

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 16, 1981

11-5310
LETTER RECEIVED
OPPOSING BUS
SERVICE

The City Clerk presented a letter from a citizen requesting that they not be named, opposing the proposed fixed route bus service within the City of Lodi. Mayor Pro Tempore McCarty addressed the Council concerning the matter, indicating that it was not the Council's intent to do away with Dial-A-Ride and responding to other points made in the letter.

315 Olive Court
Lodi, California 95240
February 12, 1981

The Lodi City Council
City Hall
221 W. Pine Street
Lodi, California 95240

Gentlemen:

This letter concerns the article on busing, in the Lodi News Sentinel, February 4, 1981. Frankly, I could not believe what I was reading! Anyone involved in the promotion of such a plan for the elderly is not living in the real world and, apparently, knows nothing of the real needs of the elderly.

Let me point out a few factors, which I believe, would contribute to the failure of such a busing plan.

Erwin & Hinshaw are including potential riders from 60 years of age on. Most people 60 to 65 are still working and driving their own cars. When I was 60 I drove to Sacramento and back five days a week, until I was 65. Now I drive my car sometimes and take Dial-A-Ride other times.

My personal observation is that many people's health begins to fail in their middle, or late seventies. When that happens they need door to door transportation, which we have now with Dial-A-Ride. Most elderly people are unable to stand out there and wait for a bus. Getting on and off is a problem for the elderly, as well as the handicapped.

Some time ago I read a letter, in a local newspaper, by a lady complaining about having to wait too long for Dial-A-Ride. Obviously, this lady has no experience in using a bus as her regular means of transportation. If she did, she would know that people often wait much longer (as a general rule) for a bus. And they are not waiting in their homes, or some other building. They are out in the open in all kinds of weather. A thorough chilling could prove fatal to an aged person.

I lived in San Francisco for almost twenty years, where public transportation is the way to go. Many times I got chilled, caught colds and flu, due to waiting for buses or street cars. And I was young in those days. I would not use a bus today.

Recently there have been terrible crimes committed on buses, in San Francisco and New York. You may say, but Lodi is not San Francisco or New York. True, but we certainly have our quota of hoodlums and criminals in Lodi. And they are just as vicious as those in larger cities. I read about them almost every day in the paper. It would be inhumane to deliberately foist this extra suffering on the helpless aged.

Erwin & Hinshaw do not know whether the proposed busing plan would be successful; they do not know whether or not they would

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put Dial-A-Ride out of business. No one even knows how much the fare would be. This whole proposed set-up appears amateurish in the extreme. Yet, a small group of people would take it upon themselves to experiment with the taxpayers' \$120,000 (minimum). If these were privately owned funds, a better way to invest them would be found.

I strongly suggest you take that \$120,000 and use it to enlarge the fleet of Dial-A-Ride with new cars. We have a sure thing with Dial-A-Ride and door to door service, which is what seniors need.

One day I was in a Dial-A-Ride cab when the driver drove up to the door of a beauty shop. The driver got out and helped the lady into the cab. When we arrived at her home, the driver got out again, took the lady by the arm and helped her to her door, rang the door bell and waited until a member of the family opened the door and helped this lady into the house. I later remarked to the driver that it's too bad she had so much trouble walking. He explained that her mind has deteriorated to the extent she does not know her own name, or her home address.

I described the above incident in an effort to impress upon your minds the kind of service (extremely necessary service) that Dial-A-Ride gives. To my knowledge, there is no other service available anywhere else where I have lived, or visited, that could even vaguely compare with Dial-A-Ride. So, let's use our heads and keep it while we still have a chance for it. And give it everything we can to help it grow.

I wish to thank Councilman Hughes for opposing the proposed bus-ing plan and for his realistic and intelligent approach to the matter. He is telling it like it is.

At this time I would like to bring up another matter, which I believe, should be given some attention. I am speaking for services needed for shutins, invalids, or semiinvalids, and the handicapped. These people find it difficult to shop, or attend to business, outside their homes.

I have thought about this for some time, but more so recently. For more than six weeks I have been unable to go out because of a case of flu that won't quit. I was in need of groceries but was too weak to shop for myself. I called several stores and asked if they had a delivery service. The only who would deliver, in an "emergency", was the Sell Rite Market. And they were most helpful.

I envision a pool with one phone number, through which a variety of services could be handled. Such services as shopping for groceries and other items, trips to the post office, hairdressers who could come to the homes, some househelp, cleaning, etc.

It may be that the businesses who supply the above services would have to set up such a center themselves, but I feel city officials should take the initiative in this plan. Personally, I have no experience in setting up a service center - I just believe there is a need for it.

Thank you for bearing with me and for keeping my name anonymous. I did not write this letter to seek publicity, but to express my

From The Desk Of

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true feelings about the matters discussed.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alma E. Zechmeister".

Alma E. Zechmeister

Encl:1

The following is a copy of a letter recently published in News Sentinel:

"Editor:

Passing through Lodi on our way home to Bellevue, Wash. we read your Lodi News Sentinel of Feb. 4 regarding 'Creation of bus service.'

I do hope the Lodi councilmen 'ponder' then throw it in the wastepaper basket.

Does the need really exist? Has it worked in other communities?

It possibly will end up like our mini-bus service in Bellevue, in the wastepaper basket. It was an expensive experiment. No one used it.

I hope you turn down those 'tax dollars' and (the) monies can be allocated to a higher priority.

Mrs. Jackie Thurman
110 Cascade Key
Bellevue, Wash. 98006"

My comment: Bellevue's population is more than 61,000. Think about it.