

Around Tulare: Tulare City Council to discuss city attorney contract

Visalia Times Delta, Friday, Nov. 29, 2013

The Tulare City Council will meet in regular session at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Council Chambers, 491 North M Street.

Items on the agenda include:

- Approve an amended service agreement with Koczanowicz & Hale to provide city attorney services.
- Adopt an ordinance to use the 2013 California Building Standards Codes.
- Adopt a resolution allowing city staff to apply from the California Emergency Management Agency.
- Authorize Tulare police accepting a \$40,000 grant from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to buy two "Zero" electronic motorcycles.
- Public hearing to receive input on the 2035 General Plan Update and Draft 2035 General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

Public comment is slated for the beginning of the meeting.

Before meeting in regular session, the council will meet at 6:30 p.m. in closed session to be part of two real estate property negotiations.

Public comment for the two items is scheduled right before council goes into closed session.

[Bakersfield Californian Editorial, Sunday, Dec. 1, 2013:](#)

Better cycling infrastructure long overdue

Bicycles are interesting creatures. They harken back not only to our youth, but to a time long before when self-propelled two-wheelers, horseless carriages and four-legged, hay-burning mammals were somewhat closer in number and importance.

That delicate balance didn't last long. Henry Ford came along with this thing he called an assembly line, Los Angeles institutionalized the transportation phenomenon known as the freeway, and bicycles, like horses, became anachronistic impediments.

But bicycles are making a comeback. Cities across the country, recognizing that many people enjoy the freedom and healthfulness of using bikes as everyday transportation, are trying to make it easier and safer for cyclists to share the road with automobiles -- or enjoy asphalt paths of their own. One potential result is a healthier citizenry; another is fewer cars on the road, and cleaner air.

Bakersfield came a little late to this party. The Kern River Parkway bike path has long been an important part of the city's recreational and transportational backbone, but cars and bikes have coexisted uncomfortably on city streets since day one. Bikes lanes are few and too often narrow, and they're typically regarded as interlopers infringing on the convenience of put-upon motorists.

Fortunately, this city is moving in a more enlightened direction with regard to bicycles and city streets.

Led by Bakersfield City Councilman Bob Smith, the city is working to develop a Bicycle Transportation Plan. Last week the council discussed the draft of a plan created by Alta Planning & Design to remake, extend and modernize its bicycle infrastructure. The plan, paid for with a \$120,000 grant from the Kern County Air Pollution Mitigation Fund, isn't entirely an act of foresight and innovation: Bakersfield needs to come up with something concrete in order to qualify for state and federal grants that will help maintain and add to existing facilities.

Among the concerns discussed in the draft plan: Only 7 percent of bicyclists nationwide are "enthused and confident" about enhanced bike-lane delineation and plan to take full advantage, while 60 percent are interested but "not confident cycling with motorists." The remaining 33

percent probably wouldn't be interested in using wider and improved bike lanes if it means they're still in close proximity to vehicle traffic.

Smith and other bicycle plan advocates, in search of support, say they'll target the interested-but-not-confident group.

Generally speaking, they've got a tough nut to crack when it comes to winning the endorsement of the non-cycling community. (Not that they necessarily need it.) Bakersfield isn't a city that loves its cars and trucks just for convenience's sake; it's a cultural thing, too.

The evidence is purely anecdotal, but to some bikes seem to represent a demographic divide: elitism in Spandex on \$6,000 bikes. That's hardly a fair or full representation of the type of cyclist who will take advantage of a new, expanded biking infrastructure, but it's indicative of a perception that advocates will have to overcome.

For now, though, it's enough that advocates are working toward the development a safe and complete plan. With a little goodwill and a lot of sound engineering, the rest will come in due time. A better cycling infrastructure is long overdue in Bakersfield.