

**CITY OF LAREDO CITY
COUNCIL MEETING
M2019-S-08
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1110 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
July 1, 2019
5:30 P.M.**

SUPPLEMENTAL MINUTES

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Motion to open supplemental public hearing #1.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance to amend the City of Laredo FY 2018-2019 Parkland Acquisition and Park Improvement Fund budget to appropriate revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$59,818.00. Revenues are from parkland improvement fees paid by the developers of Shiloh Highland and Kimberly Subdivisions. The expenditures will be utilized for the Divine Mercy Park improvements.

There was no public input.

Motion to close public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Torres

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Rodriguez, Cm. Mercurio Martinez, and Cm. Vielma were not present.

II. STAFF REPORTS

2. Introduction of newly selected director Danny Magee as Traffic Director.

Robert Eads, Co-Interim City Manager, introduced Danny Magee who began earlier today as the new Traffic Director. Mr. Magee is a native Laredoan with over 30 years' experience as a licensed professional engineer for the state of Texas. He recently retired from TxDOT as the Director of Transportations with extensive knowledge in transportation studies and related traffic skills. He also served on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Mayor Saenz welcomed Mr. Magee and commended his breadth of knowledge in road and traffic matters. Danny Magee thanked Council and the City and noted his

enthusiasm to take on this role.

Cm. Altgelt reminded Council of a discussion he had with Mr. Magee in which Mr. Magee's holistic approach to traffic and engineering matters proved highly successful and valuable to the City. He encouraged Mr. Magee to feel free to speak his mind and practice his craft.

3. Discussion with possible action to initiate joint negotiations by City of Laredo and Webb County with downtown land owner located on 1101 Matamoros lots 6-10; block 61; western division; and any matters incident thereto.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma was not present.

4. Update with possible action in regards to the development agreement with Roberto Rodriguez (Plantation East Road extension to Shiloh Drive).

Dr. Marte Martinez explained that this item is a previous agreement in which Mr. Rodriguez was going to improve the drainage.

Robert Eads, Co-Interim City Manager, recommended approval of this item as staff has determined that the benefit of the additional 10 feet of the extension is minor in light of the benefit to the City.

John Porter, Environmental Services Director, reported that this item is 10 years in the making

Motion to accept.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma was not present.

5. Discussion with possible action on the request for a parking facility by the US Customs and Border Patrol for use with planned temporary tent complex to be stationed at the old import lot on Bridge II for the processing of asylum claims, and any other matter incident thereto.

Rosario Cabello, Co-Interim City Manager, clarified that this complex would be placed between Bridges I and II.

Robert Eads, Co-Interim City Manager, reminded Council that the two Interim City

Managers have had multiple discussions with the Mayor, the Congressman, staff, and all levels of trade partnership at the border, such as CBP and Border Patrol. It has been determined that there may be a need for some parking spaces for a judicial processing center, as City staff understands it.

Mrs. Cabello explained that the Department of Homeland Security is looking to put in soft-sided facilities for adjudication cases in virtual courtrooms. About 24 facilities are planned at this time, although nothing has been made official yet.

Mayor Saenz voiced his appreciation to Congressman Henry Cuellar for his time and information. He clarified that the planned complex is not a detention center but strictly a processing center for asylum seekers. Laredo is one of three US sites for this planned complex along with additional planned sites in Mexico. The Mexican government was designated as the staging area for asylum seekers through the migrant protection protocol.

Mrs. Cabello voiced staff's concerns over the proposed location due to potential flooding risks, aesthetics, and pollution. Mayor Saenz voiced his agreement with staff's concerns.

Mr. Eads added that Laredo is able to assist with this service but would prefer to bring the operations indoors without a tent.

MPT Balli asked if the asylum seekers utilizing this service are arriving on their own or being transported to Laredo after being detained and are waiting for their asylum processing. Mayor Saenz voiced his understanding that the language to-date has been vague on that distinction.

Mrs. Cabello estimated that about 200 people will come through the complex on a daily basis to get their court date and be sent back to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, until their court date arrives. At that time, they will come back for their hearing. Mayor Saenz reminded Council that CBP is not the lead agency in this process; these directives are coming from the Department of Justice and Homeland Security.

MPT Balli stated that the City needs to receive specific information as the language has been too vague to-date. He asked if the City of Laredo's bridge system was selected because of its logistics potential. Mr. Eads agreed that the proposed location provides an easy logistical approach. However, the City suggests other locations about a block away.

Cm. Torres commended the Interim City Managers, who have proposed about six or seven alternate locations, but the federal entities continue to push for this location. He also recognized the sentiments of the public and private sector that welcoming visitors to the City and country with tents will taint the City's image. The tents will affect the Downtown community and the local economy that is stimulated by the Mexican visitor. He voiced his opinion that Council does not want a tent to be implemented at the gateway to the City and, by extension, the United States. He encouraged Council to deter the "tent image" from Laredo quickly as the process is moving quickly.

Mrs. Cabello noted that a top floor and wall build-out could make El Portal a more appropriate location for this venture. Mayor Saenz reiterated that the entities who spoke with the City have no authority to negotiate any changes to the proposal.

Cm. Torres countered that regardless of who is in authority, the City much put together a plan to present to the federal government as an assistance to avoid the tent setup. He initiated a motion to this effect.

Cm. Altgelt noted that there is only one corporate citizen who has been with the City of Laredo through floods, peso devaluation, and other economic issues, and that is the Fasken family and La Posada Hotel. He estimated that the hum of generators and the smell of diesel emission wafting through the courtyards and other components of a “tent city” is unacceptable in Laredo. If the City is forced to comply by this procedure, then the federal government should be expected to abide by the City’s nuisance ordinances, obtain a building permit, and follow all of the regulations that are required by other authoritative entities. He noted that the City has some key bargaining chips and encouraged Cm. Torres to amend his motion to include those bargaining chips during negotiations to the City’s benefit. He agreed that the City should not wait for Congressman Cuellar’s office to respond and instead present solutions directly so as not to be at the mercy of the federal government.

Cm. Vielma voiced her opposition to a “tent city” and noted that a tent does not give due process to the individuals awaiting their hearings.

Motion to authorize the Co-Interim City Managers to execute any authority on behalf of Council to negotiate an alternate location and invest in any resource in order to avoid the tent setup and to allow the Co-Interim City Managers to utilize negotiation pressure points to facilitate the placement of this complex, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

III. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Request by Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III

1. Discussion with possible action to waive garage sale permit fees for the weekend of August 9 - 11, 2019 in observance of National Garage Sale Day on August 10, 2019; and any other matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.)

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma was not present.

2. Discussion with possible action to instruct Co-Interim City Managers to direct staff to design and construct a sidewalk on 2015 McClelland; and any other matters thereto. Funding available in District III Priority Funds. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.)

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma was not present.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and MPT Balli were not present.