

Council Minutes November 17, 2015

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Work Session at 2:00 p.m. at the TXI Conference Room, 1805 L. Don Dodson, Bedford, Texas, on the 17th day of November, 2015 with the following members present:

Jim Griffin	Mayor
Rusty Sartor	Council Members
Dave Gebhart	
Ray Champney	
Steve Farco	
Roy Turner	
Roger Fisher	

constituting a quorum.

Staff present included:

Roger Gibson	City Manager
Kelli Agan	Assistant City Manager
Amanda Jacobs	Assistant City Secretary
Cliff Blackwell	Director of Administrative Services
Kenney Overstreet	Interim Public Works Director
Meg Jakubik	Strategic Services Manager
Bill Syblon	Development Director
James Tindell	Fire Chief
Jeff Gibson	Police Chief
Jill McAdams	Human Resources Director
Maria Redburn	Library Director
Emilio Sanchez	Planning Manager

CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS

Mayor Griffin called the Work Session to order at 2:00 p.m.

WORK SESSION 2:00 p.m.

• **Discussion on Council's Short Term and Long Term Vision.**

Mayor Griffin stated that the work session was to discuss the short term and long term vision of the Council and staff, the Brasher Lane project and the sign ordinance. He stated that the sign ordinance has been a work in progress for some time and that the final version needs to be put in motion; and that the following topics may be discussed: the Cultural District, Bedford Commons, the Boys Ranch and parks in general, the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) timeline and water rate considerations, employee retention, City aesthetics and codes, economic development and public utilities.

• **Boys Ranch**

Assistant City Manager Kelli Agan stated that every rain event delays the project two to three weeks and that the current timeline for completion is the end of January; that crews are currently working on the

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pavilions and other areas until the lake is drained; that staff met with Kimley-Horn to discuss the berm area at Forest Ridge and Harwood; that there are drainage issues and issues with the concrete buried in the berm, that the initial design will need to be reconfigured; that the berm may be designed to be a focal point of the intersection; that Kimley-Horn will bring a quote to staff for the girls softball field and soccer field design in addition to the previous quote for the design of the berm and creek area; that the new playground will be open prior to the completion of the lake project; that the berm area will be irrigated and hydromulched; and that the concrete buried in the berm will be removed and that a wrought iron fence will be placed around the playground area. There was discussion regarding rolling the next three phases of the Boys Ranch Park Improvement Project together to complete the project sooner. City Manager Roger Gibson stated that it is critical to revamp the City's website and by doing so, will enable the ability to promote and advertise the next phases of the project.

Mayor Griffin summarized the discussion by stating that it is a priority to complete Phase I of the improvement project, open the playground, map out the strategy for the remaining phases of the project, create a plan for the maintenance, care and staffing of the entire Boys Ranch complex and be aware of tying in what is done at the Boys Ranch into street projects, the Cultural District and Bedford Commons. There was discussion on the need to set a parks standard for all parks in Bedford, beginning with the Boys Ranch park, and creating a comprehensive strategic plan to maintain all aspects of the City.

- **Bedford Commons**

There was discussion on the location of Bedford Commons; that staff has met with three developers and will bring an update to the Council regarding the existing property owners; and how the public/private partnership will play out. Development Director Bill Syblon stated that developers will want to know what the City is working with financially.

- **Website**

Ms. Agan stated that the revamp of the website will feature three distinctive components "Live, Work, Play;" that it needs to be more robust and user-friendly; that the site needs to have a wow factor since it is the first place people look if they want to open a business or live in Bedford; that staff needs to do a better job of marketing City events and news; and that initial changes will be made by a website company while staff will maintain the content.

- **Employee Retention**

City Manager Roger Gibson stated that the budget process will begin in March and that there will be requests for staffing. It was stated that it is important to be parallel with other cities regarding salary and benefits; that there needs to be a staffing analysis to see where the City falls short, that area cities pay their Police and Fire personnel more than Bedford; that there is a need to create growth opportunities; that it is important for the employees to understand their current benefits; that the City does provide employees with a benefits statement every year; and that there was an overall 12.5 percent turnover rate in 2015.

- **Brasher Lane**

Mayor Griffin stated that the water and sewer lines are funded and that the storm water lines are currently not funded and will be looked at in the FY 2016/17 Budget. Mr. Syblon stated that the zoning is primarily residential, the lots are platted, and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan lists them as commercial. The stormwater portion of the project is the current issue and is quoted at \$500,000 to complete. Property owners along Brasher Lane are interested in developing along Highway 157, which is funded, as well as the residential properties, which are not completely funded. In response to questions from Council, Planning Manager Emilio Sanchez stated that after a street is built, there would be only 16 lots to develop and that it would not be profitable for a home builder to develop the area and build the stormwater lines. Mr. Gibson stated that if this project is a priority, there is \$288,000 that could be paid out of the 2011 CO Stormwater Bonds. There was discussion regarding the direction that

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Council wants to take; Council wanting to move forward with the sewer and water projects along Highway 157; that another work session will be held to see a list of all upcoming projects and determine which are a priority before moving forward with the stormwater project; and the Development Department working with a home developer to help offset the costs.

- **SWIFT Timeline**

Mr. Gibson stated that the City has 10 years to take advantage of the SWIFT funding and that there is an option to only take the amount needed rather than the entire \$90M; that only 85 percent of the work to be done will be completed with the full \$90M; that a system analysis will be performed to check the condition of the pipes; and that water quality and volume may improve. Interim Public Works Director Kenny Overstreet presented information on the SWIFT water line projects including the Quail Crest area, Commerce Place, Tibbets Drive, Scenic Hills Drive, Red Oak Lane, and the Loma Verde Addition. Mr. Overstreet stated that these waterline projects have been on the shelf and ready for five years and that SWIFT required that projects designed and ready to go would be completed first; that the engineering for these projects is not guaranteed to be paid through SWIFT funding; that these projects will go out for bid in January; that it will take 14 to 16 months to implement the new automated meter reading program; and that staff plans to send information to all water customers.

Fire Chief James Tindell stated that completion of these projects may have a huge impact on ISO ratings and that the average homeowner could see an average savings of \$200 to \$300 on their home owner's insurance annually.

- **City Aesthetics/Maintenance/Codes**

Ms. Agan stated that the City will take over the medians from NTE in June 2016 and staff is exploring options for installing indigenous plants in all medians. There was discussion regarding the City taking control of the traffic lights currently maintained by the State and finding out the costs associated; and TxDOT having the authority to override any light setting even if the City has control.

Mr. Gibson stated that an item will be on the December meeting agenda to expand the definition of an all-weather surface.

There was discussion on Harwood Road and obtaining grants to widen the roadway to three lanes; the medians needing to be maintained better with irrigation and new plantings; the Beautification Commission's interest in working on the medians but lacking the expertise to know what will and will not work; the City Attorney advising against an "Adopt a Median" program due to liability; Oncor needing to give a gauge as to what point a utility pole needs to be replaced and that once a pole is replaced, the old one needs to be removed; and some cities having gone to a mandatory spay/neuter for their pets unless your pet is for breeding purposes, which a majority of the Council was not interested in pursuing. There was discussion on looking into Texas Municipal League's payday loan lender ordinance; Turner Signs being in the process of completing the large monument signs and the reason the project has taken so long to complete; and the electronic sign at Fire Station #3 and the Glade Road monument sign coming before Council at a future meeting.

- **Public Utilities**

There was discussion on replacing every street light in the City with LED lights, which are cheaper to operate and maintain; the City of Arlington's recent implementation of a program; LED lights reducing light pollution; that Oncor does not have a rate schedule for LED lights at this time; Oncor having a few pilot programs in place; and the charge to change to LED lights being \$550 per light.

Mayor Griffin recapped the meeting to this point, stating that with regard to Bedford Commons, staff will meet with a third developer and come back to Council with an idea of what the next step needs to be; that City aesthetics and the Boys Ranch Park are a priority for the Council, with employee retention second and Brasher Lane third.

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- **Sign Ordinance**

Building Official Russell Hines stated that staff has addressed Council's concerns with the non-conformity clause with existing signs (Electronic Message Center, Window Signs, Existing Building For Sale/Leasing, "V" type signs, and neon tubing signs); and that these signs will need to come into compliance by the date the new ordinance goes into effect. Any existing signs that are lawfully in existence can stay until such a time that 50% of the sign needs to be repaired, altered, or replaced, at which time the sign loses its non-conformity and must be brought into compliance with the current sign regulations. The City does not intend to prohibit, restrict, or have the effect of prohibiting or restricting an owner from the display of the flag of the United States of America, the State of Texas, or an official replica flag of any branch of the United States Armed Forces. There was discussion on the display of any flag within the City. There was discussion regarding Electronic Message/Graphic Signs including that the display of an image, graphic, text, or information on the sign shall change not less than once each eight seconds and shall occur with an instant on/off cycle; there being no industry standard for brightness; and the display lighting needing be reduced by 50 percent at night.

A section has been added to the sign ordinance regarding Political Signs. The State guidelines have been added as well as a section requiring that political signs must be removed within 48 hours after the close of the polls on Election Day.

There was discussion on window signs and the options to determine coverage area. Staff presented three options and a majority of the Council chose Option 1, which states that the window area for window signs shall be calculated by multiplying the window width times the height of each window area, including the mullions but excluding building cladding; and staff notifying all businesses of the changes.

There was discussion on Feather Flags and that only four flags are allowed during approved Special Events or Grand Openings; and that within the first 90 days of a Grand Opening, a businesses can display feather flags for 30 days. Council was of the consensus to remove Special Events from the Sign Ordinance. There was discussion on Balloons and Inflatable Objects being prohibited from Special Events; and staff notifying all businesses of the changes, which will include information about the other avenues the City offers to help promote local businesses.

There was discussion on outlining the inside or outside of windows with neon or LED lights; Bedford being the first city in the area to prohibit them; and the increase in the number of businesses with these lights.

There was discussion regarding portable signs including that they will remain prohibited.

The Sign Ordinance will be presented to the Council at the December 8 regular meeting and will go into effect on September 1, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Griffin adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Jim Griffin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary

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