



The City of West University Place

A Neighborhood City

CITY COUNCIL

Bob Higley, Mayor
Kevin Trautner, Mayor Pro Tem
John P. Barnes, Councilmember
Lauri Lankford, Councilmember
Ed Sobash, Councilmember

STAFF

David J. Beach, City Manager
Scott Bounds, City Attorney, Olson and Olson
Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, **met via Zoom** in a workshop and regular meeting on **Monday, March 8, 2021**, beginning at **5:30 p.m.** due to social distancing guidelines suggested by the CDC in light of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19).

WORKSHOP (5:30 p.m.)

1. Call Workshop to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Attorney Bounds, City Secretary Gilliam, Parks and Recreation Director White and Assistant to the City Manager Thompson.

Dr. Jamie Rae Walker, Texas A & M AgriLife was also present.

2. Senior Services Needs Assessment Update

Matters related to Parks Programming and Seniors Services Needs Assessment Update. ***Ms. Susan White, Parks and Recreation Director and Dr. Jamie Rae Walker, Texas A & M AgriLife***

Parks and Recreation Director White spoke to provide overall information about the survey before the presentation by Dr. Walker.

Ms. White noted:

- The survey was modified to take into account language for COVID-19, because there were concerns of COVID-19 bias with the results
- The survey was mailed to every resident in West U the week of December 7, with residents receiving a code allowing them to go onto a secure Texas A&M website to submit the survey
- Seniors who did not have a computer or who wanted or needed a larger print copy, could request one
- Parks and Recreation staff, the Senior Services Board, and the Parks Board were involved in establishing the survey content
- The process included focus groups
- The survey was two-fold, which maximized resources and provided cost efficiencies, in that the PARD was scheduled to conduct a 5-year follow up to its Parks and Open Space Master Plan (as recommended at the time of the last survey) and one of this Council's highest priorities was to do a senior needs assessment
- Staff will be working with the Parks and Recreation Board and Senior Services Board to establish future objectives based on the data collected from the survey

Ms. White then turn the presentation over to Dr. Walker. Dr. Walker said though they had to do some workarounds due to the impact of COVID-19, she is confident of the information they were able to collect.

Dr. Walker made the following points during her presentation regarding parks and recreation and senior services:

- There was participation from 1,268 West U households
- Very strong distribution geographically of households that participated
- Excellent representation by gender and by household composition
- Very reflective sample of population
- Qualitative comments indicate some COVID-19 bias, particularly on park and facility use data and service quality indicators – prevalent but not overwhelming.
- 73% of respondents feel that West U has park-like ambiance
- 82% of respondents are satisfied with West U parks
- 90% of respondents feel that parks are well maintained and safe
- 91% of respondents feel they can safely walk to a West U park or facility
- Only 55% of respondents indicated they are well-informed about West U recreation programs
- 95% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with senior services
- Some respondents are concerned about sidewalks and parking around the Community Center
- 90-95% of respondents of all age groups ranked senior services medium to high importance
- Education and communication about specific senior services should be staff's focus
- Respondents 65+ ranked programs offering physical activity, intellectual stimulation, and transportation of high importance by 71%, 66%, and 63%, respectively

Dr. Walker stated that the data shows that West U's population is aging and/or more seniors are moving into the City. She said from a feasibility standpoint, she encourages the City to keep an eye on full-time employees and space for employees in case the senior population continues to grow and there is a higher demand for senior services. Dr. Walker said the City's quality level is very high and to maintain that level of quality, the City should make sure it maintains adequate staffing and space levels.

Dr. Walker made the following recommendations:

- Use the survey data when making budget decisions
- Communicate – it is the largest opportunity for the biggest impact, hopefully for the lowest dollar amount

Following the presentation, questions and answers ensued.

3. Adjourn Workshop

At 6:25 p.m., Mayor Higley closed the workshop.

A copy of the audio of the workshop in its entirety is on the City's website or a copy of the audio and/or presentation can be obtained from the City Secretary's office.

REGULAR MEETING (6:30 p.m.)

4. Call Regular Meeting to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Secretary Gilliam, City Attorney Bounds, Public Works Director Barrera, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, Police Chief Walker, Parks and Recreation Director White, Communications Coordinator Cuccerre, and Fire Chief Taylor.

5. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Lankford and Sobash led the Pledge.

6. Public Comments

This is an opportunity for citizens to speak to the Council relating to agenda and non-agenda items.

Alida Drewes, 6112 Fordham, spoke on various topics.

7. Huffington Park Improvements

Matters related to award of a contract for Huffington Park improvements. *Recommended Action: Award contract. Ms. Susan White, Parks and Recreation Director.*

Councilmember Barnes moved to approve the Huffington Park Improvements, approve the Friends of West U Parks Fund, Inc., expenditure in an amount not to exceed \$200,000, and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary agreement with Fun Abounds to complete the specified Huffington Park Improvements in an amount not to exceed \$118,900. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash
Noes: None
Absent: None

8. COVID-19

Matters related to COVID-19. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action. Mr. Aaron Taylor, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator*

Chief Taylor reported:

- Governor Abbot issued Order GA34 last week, which removes the statewide mask mandate and opens Texas 100 percent
- West U will continue to require masks to enter West U facilities
- Staff will continue to evaluate how removal of the state mandated occupancy restrictions may influence city operations and how city programs and facility usages can be expanded while still aligning with CDC guidelines
- GA34 allows county judges to impose some COVID-19 restrictions within the jurisdiction if the county exceeds the 15 percent hospitalization threshold, which is currently at 9.4 percent
- Recreation programs are at 75% occupancy, they can only utilize the maximum amount of space that is allowed for social distancing
- West U has 549 confirmed cases – 27 active, 520 recovered, and 2 deaths
- Only 3,600 new cases in Texas reported on March 6
- Positivity rate in Texas is 6.75 percent
- Harris County Public Health reported 13.3 percent positivity rate.
- The Texas Medical Center reported ICU's at 81 percent of Phase 1 and Phase 2 capacity

- Johnson and Johnson received emergency use authorization for its vaccine and it is already being shipped to our region and the City has requested an allocation for its vaccination program, but it has not yet been granted
- New federal directive added school and child care personnel of those eligible to receive the vaccine
- No plans to vaccinate seniors that are homebound in the county or otherwise. Texas launched a pilot program and tested six counties with a mobile vaccinations service focused on homebound seniors. They have since expanded it to 26 counties, but Harris County is not one of them. Continuing to watch for that and make alternative plans if possible to be able to provide that service for residents who need it.
- UK and South African variants of the virus are widespread within the community

9. Consent Agenda

All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

A. City Council Minutes

Approve Minutes of the regular meeting of February 22, 2021.

B. Purchase of Patrol Cars

Matters related to the purchase of two patrol vehicles. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

C. Street Maintenance (Pavement Lifting)

Matter related to awarding a contract to complete street maintenance repairs. *Recommended Action: Award contract. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

Councilmember Lankford moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash
Noes: None
Absent: None

10. Adjourn Regular Meeting

At approximately 6:52 p.m., Councilmember Barnes moved to adjourn. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash
Noes: None
Absent: None

Prepared by: Thelma A. Gilliam

Approved by City Council on March 22, 2021

The meeting audio can be downloaded from the City's website or a copy of the audio and any presentation can be obtained from the City Secretary's office.