



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, April 12, 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, Police Chief Walker, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, and Public Works Director Barrera.

Dustin Qualls with Traffic Engineers also attended.

2. City-wide Traffic Study

Matters related to an update on a citywide speed and safety traffic study. **Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director and Mr. Dustin Qualls with Traffic Engineers**

Mr. Dustin Qualls of Traffic Engineers, Inc. gave the presentation. He said the goal of the presentation was to review:

- Plan objectives from the previous workshop
- Existing conditions utilized in speed studies (to identify areas for detailed study and safety enhancements and capitalize on city-wide detailed data collection to develop a Safe Streets Toolbox for the City)
- Safe speed study methodology
- Preliminary toolbox features

After discussion, Mr. Qualls summarized the final recommendations outlined below:

- 25 mph for City-wide speed limit for non-posted speeds above and beyond 25 mph
- Existing school zones and 20 mph park zones would remain
- Buffalo Speedway, Bissonnet Street, Wesleyan Street will all remain at their existing speed limits (the engineer agreed that it made sense to lower the speed limit on Wesleyan to 25 MPH after discussion with Council)
- All other minor arterials and major collectors to be reduced to 25 mph

Councilmember Barnes inquired as to why there is not a recommendation for 20 mph along WestPoint adjacent to the Rec Center due to it being a part of the City's park system and being a safety issue with children in the area all the time. Mr. Qualls said he does not have the answer to that right now, but if it is considered a park it should be consistent with the 20 mph around other West U Parks. Public Works Director Barrera said per ordinance he does not believe the Rec Center is designated as a park so it would not warrant the 20 mph. City Manager Beach said staff review this issue.

Regarding a question about the intersection at Bissonnet and Westchester, Public Works Director Barrera said those counts are not included in this study because those streets are in the City of Houston's jurisdiction. City Manager Beach said if the City's engineers feel that West U needs to have the Bissonnet counts, the City will collect those counts and notify the City of Houston as a courtesy.

Based on everything heard tonight, Public Works Director Barrera said staff would come back before Council with the recommendation to change the ordinance to lower the prima facie speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph, with caveats relating to the Rec Center and the stretch of Wroxton between Buffalo Speedway and Kirby.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Trautner's question as to why the speed limit on Wesleyan would not be 25mph like University, Mr. Qualls said there is no reason why the speed limit could not be reduced being that the traffic study justifies it. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said, in addition, there have been several complaints received about the traffic and speed on Wesleyan.

Councilmember Lankford said it is important to take into account other factors such as the recent fatal accident on Wesleyan. She also said the impact coming in and out of West U is very important, because people coming into West U southbound do not realize that the lanes reduce from two (2) to one (1), which causes problems.

City Manager Beach confirmed with Council his intent to bring an ordinance before Council at its meeting on April 26, 2021 recommending that the speed limits within West U be reduced to 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.

3. Adjourn Workshop

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

A copy of the workshop audio in its entirety is on the City's website or contact the City Secretary's office for a copy of the audio and/or the presentation.

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, Senior Services Manager Brooks, and Fire Chief Taylor.

5. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Higley led the Pledge.

6. Older Americans and Volunteer Month Proclamation

Matters related to a proclamation for Older Americans and Volunteer Month. *Recommendation: Proclaim the Month of May 2021 as Older Americans and Volunteer Month. Mayor Bob Higley & Ms. Toby Brooks, Senior Services Manager*

Mayor Higley proclaimed May 2021 as Older Americans and Volunteer Month and recognized members of the Senior Services Board and the Good Neighbor Team.

7. Public Comments

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

Melanie Bell, 3123 Plumb Street, deferred her comments until discussion of Item 10 relating to the Virtual Gate Security System.

Buckley Morlot, 6711 Belmont, spoke regarding Colonial Park Pool regulations for the summer. Fire Chief Taylor stated that staff is evaluating the activities at Colonial Park Pool and plan to re-open the facility in May at an increased capacity to what was experienced last year and that staff will continue to evaluate and either increase or decrease capacity depending on the COVID-19 situation.

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:

- COVID hospitalization rate for the trauma service area is at 6.33 percent as of April 10.
- In Texas 2,200 new case were reported as of April 9.
- Positivity rates for Texas is 5.52 percent; Harris County is at 8.5 percent; the Texas Medical Center is at 4.6 percent.
- Texas Medical Center is reporting that the ICU status to be at 80 percent capacity of the combined Phase I and Phase II capacities.
- Harris County Public Health data indicates West U to have a total of 577 total confirmed cases; 14 active cases; 560 recovered cases; and a range of 0-5 deaths.
- Vaccine data indicates that 32.1% of Texans have received at least the first dose of the vaccine and 19.5% are fully vaccinated.

Chief Taylor gave a brief presentation on the City's schedule to re-open based on the current COVID situation and based on the assumption that the trend will continue to stabilize through 2021. He said COVID-19 guidelines would continue to be required for programmed events and that facemasks will continue to be required upon entry into City facilities.

9. Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan – Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)

Matters related to awarding a contract to complete the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Wastewater Treatment Plan Master Plan. *Recommended Action: Award contract to Kimley-Horn in the amount not to exceed \$300,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Mr. Gerardo Barrera Public Works Director*

After a brief overview of contract details by Public Works Director Barrera, Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to award the contract to complete the Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan Preliminary

Engineering Report to Kimley-Horn in the amount not to exceed \$300,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

10. Virtual Gate Security System – Phase II

Matters related to awarding a contract for Phase II of the Virtual Gate project. *Recommended Action: Award contract for Phase II of the Virtual Gate project to Minuteman Security Technologies in the amount not to exceed \$1,765,890 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Mr. Ken Walker, Police Chief*

Before discussion of this item by Council, Mayor Higley called on Melanie Bell, 3123 Plumb, who deferred her comment until discussion of this item.

Ms. Bell spoke regarding her concerns that Council is moving into Phase II without Phase I being complete. She said she wanted to be clear that she is not expressing concerns regarding the Virtual Gate itself but rather the project timing and scheduling to fund Phase II.

Chief Walker spoke to say Phase I included 15 locations, of which seven (7) have been installed and are working properly as designed. He said the remaining eight (8) cameras not yet installed are awaiting permitting approval from the City of Houston. He said Phase II includes 25 locations – all within the City of West U.

Councilmember Barnes asked Chief Walker if there are any concerns about the City's ability to assess system performance or vendor capabilities based upon the seven (7) cameras that are currently operational regardless of the delay in implementing the remaining (eight) 8 that have been delayed by City of Houston permits. Chief Walker responded that the cameras are functional as designed and as promised by the vendor.

City Manager Beach noted that the original contract included a Proof of Concept for two locations, which was the City's trial period for this project, and staff monitored those two locations to ensure that the cameras would perform as designed, which they are.

Councilmember Sobash asked if there is a direct cost of delay associated with proceeding to Phase II at a later date. City Manager Beach said there is no delay cost per the contract if the City does not move forward with Phase II, there would be an inflationary cost in any material and labor, as well as delays in delivery of the product. Mayor Trautner said there would also be a delay in security for the City's residents.

Councilmember Sobash said he really thinks this is a financial question and asked if the cost of moving forward worth proceeding with the data the City has.

Councilmember Lankford said in case there are delays on the contractor's part it needs to be clear in the contract when the City can start to charge a \$400 a day delay penalty and under what terms.

City Attorney Bounds said penalties are in Section 15 of the contract being proposed. He said it is standard wording and said as long as it relates to the work that is expected from the contractor, the contractor would be liable for the liquidated damages.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said he thinks Council should lock it in and proceed, because it has been tested and proven to work.

Councilmember Sobash said the City was originally scheduled to be complete with the project in the January timeframe so did the City experience any type of price difference from the January date to now or is the City still on budget with what Phase II was predicted to be charged. City Manager Beach responded that the City is under budget for Phase II.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to approve to award the contract for Phase II of the Virtual Gate project to Minutemen Security Technologies in the amount not to exceed \$1,765,890 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

11. 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 March 22, 2021.

B. Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Matters related to an ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance. *Recommended Action: Approve ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance on the second and final reading. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

C. Colonial Park Pool Concessions

Matters related to a contract for concessionaire services at Colonial Park Swimming Pool. *Recommended Action: Approve a one-year contract renewal with Jami's Fine Foods for concessionaire services at the Colonial Park Pool for 2021 season and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Ms. Susan White, Parks and Recreation Director*

D. Agreement with Southside Place Relating to Virtual Gate Poles

Matters related an agreement with the City of Southside Place regarding City of West University Place's virtual gate poles within Southside Place's right-of-way. *Recommended Action: Approve agreement between the City of West University Place and the City of Southside Place and authorize the Mayor to execute the final agreement. Mr. Ken Walker, Police Chief*

E. Memorandum of Understanding with West U Baptist Church

Matters related to approval of an MOU with the Baptist Church. *Recommended Action: Approve and authorize the City Manager to execute the revised Memorandum of Understanding with the West U Baptist Church. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

F. Budget Amendment – Upfitting Fire Marshal Vehicle

Matters related to approving an ordinance amending the 2021 Budget to authorize the expenditure to upfit the City's Fire Marshal vehicle. *Recommended Action: Approve ordinance on the first and final reading amending the 2021 Budget to appropriate \$5,536 from the Vehicle Replacement Fund for equipment upfit to the Fire Marshal vehicle. Mr. Aaron Taylor, Fire Chief*

Councilmember Lankford removed Item E from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

Regarding Item E, the Memorandum of Understanding with West U Baptist Church, Councilmember Lankford said in combining the two previous MOUs, the proposed MOU only references Parking Lot 3. She said it does not reference any of the other parking lots.

Councilmember Beach said the third "Whereas" in the MOU includes all of the other lots, but staff can add something to that "Whereas" to identify all the lots individually and recommended that Council approve the MOU as amended with clarifying language in the third "Whereas."

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to approve the MOU with the amendment as recommended by the City Manager. Councilmember Lankford Seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

12. Senate Bill 1661 Relating to November Elections

Matters related to discussion regarding Senate Bill 1661. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action. Mr. Dave Beach, City Manager and Ms. Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary*

City Manager Beach said Senate Bill 1661 relating to moving City elections to November. He said it does not look like it is not going anywhere and recommended tabling this item until something changes.

Councilmember Barnes moved to table this item. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

13. Recess Regular Meeting and Convene into Executive Session

City Council will recess the regular meeting and convene into executive session in accordance with the following provision of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (TGC):

Mayor Higley recessed the regular meeting at 7:32 p.m., to convene an executive session in accordance with Section 551.072 of the Texas Government Code to deliberate regarding real property.

14. Adjourn Executive Session / Reconvene Regular Meeting

Matters related to any desired action resulting from the executive session. City Council may take action on the matters discussed in Executive Session as deemed appropriate.

At 7:45 p.m., Mayor Higley adjourned the executive session and resumed the regular meeting. No Action taken.

15. Adjourn Regular Meeting

At 7:45 p.m., Councilmember Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

Prepared by:
Thelma A. Gilliam, City Secretary

Approved by City Council on:
April 26, 2021