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"Crossroads to the Metroplex"

**CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION**

**June 23rd, 2015**

Mayor Pittman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, and announced a quorum. Council members present were Jo Ann Wilson, Dawn Davis, Jerry Taylor, Tim Robison, and Ronnie Moore.

Staff Present: City Attorney, Walt Leonard, and City Secretary, Angie Young, Police Chief, Brandon Davis, and Public Works Director, Sam Dorsett.

Council Member Jerry Taylor gave the invocation and Mayor Pittman led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Citizens Presentations and Public Input for Future Agenda Items**

Sam Eason addressed the Taco Casa Restaurant; he tried it out and liked it. However, he disagrees with the requests for monetary concessions and the sign height. His biggest objection is to the sign. He read from section 14.38 of the Code Ordinances, citing that signs are not supposed to interfere with the public view or create a nuisance. He also quoted section 14.38 6a regarding the monuments signs only. He believes the concern when these ordinances were written was the appearance of the city and he would ask to allow a monument sign only.

Debora Becraft addressed council concerning spraying for mosquitoes. She has lived in areas where it was done and she believes it is the cause of many illnesses. She is also concerned about the effect on animals if it is done while people are away from home. She also noted that Rhome is a possibly a bird sanctuary. She feels it will harm the wildlife and that it is only done in big cities when there are West Nile positive tests.

**Announcements from Mayor and Council Members**

Council Member Robison said that on June 15th he and Council Member Moore drove north of Hwy 407 where the DVI television show is filmed that moves houses in and renovates them and then auctions them. They stopped in and introduced themselves. The show is in need of contractors. Council Member Robison said they could leave information at City Hall that advertises for contractors.

Council Member Wilson confirmed the time for Splash Days. It is from 11:00am to 7:00pm on Saturday, June 27th, 2015. They will have vendors and slides

**Consent Agenda**

Council Member Wilson made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda and Council Member Robison seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

**Old Business**

Mayor Pittman announced that there are three seats up for appointment on the Planning & Zoning Board. Council Member Wilson moved to appoint three members; Shawn Holliman, who has served as Vice Chairman and is very knowledgeable; the same goes for Jimmy Johnson; and Pam Davis has been a realtor in Rhome for several years and knows Rhome very well. Council Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

Mayor Pittman noted that the Parks and Recreation Board had recently been revitalized and that there are five seats. Council Member Moore said that we need to table this item until we have more applications. Council Member Wilson said she agreed. Council Member Davis seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

Mayor Pittman addressed the issue of re-surveying the Norman property near Well #5. She noted that to re-survey is approximately $750.00. She also noted that Public Works Director Sam Dorsett said that once he accepted the survey as it was done that is it. Council Member Robison said that the agreement was between the previous mayor and Mr. Norman the surveyor surveyed it differently. Council Member Wilson verified that the previous mayor in question was Nell Fernandez. Council Member Robison said we need to set up a meeting with Nell, Mr. Norman, and Mayor Pittman. Council Member Moore said the reason this is an issue is because it is a problem to get through the gate there. Council Member Robison said the original survey point was missed and wants to see if the surveyor will change the survey. Chief of Police Davis said there are two points in Rhome from which to survey. Mayor Pittman said she will try to set up a meeting with Mr. Norman and see if we can reach an agreement.

Mayor Pittman gave a brief history of the requests made by Will Reed from Taco Casa and the city’s offer to cover $15,000.00 of costs. Mr. Reed asked if instead of paying back the $15, 0000.00 when the second lot sold could they work it off over 5 years. Council Member Robison reminded Mr. Reed that the $15,000.00 can be taken off anywhere. Mr. Reed asked how that works and Council let him know that they are working out the details on that. Mayor Pittman said they would like to bore through the road instead of cutting under it with an agreement that they do any repairs in the next five years. Council Member Wilson asked about the sign height. Mr. Reed said it is 80 feet. Council Member Robison said he thought it was 65 feet. Mayor Pittman explained that to have a sign other than a monument sign that he would have to get a variance. City Attorney Leonard explained why the variance is necessary and the process for it. Mr. Reed said he thinks the lower sign will bring it right into the line of sight. Mr. Reed asked if Love’s had to do this. Mayor Pittman said yes they did. Mr. Reed asked how to request the variance. City Secretary Young said she would provide the form to him. Council Member Moore said that he had spoken to several people and so far none have a problem with the sign or lights. Council Member Wilson said we could make a motion without the sign included. Mr. Reed said he needs to know how to proceed for financial reasons. Council Member Wilson made a motion to approve plans as submitted with the stipulation that they city grant $15,000.00 to Taco Casa for use as needed toward fees and also to allow Taco Casa to bore through the road instead of under it with the agreement that Taco Casa will bear the costs of any repairs needed to that section of road within five years. Council Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

**New Business**

Mayor Pittman went over the reasons for the request to convert the savings accounts to checking accounts. City Secretary Young also commented that it would save the city money. Council Member Taylor made a motion to approve changing these accounts and Council Member Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

Mayor Pittman commented on the need to distinguish regular police uniforms from bailiff uniforms. Chief of Police Brandon Davis addressed council concerning the use of Court Security Funds for metal detectors and bailiff uniforms. He noted that they have to provide a bailiff for every court date and he does not like the idea of the bailiff wearing the same uniform as the officer who wrote the citation. He does not like the appearance of bias from the judge because the officer and the bailiff are one in the same. He would also like to send the officers to bailiff training. In addition, he noted that it is impossible to pat down everyone entering the court so he would like to see metal detectors and that most people don’t realize they cannot carry a weapon into the court. Council member Robison asked how much is in the account. Chief Davis said it is around $15,000.00 and the uniforms are around $1000.00. City Attorney Leonard noted that the judge is in favor of this. Chief Davis said this would also pay for another officer to come in if our officer cannot attend for reasons that they are the same officer writing the citations. He commented that these funds have been sitting for a while and have not been used. City Attorney Leonard added that these funds can be used for security in council chambers too. Council Member Wilson asked if they would have a name patch on them. Chief Davis said they would have a “Bailiff” patch on them and they are brown in color. Chief Davis will get quotes and information to bring back to council

Chief Davis then addressed the Police Department Plan for growth. He reviewed their mission statement, current organization, which consists of himself, a lieutenant, a sergeant, and 4 officers, three of which are in training. Chief Davis said he used North Central Texas Council of Governments for statistics on growth and crime. He also he cited Wise County’s Strategic Plan for public safety radio communications and said that the Northwest Independent School District site is a good indicator of growth. Chief Davis said the Rhome is the second fastest growing city in Wise County. There has been a 23% increase in call load since July of 2014. They are at capacity for officer right now but will need to increase by three per shift by 2017. He noted that it is realistic that the citations written by these officers will pay for them. Next Chief Davis addressed purchasing vehicle and vehicle rotation, equipment for new officers, and a step plan to increase pay so that we will be able to keep good people. Chief Davis said he personally drives by each house in Rhome each day and reports back to his officers if there is anything that needs attention. He has divided the city into four sectors and there is an officer assigned to each sector. Chief Davis addressed questions about why Rhome officers go to calls in Newark to which he advised that Wise County dispatches the calls and since we do not pay for the dispatch service we don’t really have a say in it. Council Member Taylor added that we help them so they help us. Chef Davis also said that we are the closest in most cases so we get sent on less urgent calls. Chief Davis ended by stating that by 2017 we will have a plan in place to handle the growth.

Mayor Pittman addressed the topic of mosquito spraying. She said she has had lots of calls about it. Council Member Wilson said he thinks we should all take care of our own homes to reduce harmful situations. Council Member Robison said he believes it is a liability and it also destroys the ozone. Council Member Taylor said he believes that the clean up days will help alleviate some of the problem. Council Member Robison suggested the mosquito cakes that you put in standing water.

Mayor Pittman addressed a process for how to address complaints. She said that she does not want to see them go directly to employees if they should be directed to council. She said there is a numbered form to use for these. Chief Davis said it is illegal to include threats in a complaint. Mayor Pittman asked if all complaints should go directly to council. Council Member Robison said the work orders should be the same as complaint forms. Council Member Davis said there will be some that fill out 50. Mayor Pittman said it is her job to step in and handle these and she would like to know how much the council wants to be informed and whether they want to be on every one. Council Member Moore said it depends on what it is. Mayor Pittman said it is serious she will forward them to council as well and Mayor Pittman will make the call on what is serious. She also advised that we could put this form on the web.

Mayor Pittman discussed the issues with the easements, specifically in By Well Estates. Public Works Director Sam Dorsett said last year the city quit mowing them. Mayor Pittman explained that there are ordinances that convey that it is the property owner’s responsibility to mow them but that has not always been followed, the city has mowed as well. Council Member Wilson said we should put aside the ordinances at the moment and move forward in cleaning up. Mayor Pittman explained that it takes 3 – 5 days to mow By Well Estates and that there is improper drainage issue and that the city does not have the equipment t repair it. Council Member Robison said we have to clean it up first to see what we are dealing with; Council Member Wilson asked if we could clean the culverts. Council Member Taylor said we cannot go onto the driveway. Council Member Moore said we could dig out the ditches to make the water flow correctly. Mayor Pittman asked if it is the city’s responsibility to do this. Council Member Moore said not if it is their property. Council Member Davis agreed that it is the property owner's responsibility and also said that the parks need mowing too. City Attorney Leonard said that we need to focus on public health and safety and we can control public health and safety. Council Member Moore said if we do this for one we have to do it for all. Council Member Robison asked if Public Works needs help catching up, to which Mayor Pittman replied yes. She also noted that we need to set aside funds for this. Council Member Taylor said it should start to slow down. Council Member Davis asked if we used contract labor could they use the city equipment. Council Member Wilson said if we get quotes we need to be specific about how long, what and where. Council Member Taylor believes we can save money by contracting out for mowing. Council Member Moore said we need to start with By Well Estates. City Attorney Leonard said we need to get permission from the property owner. Council Member Robison said he could provide a release form. Council Member Robison said he would move to get Public Works to start getting quotes and for what and where. Council Member Davis made a motion to approve this and Council Member Wilson seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

At 8:58pm council recessed into Executive Session. At 10:14pm council reconvened into open session. There was no action as a result of the Executive Session.

**Future Agenda Items**

None

There being no further business, at 10:18p.m. Council Member Moore made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Davis seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

**CERTIFICATION:**

**Passed and approved on this the 9th day of July, 2015.**

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**Michelle Pittman, Mayor**

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**Angie Young, City Secretary**