

**CITY OF LAREDO
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
M2020-S-06
LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS 1110
HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
June 15, 2020
5:00 P.M.**

SUPPLEMENTAL MINUTES

I. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance authorizing the City Manager to amend the City of Laredo FY 2019-2020 Parkland Acquisition and Park Improvement Fund Budget to appropriate revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$312,492.00. Revenues are from park improvement fees and/or cash payment in lieu of land paid by the developers of Shiloh Highland, Antler Crossing, Stamford Height, Village South, The Loop, San Isidro Northeast, San Miguel at Plantation and Hidden Heaven subdivisions. The expenditures will be utilized as per Ordinance 2008-O-058 Section 24.56.2.E and amended Ordinance 2019-O-036 Section 24.56.2.C for park improvements.

No discussion or action taken.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

UTILITIES: STAFF SOURCE MICHAEL F. RODGERS, INTERIM UTILITIES DIRECTOR

2. Authorizing the City Manager to award \$203,469.51 to Precision Pump Systems, Edinburg, Texas, for the labor and parts in order to repair a Patterson 24 RHC 2-Stage 10 MGD 600 HP Raw Water Pump #2 at El Pico Water Treatment Plant utilizing Buy Board Contract #589-19 for the Utilities Department. The scope of work is included in the background and provided by project engineer, Garver Engineering. Funding is available in the Utilities Department Water Works Construction Fund.

No discussion or action taken.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

III. STAFF REPORT

3. Discussion with possible action to re-establish the Veterans Affairs Committee with representation of the various veteran organizations; and any other matter incident thereto.

Rafael Benavides, Public Information Officer, explained that the local veterans need a space to express their concerns and receive answers from local representatives. He noted that the Veterans Affairs Committee has been dormant for at least five years, if

not longer. In a 2018 memo to the City Manager's Office, the Committee's liaison expressed an interest in re-establishing the Committee; current management has also been brought into this conversation and are supportive. The organizations to be considered for involvement include the American Legion Post 59, the Catholic War Veterans, the Disabled American Veterans, the Korean War Veterans, Laredo Veterans Coalition, LULAC Veterans Council 777, the Marine Corps League Laredo Detachment, South Texas Afghanistan/Iraq Veterans Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9194, and Webb County Service Office (to serve in an advisory capacity only). Each organization can have one person as a voting member of the Committee; an alternate member can also be designated in case the primary voting member is not able to attend. He noted that management or Council could suggest additional organizations to participate. The agenda and membership would be established during the creation of the by-laws of the Committee; appointments would be at the request of the Veterans Affairs Committee, City Manager and/or City Council and require Council approval.

Arturo Garcia, Committee liaison and Building Development Services Director, explained that the intent of re-establishing the Committee is to give each individual entity a representative for a consensus of the general veteran population.

Motion to approve as presented.

Moved: Cm. Vielma

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

IV. RECESS AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL AND CONVENE AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD

Motion to recess as the Laredo City Council and convene as the Laredo Mass Transit Board.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

4. Authorizing the City Manager to enter into lease negotiations between Laredo Transit Management, Inc. (Lessor) and Turimex, LLC (Lessee). This is for the leasing of building space at the Laredo Transit Center, located at 1301 Farragut St., for an approximate square footage of 2,850 square feet. The building space includes a vacant office of approximately 150 square feet and vacant bus slip # 6, 7, and 8 of 900 square feet each.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

5. Authorizing the City Manager to execute a proposed amendment to the management contract between First Transit, Inc. and the City of Laredo for one year in the amount of \$631, 762.09, in accordance with the terms and conditions.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

V. ADJOURN AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD AND RECONVENE AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL

Motion to adjourn as the Laredo Mass Transit Board and reconvene as the Laredo City Council.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: MPT Torres

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

VI. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

6. Request by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.

1. Discussion with possible action to create an ordinance that would regulate animal traps further prohibiting homemade and inhumane traps to ensure Laredo Animal Care has a detailed inventory list of trap owners for the proper catch, release and treatment of caught animals; and any other matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Mayor Pro-Tempore Alberto Torres, Jr.)

Cm. Gonzalez noted that he and MPT Torres have received several calls about individuals using homemade traps, which are routinely inhumane. MPT Torres explained that the City has an ordinance that covers the inhumane use of traps as well as homemade traps that could prove to be dangerous when capturing animals. He voiced the importance of tracking the traps that people are buying, especially when capturing domestic animals like cats or dogs. If the Laredo Animal Care Services does not have a list of where their traps are located or checked routinely, there is a potential for domestic animals to be left in the sun or dehydrating while they wait to be released. Animals can also be injured through the incorrect use of these traps. He proposed a permit fee for each trap that is required whether the trapper is using a LACS trap or obtaining one of their own as well as an annual fee for each trap and an inventory noting where these traps are located to ensure the proper catch and release procedure is following. He initiated a motion to this effect as well as direction to staff to create a database of privately-owned traps and to confiscate inhumane traps, noting that traps purchased in a store are most often humane or regulated. Determining whether a trap is inhumane or inappropriate can be left to the discretion of the LACS officer.

Dr. Marte Martinez commended MPT Torres and Cm. Gonzalez for bringing this problem forward but asked that Council take a step back and allow management to bring a recommendation on this matter regarding the definition of humane versus inhumane as well as the structure for implementing these procedures.

Heberto L. Rarmirez, Jr., Animal Care Services Director, confirmed that under Section 6-19 (b) 1 of the Code of Ordinances (Traps with holding mechanisms prohibited), "No person shall set up or allow to be set up on his property steel jaw traps, spring traps with teeth or perforated edges..." These kinds of traps are already illegal, and LACS staff already confiscate them if they are found. Snares are also prohibited under this

subsection.

MPT Torres noted reports of some private trappers who have left animals in the traps for days with no food or shelter. This is unacceptable, and there are some people who set up multiple traps around their home simply because they do not like cats.

Dr. Martinez asked how the City will be able to enforce or implement this with the private owner. Mr. Ramirez noted that once the Department issues a permit, applicants will be told what type of traps are allowable for use. Then the Department would inventory all of the traps that come through the permit process. The Department does not have the manpower to go inspect all traps but can make time available for Animal Control Officers to perform spot-checks.

MPT Torres noted that the responsibility would be on the property owner and/or permit holder; if it is determined that the animal has been in the trap for a prolonged period of time, a citation can be issued or the matter can be forwarded to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Dr. Martinez stated his opinion that people will likely not apply for a trap permit in order to avoid having LACS come to their property for a spot-check inspection; MPT Torres countered that if a neighbor reports that trapper, then they are already in violation of the ordinance and stand to receive a citation.

Cm. Altgelt reminded Council that citizens can buy a humane trap, but leaving an animal trapped in it for just a couple of hours in the Laredo heat can quickly turn into an inhumane situation with an otherwise humane trap. The onus is on the trapper to call Animal Control quickly to remove the animal. He asked that Council incorporate timing into this motion. He asked about raccoons and possums, which are native to the area and serve an ecological purpose despite their nuisance to many people. He voiced his understanding that it would be better to release those animals back into the neighborhood or have LACS take them to the edge of town where they will be inclined to stay safely.

MPT Torres explained that regardless of the animal in the trap, people are responsible for contacting Animal Control for proper release of the animal. Mr. Ramirez confirmed that raccoons and possums are released into the wild; the only time they are euthanized is if there has been human contact. MPT Torres accepted Cm. Altgelt's proposed amendment to compel trappers to immediately contact LACS upon discovery of a trapped animal and provide shade or water if the animal cannot be immediately released from the trap.

Cm. Vielma noted that trappers are not immediately made aware of when an animal becomes entrapped; nor does the Animal Care Services Department. If the Animal Control Officer has the discretion to determine if criminal charges are necessary, then there is a potential for someone who has reported a trapped animal in a timely manner to still face criminal charges if the Department takes multiple hours to get to the property to release the animal. She noted that this very situation happened to her when LACS took over four or five hours to respond to her report of a trapped animal on her property.

Cm. Altgelt reminded Council that feral cats breed at a rate that exceeds the City's ability to control them. Cats can be a vector for diseases and are problematic to the community. Cm. Vielma reiterated that the discretion of a cruelty to animals charge

should be the discretion of the penal code, not an Animal Control Officer.

Motion to charge a \$25 annual fee for each privately-owned animal trap within the City Limits and to direct staff to create a database of traps and to confiscate inhumane traps and forward the case to the District Attorney's Office for possible prosecution of animal cruelty and to require that the trapper immediately contact Animal Care Services upon discovery of a trapped animal and provide shade and/or water if the animal cannot be immediately released from the trap, as amended.

Moved: MPT Torres

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 5

Against: 3

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez

Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Cm. Rodriguez

Cm. Vielma

MPT Torres

Cm. Altgelt

Dr. Marte Martinez

Cm. Balli

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: MPT Torres

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0