will permit more refined decisions.

On behalf of Washoe County, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Bond, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sferrazza ordered that staff move forward with the EIS process, the four alternatives outlined by staff, cost and financial planning studies, the historical resources planning including the Section 106 process, and planning of such items as early replacement of bridges.

On behalf of the City of Sparks, on motion by Councilmember Martini, seconded by Councilmember Mayer, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that staff move forward with the EIS process, the four alternatives outlined by staff, cost and

financial planning studies, the historical resources planning including the Section 106 process, and planning of such items as early replacement of bridges. It was further ordered that negotiations commence for the acquisition of properties needed for the project.

Commissioner Galloway said he believed the motion made on behalf of Washoe County was broad enough to include land acquisition and Washoe County Legal Counsel Paul Lipparelli agreed.

On behalf of the City of Reno, on motion by Councilmember Aiazzi, seconded by Councilmember Hascheff, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that staff move forward with the EIS process, the four alternatives outlined by staff, cost and financial planning studies, the historical resources planning including the Section 106 process, and planning of such items as early replacement of bridges. It was further ordered that negotiations be entered into for the acquisition of properties needed for the project.

**02-290 REPORTS – CONSOLIDATION OF GOVERNMENT/SERVICES
COMMITTEES – DISCUSSION OF CITY/COUNTY
CONSOLIDATION MODELS**

Commissioner Galloway said County staff asked him to discuss a matter that came out of the Land Use Committee, whereby it was decided there might not be a lot of work for that committee. He advised that, subsequently, the County Commission took action that the formal committee process and consolidation talks were not going well because there were too many obstacles. The County worked on the idea of a joint approval alternative that could be used in place of joint planning and new sphere areas. Legal Counsel advised the best way to implement that would be to put it in the Regional Plan, which staff is writing up in the context of the Regional Plan Update and a compromise proposal the County Commission approved in concept at their last meeting.

John Mayer, Chairman, Land Use Committee, advised that the direction of the committee was to take Councilmember Hascheff's proposal back to the three bodies. He said the Land Use Subcommittee was supposed to meet yesterday to discuss any changes recommended by the three entities, but the meeting did not take place.

David Aiazzi, Chairman, Financial Committee, said their committee was the last to meet and the word was that the committee process might be falling apart before it got started. They voted to come back to this board to see if the process would continue.

Pete Sferrazza, Chairman, Governance, Labor and Legislation Committee, reported that they asked staff to look at alternative models for governance from three areas of the country and report back on the fiscal impacts of those models. He said the next meeting is scheduled for Monday at 8:00 a.m.

Councilmember Hascheff said his understanding was, given the developments at the County and there might not be an appetite to proceed with consolidation, staff asked that the Land Use Committee be cancelled. It was felt it would be better to have discussion at today's joint meeting to determine if there is any appetite to move forward with consolidation. He advised that the Reno City Council directed staff to move forward with some type of ballot issue in November.

Commissioner Bond said she is concerned that the process is being moved on a fast track, which is generating anxiety and misinformation in the community about the consolidation issues. She said she is not opposed to looking further into consolidation but has a problem with the November deadline to put something on the ballot when adequate information is not available to present to the public.

Commissioner Short said he shares Commissioner Bond's concerns. He stated that the dialogue should be kept open and consolidation of certain services should be looked at. He noted the Regional Plan map is being distributed this week and three public hearings are scheduled; and he thinks the citizens would like to review what is going to happen in the community. He said he would like to wait on consolidation of government until after the Regional Plan hearings.

Councilmember Doyle said she is not against consolidation, but is against moving forward on a fast train. She feels this is being pushed through when the answers are not available to respond to constituents. She said she supports exploration of the consolidation of certain services among local governments, noting that in 5-10 years the process would then be at the last form of consolidation, which would be governance.

Councilmember Martini stated that putting the consolidation issue on the November ballot is too soon. He said he thinks consolidation issues can be addressed at the joint meetings rather than having three fragmented committees discussing the issues.

Commissioner Galloway said he thinks it would be better to bring consolidation issues to this forum. He would also like to have the issue of joint approval brought to the joint meetings.

Mayor Griffin said consolidation makes a lot of sense, but he does not think it is feasible that something could be put on the November ballot. He believes great progress could be made now and would like to see staff directed to bring something back in the near future on consolidation of Parks and Recreation, etc.

Councilmember Schmitt left the meeting.

Commissioner Galloway said the issues that bother a lot of citizens is the dispute over Verdi and a court case over a Regional Plan matter, which do not create an atmosphere conducive to proceeding forward at this time. He stated he sees problems if an acceptable Regional Plan compromise cannot be reached, with the fiscal issue, and about approaching the cap on the property tax. He does not think consolidation talks

should proceed until the fiscal difficulties are resolved. There is a concern, which he shares, that anything done now will be changed in the future and debt will be shared by various parties who had nothing to do with accumulating the debt.

Councilmember Aiazzi said he believes the issues mentioned by Commissioner Galloway are the problems that show the need for working toward consolidation, which would resolve those difficulties.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, said, in order to get a consolidation of government, a disinterested third party would need to attack the problem.

Upon inquiry of Mayor Griffin, Charles McNeely, Reno City Manager, said the last direction from the City Council was that staff hold off on functional consolidation because consolidation of the region was being pursued.

Councilmember Sferrazza-Hogan stated she believes the majority of the City Council favors consolidation and exploring placing the issue on the November ballot. She *moved*, seconded by Councilmember Aiazzi, that the City Council put the ballot issue concerning consolidation on their March 26 agenda. Councilmember Doyle said, if Reno does not have the cooperation of the City of Sparks and Washoe County, they would be hanging out there by themselves. She would like to know what the language of the ballot question would be, and would like to start initial conversations about realistic consolidation of services, such as Parks and Recreation. On call for the question, Councilmember Doyle voted "no" and the motion passed 5-1.

Later in the meeting, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Bond, which motion duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners ordered that the subcommittees be abolished and consolidation issues be addressed at the joint meetings.

On motion by Councilmember Hascheff, seconded by Councilmember Doyle, which motion duly carried, the Reno City Council ordered that the subcommittees be dispensed and the issues of consolidation be dealt with at this table.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES – CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEES

This item was continued.

DISCUSSION - PROPOSED CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR CITY/COUNTY CONSOLIDATION STUDY PROCESS

This item was continued.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (REOPENED)

Mayor Griffin reopened public comments.

John Mayer, Sparks City Councilman, requested that the Spanish Springs levee problems and the Homeland Security Block Grant issue be placed on a future joint agenda. Commissioner Galloway requested a discussion be agendized relative to the Regional Plan Update. Councilmember Doyle requested an update on the Evans Creek Dam.

Councilmember Martini left the meeting.

Commissioner Sferrazza requested that consolidation of government and services be an ongoing item on the joint meeting agenda.

02-291 DISCUSSION – REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES SHELTER AND OPERATION

Councilmember Doyle requested that Washoe County put the issue of a ballot question for a new regional animal shelter on their agenda. She said the ballot issue would need to be countywide and noted that the current shelter has outgrown its capacity. Councilmember Sferrazza-Hogan stated that Washoe County has one of the highest euthanasia rates in the country and urged the County Commission to put the issue on the ballot.

* * * * *

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

PETER J. SFERRAZZA, Chairman
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

AMY HARVEY, Washoe County
Clerk and Clerk of the Board of
County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared By:
Barbara Trow
Deputy County Clerk*