

Chairperson Eddie De La Cruz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Committee members present were Manuel Gutierrez, Clair Beas-Fitzgerald, Jesus (Chuy) Rome, and Claudia Jimenez. Hector Ramirez and Bryan Medelez were excused. City representatives present were Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, Officer Erica Sandoval, and Executive Assistant Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The Pledge of Allegiance was given!

Introduction of New Committee Member Claudia Jimenez

Eddie introduced and thanked new Hispanic Advisory Committee member Claudia Jimenez.

Claudia thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the committee and stated she is very excited to be a member as she considers Hermiston her home. Claudia stated she and her family moved to Hermiston from Mexico when she was a teenager; Maria Duron was one of her ESL teachers that helped teach her English, and thanks to people like Maria who helped her along the way, she was able to go to college in La Grande and then finish her education in Portland. Claudia stated she studied Business and Accounting with a Masters in Financial Analysis and works for Barnett & Moro. She was able to travel and lived in France for a year, and is also fluent in French. Claudia stated she is very grateful and blessed for all the opportunity she has had in her life and would like to pay it forward and help others succeed.

Minutes

Manuel moved and Clara seconded to approve the minutes of the September and October Minutes, with a correction to the October minutes excusing Manuel from the October meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

School District Presentation

Eddie, Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith and Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo thanked the Hispanic Advisory Committee for helping with translation services at parent teacher conferences. And through translator, Maria Duron, Mr. Smith presented the Committee with information regarding the growing number of students in the Hermiston School District, aging infrastructure, and safety issues. In 2007 a Long Range Facility Planning Committee and Blue Ribbon Panel saw a \$90 million need to replace Armand Larive Middle School, Sunset, Rocky Heights and West Park Elementary Schools, as well as build a new elementary school. The Blue Ribbon Panel consisted of 15 diverse community members who spend about 3 months analyzing if there was really a \$90 million need. This committee came back and stated yes, the School District does have a \$90 million need. After doing numerous community outreach, the feedback they received was unanimous; there will be support replacing Armand Larive, Sunset and West Park schools but not to replace Rocky Heights or build a new elementary school at that time. Therefore, the School District prioritized these projects to what the community felt they needed and continued with the bond at \$69 million to ensure its passage.

Mr. Smith stated the School District has received a great number of positive feedback from the school improvements, coming in at or under budget, and keeping their timeline on these projects. \$12 million of the \$69 million bond went back into the community as the School District hired local contractors, subcontractors, and vendors.

Mr. Smith stated two years ago the School Board directed staff to start this process again as the current facilities are not sufficient enough to house all of the students. This newly formed committee has been working for the last 18 months to gather information, some of this information from Portland State University, Population Research Study, predicts the number of growth in the community, development, and students. The Committee returned to the Board in June and stated, the community has a need of \$131 million for the replacement of Rocky Heights, which should have been replaced 8 years ago, and building a new elementary

school to address the current 24 modular classroom buildings and the growing need of them, expanding Sandstone Middle School, addressing safety issues at Highland Hills Elementary School, and most importantly, the High School is going to exceed 2,000 students within the next 8 years. If nothing is done, there will be about 24 to 30 modular buildings to accommodate high school students alone.

Mr. Smith stated Portland University study predicts Hermiston's student growth until about 2023. There were 3 types of growths analyzed, small, medium and high range growth. Student growth has been steadily increasing at 1.5% to 2% every year up until this year, where Hermiston exceeded the highest range growth rate expected at 3%, which caught the School Board off guard as medium growth is what had been planned for. If the School Board and community do not address these issues, the School District will have over 1,500 students in over 80 modular buildings throughout the school in less than 8 years at this high range growth rate.

Mr. Smith stated within the next year, the School District and a newly formed Committee will be doing a tremendous amount of community engagement and outreach to gather information and ideas about the bond and its passage.

Manuel stated his main concern is for the safety of the children at school, especially with gun violence and asked if the bond would only be for city limit residents or for all of Hermiston residents.

Mr. Smith stated when Rocky Heights and Highland Hills were built in 1960 and 1980, safety issues of this sort weren't an issue like they are today. Mr. Smith stated the bond would be for all Hermiston resident.

Gary West asked when will the current bonds mature.

Mr. Smith stated the 1999 Bond will be paid off in two years which will create the capacity to potentially look at another bond with a low or no tax increase. The School Board understands for home owners, the tax rate is already pretty high right now.

Celso De La Cruz suggested that police officers show their presence at all schools to detour violence of this nature.

Mr. Smith and Officer Sandoval explained there are two officers, one officer who rotates between all of the elementary schools, and the second officer who rotates between the two junior highs and high school.

Manuel stated he and his wife will vote yes for this bond and neither have school aged children. But, they will both vote yes because education is very important.

Eddie agreed and stated the best investment a community can make is one in its children's education and safety.

Hermiston Herald

Hermiston Herald Editor Gary West stated Hermiston Herald is forming an Advisory Group, looking for people in the community to help the Hermiston Herald be more interesting and valuable for the people living in the community. Mr. West stated Hermiston Herald wants to make sure the paper is reflecting enough Latino voices, people, and events. Mr. West stated the Advisory Group will meet once a month and be made up of six members, and Clara is one of those members.

Eddie stated he will announce the Hermiston Herald Advisory group on air from the radio station.

Clara stated the Advisory group is looking for diverse individuals, including high school students, to join. Clara stated being a part of this Advisory group is very important as she wants to make sure accurate information is being published and her family has a vast background in media.

Manuel and Eddie suggested once a month, the paper write a news article about a person in our area. Someone who has grown up in Hermiston, left to study, and returned, like Claudia and Jesus.

Eddie thanked Mr. West for doing outreach in the Latino community.

County Commissioner Bill Elfering

Mark Gomolski stated he recently moved to Hermiston from Chicago where he had lived for the last 30 years. He is currently a political consultant for County Commissioner Mr. Bill Elfering. Mr. Elfering is interested in receiving more input from the Hispanic community and giving information on what County Commissioners do and how he can help the community and hope to be back before the Committee within the next couple of months.

Eddie thanked Mark and the County for everything they do, and stated the County has been a supporter Cinco de Mayo and it is very much appreciated.

Martin Luther King Day

Jesus invited the public to participate in the MLK Day on Monday, January 18th, 2016. The next MLK meeting will be December 12th at Starbucks.

Closing Comments

City Representatives

Assistant City Manager Morgan asked the public if there is anyone who would like to participate in the five question Community Livability Survey, they can go online or fill out hard copies that are located on the back table. Assistant City Manager Morgan stated the City Council will again be hearing the Marijuana voting ordinance at the next Council meeting to possibly allow the voters to decide if Marijuana should be allowed to be sold within the City Limits of Hermiston.

Next Scheduled Meeting

There will not be a December meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, January 19th at 7:00 pm.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:17 pm