

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** Honorable City Council

**FROM:** Hugh R. Riley, Assistant City Manager 

**DATE:** July 6, 2007 (CC Meeting of July 18, 2007)

**SUBJECT:** Consider Donation of Moorpark Mammoth Fossil Collection to Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

**BACKGROUND**

On March 29, 2005 an excavator working for Sukut Construction Company while performing grading operations for the William Lyon Homes, Inc, new 250-home residential development in northwest Moorpark, unearthed the tusk of a nearly complete, fully fossilized skeleton of an ancient Mammoth (*Archidiscodon Meridionalis* or *Southern Mammoth*). A field inspector observed the occurrence, halted operations and excavations began to extract the fossils.

To preserve the fossils, the developer followed the Paleontological Resources Salvage Plan approved by the City of Moorpark as part of the project's permit approvals. The plan required daily on site inspections by a qualified paleontologist and gave the City of Moorpark the option to retain ownership of the discovery.

On April 20, 2005, the Moorpark City Council elected to maintain ownership of the fossils in order to have some influence and control of the ultimate disposition of the discovery. During the Council's discussions it was clear that the collection of fossils would ultimately need to be placed with a museum capable of caring for them and to make the discovery available to the public as well as to the scientific community.

**DISCUSSION**

Staff contacted officials of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH) in November 2006 to determine the museum's interest in accepting a donation of the fossil collection. On June 26, 2007, SBMNH officials concluded that the museum could accept an unconditional donation of the collection. In conveying the decision, the Director of Vertebrate Zoology, Paul Collins stated:

*“The Executive Director is excited about receiving the specimen for the museum and about the prospect of mounting the specimen for exhibit in a redesigned paleontology hall. He is particularly excited about being able to let the public have an opportunity to view the preparation of this specimen.”*

The attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the various conditions of the donation both for the Museum and the City. In summary the conditions are:

1. The donation is permanent.
2. The SBMNH is not obligated to create a public exhibit and the City is not obligated to provide public funds for such an exhibit.
3. If the City acquires additional fossils in the future and elects to offer them to a museum, the SBMNH will be considered as a recipient however the City will not be obligated to do so.
4. The City of Moorpark will be acknowledged on exhibits of the mammoth fossils which will be labeled “Moorpark Mammoth.”
5. The City and SBMNH will promote each with their respective audiences.
6. SBMNH will provide educational curriculum materials from the City to schools and assist with field trips to SBMNH.
7. SBMNH will loan items for temporary display in the City of Moorpark.
8. The City and SBMNH will explore other opportunities to collaborate in research, education, display and mutual promotion.

The estimated cost to prepare the collection and move it to Santa Barbara is \$3,740. Staff is contacting the various past sponsors of the project to seek assistance with these costs.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) Approve Donation of Moorpark Mammoth Fossil Collection and other small mammal and fauna fossils to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; and
- 2) Authorize City Manager to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Museum subject to final language approval by the City Manager and the City Attorney.

Attachment: Memorandum of Understanding

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between the

### CITY OF MOORPARK

and the

### SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

#### Recitals

WHEREAS construction work at the Meridian Hills locality in the City of Moorpark (the "City") in 2005 led to the discovery of the fossil remains of a rare Pleistocene Southern Mammoth (*Mammuthus meridionalis*) and of a diversity of smaller extinct Pleistocene mammals; and

WHEREAS the City is desirous that the fossil remains be professionally preserved, that they be available for scientific study, and that they be used for educational programs that further science education and knowledge of the natural heritage of our region; and

WHEREAS the mission of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (the "Museum") is to preserve, study, and interpret the natural and cultural history of the South Coast region of California; and

WHEREAS the Museum is desirous to obtain the aforesaid fossil remains for its collections and to include them into its programs of scientific study, exhibits, and education;

THEREFORE, the City and the Museum are entering into the following agreement:

The City:

1. hereby donates the fossil collection (described on Exhibit "A" attached hereto) to the Museum as a permanent gift;
2. will make reasonable efforts to assist the Museum in finding the funds necessary to complete preparation of the fossil materials, to mount the mammoth specimen, and to put it into a permanent exhibit at the Museum; provided, however that the City shall not be obligated to provide any funding nor does this MOU constitute a commitment of public funds;
3. hereby agrees that, in the event the City obtains control of future fossil discoveries from within its municipal boundaries or from land owned by the City and the City elects to donate said fossils, the Museum will be considered as a recipient however the City shall not be obligated to do so.

The Museum:

4. accepts the donation of the fossil collection described in Exhibit "A" and assumes responsibility for its long-term professional care;
5. will accession the fossil collection into its permanent collection and use it for scientific study, exhibit, and educational purposes;
6. will acknowledge the City of Moorpark as the source location and donor of the fossil collection in all official communications. Exhibits of the fossil collection will be labeled "Moorpark Mammoth."

Furthermore, the City and the Museum will collaborate in their mutual interest in the following manner:

7. the City and the Museum will promote each other with their respective audiences;
8. the Museum will provide educational curriculum materials to schools from Moorpark and assist these schools in organizing field trips to the Museum;
9. the Museum will loan fossil and other natural history specimens for temporary displays at the City and provide advice and assistance with such displays to the extent possible without unreasonably impacting its existing work schedule;
10. the City and the Museum will explore other opportunities for collaboration in research, education, display, and mutual promotion.

Date

For the City of Moorpark:

For the Santa Barbara Museum of  
Natural History:

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Steven Kueny  
City Manager

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Karl L. Hutterer  
Executive Director

## EXHIBIT A

**PALEO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATES, INC., FOSSIL SPECIMEN CATALOG—  
MERIDIAN HILLS PARCEL,  
MOORPARK, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Field No.	Taxon	Element	Fossil Site No.
TJL 110304-02	<i>Equus</i> (large)	cervical vertebral prezygopophysis	12
TJL 110304-02	Mammalia	bone fragment	12
GC 040205-1	Camelidae	trapezoid	20
TJL 032905-01	<i>Mammuthus meridionalis</i>	skeleton	11
TJL 032905-01	<i>Sylvilagus?</i> , <i>Thomomys</i> , <i>Perognathus</i> , <i>Dipodomys</i> , <i>Reithrodontomys</i> , <i>Neotoma</i> , <i>Pitymys meadensis</i>	teeth	11
TJL 060605-01	<i>Mammuthus?</i>	thoracic vertebral neural arch	16
TJL 060605-02	<i>Equus occidentalis?</i>	P2	16
TJL 060705-03	<i>Mammuthus?</i>	thoracic vertebral centrum	16
TJL 061605-01	<i>Hemiauchenia macrocephala</i>	dentary with p2 or 3-m2	9
TJL 061605-02	<i>Hemiauchenia macrocephala</i>	dentary with m2-3	9
TJL 062105-02	<i>Equus</i> (large)	anterior sacral right wing	21
TJL 062805-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	proximal metacarpal	10
TJL 062805-02	<i>Equus</i> (large)	proximal 1st phalanx	10
TJL 062905-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	distal tibia,	10
TJL 072705-01	<i>Mammuthus</i>	root of tooth	15
TJL 072705-02	<i>Mammuthus columbi</i>	2 molars	15
TJL 072705-04	<i>Equus</i> (large)	scaphoid fragment	14
TJL 072705-04	Proboscidea	bone fragment	14
TJL 072805-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	cheek tooth fragment	13
TJL 080205-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	proximal scapula	6
TJL 080205-02	<i>Equus?</i> (large)	scapula shaft?	6
TJL 080505-02	<i>Equus</i> (large)	acetabulum	17
TJL 081705-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	distal metatarsal	7
TJL 083005-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	proximal scapula	8
TJL 083105-01	<i>Mammuthus</i>	occlusal cheek tooth fragment	8
TJL 091605-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	cervical vertebral fragment	18
TJL 101305-01	<i>Equus occidentalis</i>	m1	2
TJL 101305-01	Mammalia	bone fragment	2
TJL 102405-01	<i>Equus</i> (large)	cheek tooth fragment	1
TJL 110105-01	Camelidae	patellar fragment	19
TJL 111405-01	Camelidae	posterior cervical vertebra VII neural arch	4
TJL 111405-03	Camelidae	anterior lumbar vertebra	3
GC 040205-1	Camelidae	trapezoid	20

EXHIBIT A

Wm. Lyon Homes Southern Mammoth T J L 032805

Wm Lyon Homes Moorpark Mammoth T J L 032805-

*Mammuthus meridionalis*

photo shot	field number	Letter	bone	identification	side	comments
8317	T		hind foot		L	leg bones-foot
8318	T		tibia-fibula		L	leg bones-foot
8319	KK		ribs			
8320	Y		vertebrae			articulated vertebrae
8321	G		side of skull		L	skull
8323	G		same			skull
8324	L		vertebrae			articulated vertebrae
8325	S		femur, tibia, fibula			leg bones- 2 feet
8327	S		femur, tibia, fibula			leg bones- 2 feet
8330						
8332	XX1		ribs			ribs
	DD		ribs			
	EE		ribs			
	BB		ribs			
	C		ribs			
8333	P		scapula spine		R	?????
8334	LL		scapula		L	
	RR		ribs			
	RR		ribs			
	BB		ribs			
	C		ribs			
8335	II		ribs			ribs
	PP		ribs			
	NN		ribs			
8336	V		radius		R	radius?
8337	F		vertebrae			vert. processes
8339	?		scapula		R	scapula
8340	K		distal humerus		R	bone end
8341	LL		scapula		L	scapula
8342	LL		scapula		L	scapula
8343	MMC		unciform		R	footbone
8344	MMB		magnum		R	footbone
8345	MMA		pisiform		R	footbone

EXHIBIT A

8346	MME	cuneiform	R	footbone			
8347	OO	front foot	L	articulated foot			
8348	F	proximal 1st phalanx		footbone			
	F	sesmoid		footbone			
8349	F	ventral dentary fragment	L	jaw fragment?			
8350	F			jaw fragment?			
8351	KK2	greater trochaner of prox. of femur	R	bone fragment			
8352	M	distal radius fragment	L	bone fragment			
8353	N	possible humerus fragment		bone fragment			
8354	W	pelvis? Fragment		bone fragment	may go with FF		
8355		scapula fragment?		bone fragment			
8356	HH	ulna?		bone fragment	may go with MM	possible fit	
8357	XX1	cervical vertebra process		bone	possible fit with		
	X	cervical vertebra process		bone			
8358	A	upper M3/	L	upper molar			
8359	I	dentary fragment with M/3	L	lower jaw with molar			
8360	I	dentary fragment with M/3	L	lower jaw with molar			
8361	AA	humerus fragment	R	bone fragment			
8362				bone fragment			
8363	FF	humerus fragment	R	bone fragment			
8364	QQ	humerus fragment	R	bone fragment			
8365	KK1	humerus	R	bone fragment	add to K will fit		
8366	L	scapula? Fragment		bone fragment			
8367	T	scapula? Fragment		bone fragment			
8368	FF	sacral vertebrae		bone fragment	right side, I-II		
	Q						
	G	long bone fragment					
	JJ	lumbar vertebrae			three		
	J	proximal humerus fragment					
	FF	ilium fragment					
	no number			bone fragment	may go with KK, clean		

## EXHIBIT A

Small Mammals Recovered from the Moorpark Mammoth Site (TJL032805-1), Wm  
Lyon Homes, Moorpark, Ventura County, California

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Elements</b>
<i>Sylvilagus</i> sp.	cottontail	teeth
<i>Thomomys</i> sp.	pocket gopher	teeth
<i>Perognathus</i> sp.	pocket mouse	teeth
<i>Dipodomys</i> sp.	kangaroo rat	teeth
<i>Reithrodontomys</i> sp.	harvest mouse	teeth
<i>Neotoma</i> sp.	woodrat	teeth
<i>Pitymys meadensis</i>	extinct Mead's pine mouse	teeth