



Perris Press Release

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City Clerk's Open House a Showcase for Perris History

The first Perris policy makers dealt with many of the same issues confronting municipal officials a century later—speeding vehicles, keeping children safe and regulating the sales of controlled substances.

On Nov. 8 1911, less than six months after Perris incorporated, the Board of Trustees—which later became known as the City Council—enacted an ordinance prohibiting children under 18 from entering and “billiard hall, saloon or gambling house.” Violators faced a fine of up to \$100 and 90 days in jail or both.

Soon afterward, the approved an ordinance preventing the loading and unloading of manure/fertilizer between First and Eighth streets for fear contaminants could cause sickness. And another one of their first acts was to regulate the speed of all vehicles within city limits. Historical documents from the City’s infancy were on display recently during Perris’ annual observance of Municipal Clerks Week. City Clerk Judy Haughney and her staff always take the time to display historic City documents, photographs, newspaper accounts and other memorabilia from Perris’ early days to the present.

“Some of the items are funny, some are heart-warming but all give you a sense of history of this City,” Haughney said during an Open House on Thursday. “Circumstances change but the critical issues remain the same—law and order, public safety and order. These documents give you a deep-seeded history of what this City was all about. They tell the story.”

Duties of the municipal clerk include keeping most records produced by the City. They also serve as the election official for the City, process minutes, ordinances and minutes of City Council meeting and perform bid openings on City projects. In addition, the Perris City Clerk’s office also processes U.S. passport applications.

Haughney said the City has applied for a \$6,000 Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

If approved, Haughney said the grant will help Perris to assess the artifacts in its possession and help to preserve them. The City will not know until the end of the year whether its application has been successful.

A review of early Perris records indicated that the Board of Trustees indicated that the new City leadership considered public safety and law-and-order paramount. The initial board consisted of business owners and leading citizens used to hard work and little pleasure time. So Ordinance No. 1 approved by the board established set the time for their meetings at 8 p.m. on Fridays. The location: The Masonic Hall on D Street. Their first official actions included restricting sales of alcohol, keeping children away from drinking establishments and regulating speed limits on Perris streets. They also enacted the City’s first animal-regulation law.

On Aug. 4, 1911, the Board of Trustee passed an ordinance making it illegal to “hitch or tie any horse, mule, pony or donkey or any other animal to any shade or ornamental tree in the City of Perris.” Guilty parties faced a \$3 fine. As far as City officials know, it remains in effect.

“Until it’s rescinded, don’t tie animals to any City tree,” she said with a smile.

Other ordinances reflect the times in which they were passed. In the days right after the U.S. entered World War II, the City Council approved creation of a Civil Defense Council. The ordinance later was repealed and few details remain about its specifics. In 1990, a City agency known as the Industrial Development Authority—created to issue “bonds to assist industrial development”—disappeared after approving just one resolution.

Haughney said it’s important to preserve all City records because “everything we produce eventually will be 100 and 200 years old.”

“There is a true necessity to preserve them,” she said.

Public Safety Commissioner Joe Dapice dropped by during the open house to look over the archives on display. He said today’s Public Safety Commission often is asked to grapple with the same issues encountered 100 years ago, including traffic safety and business regulation.

“It’s great to see all the history of our City from the time it was created to the present,” Dapice said. “I’m proud to be representing this City.”



To preserve century old handwritten City archives, Perris City Clerk Judy Haughney put on gloves while conducting an open house last week.



Perris City Clerk Judy Haughney said the City has applied for a \$6,000-preservation grant to ensure original Perris documents remain available to future generations.