

Public highly engaged in city council meeting

By GINA ENDER - March 29, 2017, 1:22 pm



Santa Clarita's city council chambers were brimming with citizens for the Tuesday night council meeting, as many citizens took advantage of opportunities for public participation.

A large portion of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the pros and cons of the water merger between Castaic Lake Water Agency and the Newhall County Water District that would result if legislation is passed this year to authorize the move.

Also among Tuesday's approved agenda items, however, council members approved the second reading of the most recent iteration of the Old Town Newhall plan.

This second version returns to the original plan's wording describing what qualifies as a "specialty retail" store for the arts and entertainment district after Mayor Smyth and council members Miranda and Kellar expressed concern that the language allowed for too many exceptions to be made for the type of stores would be allowed to operate on Main Street.

In anticipation of the second public hearing for the Chiquita Canyon Landfill on April 19, four citizens expressed their concern with the expansion during a public comment period.

The Signal's Director of Veterans Affairs Bill Reynolds also addressed the council and proposed June 30 as the deadline for the completion of the Fallen Warriors Monument and asked that the design be finalized by April 12.

On another front, in an effort to gain information about missing the Santa Clarita man William Cierzan, 58, the council established a \$5,000 reward to find him. Cierzan was last seen in his home on January 26, but went missing in the evening in between talking to his wife on the phone and cooking dinner.

Volunteers have spent nearly 6,000 hours searching for him, one community member said. She also said she does not think the \$5,000 will be enough and suggested raising the reward to \$10,000.

In response, Councilman Bob Kellar proposed and approved doubling the reward amount.

Regarding street repairs, councilwoman Marsha McLean asked if there was policy for companies who make electrical or water repairs to city streets to also restore the streets after making repairs to make the streets look better.

Her concern was that repairs were made with different materials than used for resurfacing the streets, however, a city spokesperson said the materials used are the same.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Department Chief of Police Roosevelt Johnson was recognized for his service alongside Santa Clarita, as he is being promoted and will be leaving his current role. Captain Robert Lewis will be taking his place as chief starting Sunday.

“It’s been a tremendous ride for me and a tremendous opportunity for me and my family,” Johnson said. “I have not worked in a place that had such a fine staff as this city. I want to thank all of you for your support for law enforcement in this community.”

Notably, a large portion of the audience was filled with Santa Clarita’s Assyrian community in recognition of the Assyrian New Year.

“This is a testament to the growth of diversity in our community in California,” Mayor Smyth said.

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