



Regular Council Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes

Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 6:30 PM
8301 Westview Drive, Houston, Texas 77055

In accordance with the order of the Office of the Governor issued on March 16, 2020, as amended, this meeting was conducted via telephonic conference (Zoom).

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Herron called to order the Regular Council Meeting at 6:31 P.M.

1.A. **Invocation** was given by Council Member Gordy.

1.B. **Pledge of Allegiance**

1.C. **PRESENT**

Mayor Russell Herron
Council Member Mike Gordy
Council Member Robert Byrne
Council Member Andy Carey
Council Member David Schwarz

Also Present: Olson & Olson Attorney Rutherford, City Engineer Him, City Engineer Vasquez, Spring Valley Police Captain Lane, City Administrator Blevins and Assistant City Secretary Stephens

ABSENT

Mayor Pro Tem Paul Maddock

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Administrator Blevins said several letters were received from citizens regarding the Street Light discussion.

Drew & Kristy Steffen, 1238 Glourie Drive, wrote in support of the additional lighting stating that in their professional real estate experience, well-lit streets increase safety and improves aesthetics.

Michelle & James Mayes, 8108 Bromley Rd, wrote in support stating the streets are very dark. They said they and neighbors are out walking and running with no sidewalks and must share the road with cars.

Brett & Kim Williams, 1201 Pine Chase Drive, wrote in support as Kim is an early morning runner and has expressed concerns for safety because of the low output and spacing of street lights.

Nancy Polis, 1210 Glourie Drive, wrote in opposition as additional lighting will increase light pollution. They stated that the existing street lights are sufficient and individuals can light their own porches and keep doors locked for safety.

David Sanders, 1206 Glourie Drive, wrote in support of increased street lighting as long as the poles are visually appealing and cables are underground.

Austin Davis, 2 Hilshire Oaks, wrote in favor of decorative lighting similar to what the other villages have already installed.

Melissa Blakeslee, 24 Hickory Shadows, wrote in favor of decorative lighting similar to other villages, stated that it will attract future residents and increase property value and safety.

Christy & Jackson Naponic, 22 Hickory Shadows, wrote in favor of decorative lighting similar to other Memorial Villages stating that it will help keep children safe as well as increase property values and attract future residents.

3. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

3.A. Police Report

Captain Lane said there were 123 calls for service in the month of July. Of which, he stated that there were 9 alarm, 39 business checks, 46 public relations, and 9 information reports but no major incidents to report. He stated that Hilshire Village and Spring Valley have had low crime numbers, but to be aware in surrounding areas as Houston has experienced an increase.

Council Member Gordy asked Captain Lane from a safety standpoint, how he felt about additional lighting in the City. Captain Lane said in his opinion it would be a great help, and that in Hilshire Village it is easy to hide in the shadows because there is not a lot of light. He stated that increased visibility would deter people from checking door handles on parked cars. Captain Lane said in residential areas, keeping doors locked is the biggest deterrent, but lights will help. Council Member Byrne asked if the activity in Spring Valley is on locked cars. Captain Lane said the majority of vehicles that are broken into are left unlocked. He said in commercial areas they are more likely to break a window, but not residential.

Council Member Byrne asked “how is the City doing on the overnight parking”? Captain Lane said there has not been near as much problem with the parked cars since the warnings have been issued.

3.B. Building Official Report

Deputy Building Official DuVall said there are more inspections this month due to the multiple construction projects on Glourie.

Administrator Blevins said a parking pad permit was issued to **1306 Pine Chase Drive**.

Council Member Gordy said in the past residents have complained about things that are going on at job sites but that has decreased since BBG Consulting has been working the City.

Council Member Byrne said BBG Consulting is the code enforcement for Hedwig Village and has also helped with the Fire Department.

3.C. **Engineer's Report**

Engineer Him said it has been somewhat of a slow month. There were only a few residential Drainage Plans for review, but mostly it is business as usual.

Engineer Him stated that the parking pad design at **1306 Pine Chase Drive** had been approved. Mayor Herron said the shoulder does not appear to provide enough space. Engineer Him said Mr. Truax will be constructing a retaining wall adjacent to the bank of the ditch which will sit six (6) inches above the height of the pavement and act as a curb. Council Member Gordy asked if surface water flows from the centerline of the street toward the ditches, then how will the six (6) inch curb affect the drainage? Engineer Him responded that there will be openings for water to flow into the ditch. Council Member Byrne said the plans have been submitted and approved so he doesn't have a problem with a skilled citizen taking on the task of the installation, but he asked what will be inspected during the construction. Engineer Him said Javier will meet with Mr. Truax before he resumes digging in the area, then again before the concrete is poured, and a final inspection to make sure the ditch cross-section has not been disturbed. Engineer Him said that there has been a request for a similar design on Glourie but that particular ditch has a three (3) foot depth and is a different story.

Street & Shoulder Drop Offs - Engineer Him stated that Engineer Vasquez will set up a meeting with Mayor Herron to evaluate the street shoulder drop-offs throughout the City to identify areas that need repair work.

Wirt Road Safety Project – Engineer Him said that he will be attending a meeting on Thursday with Veronica Davis in charge of City of Houston Traffic Drainage Operations Division, as well as individuals from Traffic Signals and Engineering to discuss left turn holding lane expansions and a traffic signal. Administrator Blevins, Mayor Herron and Council Member Gordy will also be in attendance.

Council Member Carey asked about the cabling along Wirt Road. Engineer Him said that it is likely Verizon who would have permitted through the City of Houston for the Wirt Road Right-of-Way. Mayor Herron said there is also work on Ridgeley near the Wirt intersection. Engineer Him said there's a portion on Ridgeley just before the lift station that was permitted through City of Hilshire Village.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

4.A. **Public Hearing regarding the Preliminary Report related to attic story**

Motion was made to end the Regular Council Meeting and begin Public Hearing at 7:06 P.M. made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Byrne.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Byrne, Council Member Carey, Council Member Schwarz

Mayor Herron said there is no current definition of a "legal attic story" in the City of Hilshire Village's Code of Ordinances. Mayor Herron displayed images of a house

elevation depicting the attic space with both an acceptable sloped roof and an unacceptable flat roof, per the proposed changes.

There were no citizen comments.

Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing and resume the Regular Council Meeting at 7:10 P.M. made by Council Member Byrne, Seconded by Council Member Gordy.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Byrne, Council Member Carey, Council Member Schwarz

The motion passed unanimously.

4.B. Discussion and possible approval of the Final Report on changes to the Zoning Ordinance related to attic story and set date for Public Hearing on the Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance related to attic story.

Motion for discussion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Byrne.

Administrator Blevins said the next Public Hearing will be on September 21st, 2021.

Mayor Herron said the purpose of adding language which regulates balconies was to prevent them on a roof. He asked if there are any regulations about constructing a balcony on a second floor. He said according to the proposed ordinance, a balcony can be three (3) feet from the natural grade. He stated that the setbacks for the balcony would be twenty feet from the side property line and thirty feet from the rear property line, which is smaller than the current requirements.

Attorney Rutherford said the regulations for a legal attic story might need to be separated from those for balconies in the code of ordinances.

Council Member Byrne said if there is language in this ordinance that affects other sections then those should be evaluated.

Administrator Blevins asked if the language stating that any balcony above thirty-six inches must be set back at least twenty feet from the side and thirty feet from the rear property lines would prevent a second-story balcony. Deputy Building Official DuVall said it would prevent a second-story balcony that does not meet those setbacks. He said the item could be modified to address a legal attic story by saying "No balcony shall be constructed above the second floor". Deputy Building Official DuVall said he has seen a third-story balcony off attic spaces in other Memorial Villages.

Attorney Rutherford asked if there are any single-story homes that have a balcony off the habitable attic space? Deputy Building Official DuVall said he hasn't seen that design, but it would be possible and would be similar to requirements for a second story balcony.

Mayor Herron said the concern from citizens is that they don't want people above the first floor looking down into the neighbor's property.

Council Member Gordy amended the motion to approve the Final Report of the changes to the Zoning Ordinance related to an attic story subject to the amendments to the balcony provision as discussed.

Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Byrne.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Byrne, Council Member Carey, Council Member Schwarz

The motion passed unanimously.

4.C. Discussion of FYE 2022 Budget and FY 2021 Taxes

Administrator Blevins said the certified numbers came in from Harris County Appraisal District but she is still recommending the Voter Approval Tax Rate. She said she added three (3) license plate reader cameras as a line item and that there are no extra funds for capital improvement. Administrator Blevins said she would like to add a website upgrade because the City needs to be ADA compliant.

Council Member Byrne said on line 27 of the Budget there is a note about the Village Fire Department keeping the ambulance funds. He asked that it be clarified that those funds have been voted on to stay within the department.

Council Member Schwarz asked if it would be possible to create a platform where citizens could log in to access the directory online? Administrator Blevins said the directory is a function of the Civic Club.

Council Member Gordy said last year there was nothing done with the funds to improve City Hall such as painting and flooring but the amount included in this budget would be insufficient. He said new quotes might need to be obtained.

Administrator Blevins said the City of Houston is increasing water rates, but did not know yet exactly how much.

She said there will be a Public Hearing at the September 21st Regular Council Meeting to vote on the approval of the tax rate.

5. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Council did not convene into an executive session.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

7. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

7.A. **Fire Commissioner's Report**

Fire Commissioner Byrne said the department is still working under budget. He said yesterday's storm caused 27 calls including a house fire in Piney Point. He said the department's response times are still within the national standard.

Commissioner Byrne updated the Council on the status of the **Fire Station Renovation**. He said the apparatus doors were being painted, the building HVAC system is not functional yet and the building still doesn't have electricity but possibly could in the next week. He stated that the project's substantial completion date is October 8th but that is likely to be moved due to issues.

7.B. **Mayor Herron's Report:** The mayor had nothing additional to report.

7.C. **City Administrator's Report**

Administrator Blevins said she is meeting with the City Arborist to make a list of the areas that have trees with branches overhanging the roadway and therefore creating an obstacle for emergency vehicles.

She said it was noted that Inframark started installing the fire hydrant valves as a result of miscommunication but they have put a stop to the work for now. She said as soon as a meeting is set up with them to determine a total cost then we can continue with the installation.

7.D. **City Treasurer's Report:** CDARS worksheet was provided, the maturity date is December 9th, 2021.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Byrne, Seconded by Council Member Schwarz to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of:

8.A. Disbursements

8.B. Minutes from the July 20, 2021 Regular Council Meeting

8.C. Check Registers

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Byrne, Council Member Carey, Council Member Schwarz

The motion passed unanimously.

9. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS

10. FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Administrator Blevins said the Budget Hearing is scheduled for September 21, 2021 and the Council will also discuss zoning changes for attic spaces. She said the Budget Workshop date is to be determined.

Council Member Byrne said there is a virtual educational seminar from the City of Houston Lighting Advocacy Group on August 25th.

Council Member Gordy asked if the City will resume in-person meetings after September 1st. Administrator Blevins said, "Yes".

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Council Member Byrne, Seconded by Council Member Schwarz.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Byrne, Council Member Carey, Council Member Schwarz

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.

Russell Herron, Mayor

ATTEST:

Susan Blevins, City Secretary