



The City of West University Place

A Neighborhood City

CITY COUNCIL

Susan Sample, Mayor
John Montgomery, Mayor Pro Tem
John P. Barnes, Councilmember
Melanie Bell, Councilmember
Shannon Carroll, Councilmember

STAFF

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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, met in a regular meeting on **Monday, June 14, 2021**, at **6:30 p.m.**, in the Municipal Building at 3800 University Boulevard, for the purpose of considering the agenda of items listed. Due to COVID-19, the public was able to attend via Zoom.

Agenda of as follows:

1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Sample called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilmembers Montgomery, Barnes, Bell, and Carroll were present. Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Secretary Gilliam, City Attorney Bounds, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, Finance Director DuBose, Fire Chief Taylor, Public Works Director Barrera, IT Director Davenport, and Police Chief Walker.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Carroll led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comments

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

There were no public comments.

4. Mayor Pro Tem

Matters related to the selection of a Mayor Pro Tem. *Recommended Action: Select Mayor Pro Tem. **City Council***

Councilmember Bell moved to elect John Montgomery as the Mayor Pro Tem. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Sample, Montgomery, Barnes, Bell, Carroll
Noes: None
Absent: None

5. Buffalo Speedway – Project Update

Matters related to the Buffalo Speedway project. *Recommended Action: Receive update. **Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director***

Public Works Director Barrera presented and noted that the following agenda:

- Project Description
- Current Progress
- Project Location and Enhancements
- Enhancement Options

Mr. Barrera said the project, which includes installation of box coverts and waterline improvements, starts behind St. Vincent's at the outfall of Poor Farm Ditch, traverses east once it gets to Buffalo Speedway then moves north from Buffalo Speedway just shy of Bissonnet.

Mr. Barrera said this work was not part of the original project, but was included as an economy of scale. He said since the roads were already being "dug up" it was better to do the work now with a favorable price from the contractor rather than come back and disturb the area in the right-of-way at another time.

Mr. Barrera said as of today, work has traversed from the outfall at Poor Farm Ditch all the way through St. Vincent's Church property.

Regarding enhancements, Mr. Barrera said the previous Council discussed the following options: the

- **OPTION 1** – Decorative Traffic Signals (3 Loc)

Mr. Barrera noted that the previous Council selected this option. He said as part of the plan, TexDOT provided its standard for traffic cabinets and traffic signals, but the City chose to take a different route to match the City's current street lights and the previous Council gave the okay for staff to pursue that option to take advantage of the economies of scale.

- **OPTION 2** – LED upgrade to existing streetlights

Mayor Sample asked about the energy savings if the City pursued this option. City Manager Beach said he is not able give an idea of the savings, but said as replacements become necessary CenterPoint will replace the current lights with LED lights, so eventually all the lights (approximately 1850 lights) will be replaced with no cost to the City.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery's question as to whether there have been complaints from residents about the brightness of lights that have already been replaced with LED lights, Mr. Beach and Mr. Barrera said they are not aware of any complaints. Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery noted that LED lights last longer, are consistent with the City's commitment to sustainability, and there have not been any complaints.

- **OPTION 3** – Intersection Enhancements (3)

Mr. Barrera stated that this option has to do with placing the logo, similar to the ones located at Auden and University and Edloe and University, at locations on Buffalo Speedway. Mayor Sample said with Buffalo Speedway being a marquee street, the logo would look nice and would be cost-effective to do during the Buffalo Speedway project. Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery said similar considerations were made for economies of scale regarding other options so it seems like it would be a logical thing to do and use the logo to demonstrate the aesthetics of the City to people passing through and to the residents.

City Manager Beach said that's the consensus of the Council staff can get with the contractor and engineers and come back with what the cost would be to put the logo in the three major intersections.

Councilmember Barnes said he would like information on maintenance costs and its durability. He said because of the location, there would be more wear and tear at higher rates of speed than the similar logos around the City Center. City Manager Beach said staff will provide that information.

In response to Councilmember Bell's question as to the other two locations on Buffalo that would have the logos (other than at University), City Manager Beach responded at Rice and at Sunset.

Councilmember Montgomery asked the reason for the previous Council's objection to the logos and Councilmember Barnes responded he believes it was due to pricing and concerns regarding maintenance.

- **OPTION 4 – Gateway Signage (2)**

Mr. Barrera stated that this option was not pursued because of the limited right-of-way based on the design of Buffalo Speedway, the pricing, and the limited options as to what types of signs. Mr. Barrera said staff can revisit this option if this Council so desires.

Mayor Sample said it does not seem that simple signage would be that expensive and thinks the City could do some kind of entry marking into West U. City Manager Beach said staff will work with an engineer and look into this after completion of the project in order to have a better understanding of what signage would best fit the spaces.

Councilmember Barnes said for him the decision will depend on the placement of the signage at the intersections as he would not want anything to detract from the tree arch vista.

Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery asked that the City start with the knowledge and expertise of City staff before engaging an engineer.

- **OPTION 5 – Underground Power Line Crossings (5)**

Mr. Barrera said there are five crossings of underground electricity and after reviewing with engineers from CenterPoint Direct, it was determined that placing power lines underground would be cost prohibitive due to the number of crossings and the costs per linear foot to just run the cable, which does not include labor and other costs. City Manager Beach stated that the estimated costs would be over \$2,000,000.

Mayor Sample said the City would not get this kind of opportunity again to bury some of the lines during an existing project. City Manager Beach said he would love to bury all the power lines but it would cost \$100 million to bury them throughout the City and each homeowner would have to change their electrical service and incur a cost. Mayor Sample said she is not suggesting it for the whole City, only as it relates to the area of the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery said the construction is putting residents on Buffalo Speedway through a lot so if it something popular with residents in the area and they think it might make their neighborhood attractive, he thinks Council should look at it one more time.

Councilmember Bell asked if there is time to assess this before the work is complete. Mr. Barrera said staff would have to start immediately, because the contractor is moving at a good

pace. He said another caveat discussed with the previous council is that the cost is just for the electric, but there is also telecommunications and cable costs that the City was not able to gather due to the timeframe in completing the design. He asked that Council keep this in mind that it will be a total project costs when staff presents the numbers to Council.

City Manager Beach noted that this project involves TIP Transportation Program Grant Funding so the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the administrator. Therefore, the City will need to involve TxDOT in some of the discussions, so staff will initiate discussions and report to Council the results of those discussions.

Mr. Barrera summarized the options per the discussion as follows:

- Option 1: Approved and moving forward
- Option 2: CenterPoint is handling
- Option 3: Staff will be looking at options and pricing
- Option 4: Staff will look at options and pricing and designs
- Option 5: Staff will look at details and costs

Audio of this presentation is on the City's website. A copy of the presentation is available in the City Secretary's Office.

6. COVID-19

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

Fire Chief Taylor reported the following:

- COVID numbers have been very stable over the last couple of months.
- City Staff has been making incremental changes back to normalcy.
- State of Texas Declaration is still ongoing.
- Currently no state or county mandates in place that limit City operations, but is subject to change based on the COVID hospitalization rate (15%) for the region. Currently, we are way below the threshold at 3 percent.
- West U is still under the disaster declaration for COVID-19, which went into effect on March 17, 2020. The declaration gives certain powers to the mayor and Council action will be needed to end the disaster declaration.
- There is one emergency order tied to the City's disaster declaration, which is a variance for a temporary tent structure at St. Marks needed to enable them to social distance students. The plan is dismantle the tent structure at the end of July.
- The declaration is tied to funding. Spending related to COVID-19 has pretty much come to a halt, but if items are needed they will be covered under the declaration. Staff will come back with a recommendation on that in the future.
- All West U programs and activities have resumed, some with limited capacities or requires reservations.
- Face masks are no longer required in City facilities, as a result of Governor Abbott's GA-36 Executive Order. The same policy applies to staff. The City recommends that staff follow CDC guidelines regarding face coverings.
- Municipal Court operations are still 100 percent virtual and will continue at least through the summer. Municipal Court has a different set of rules and is up to the DOJ and local judges.
- Senior Services, aquatics, and recreation programs have resumed. All cardio and weight room equipment are open.

- Hours of operations for the Rec Center and Colonial Park are still adjusted based on utilization and staff recommendations.
 - In response to Mayor Sample's question as to when hours will be back to normal, City Manager Beach said that in speaking with the Parks Director the goal is to be to a new normal by July 1.
 - Regarding hours, City Manager Beach said staff is reviewing usage versus costs to operate the facility at certain hours.
 - In response to Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery's question as to when staff would be done with review of the usage versus costs, City Manager Beach said as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of July in time for the budget in case adjustments are needed.
- Parks is planning the Fourth of July parade, which is the first big event since the pandemic.
- Resuming in-person public meetings with a virtual hybrid model – as long as the declaration is in place, the City has to have the virtual option.
 - Councilmember Bell said even after the declaration has ended, she would like the City to continue the option for residents to attend meetings virtually.
 - City Manager Beach said this would be a good discussion for the Budget Workshops because there are currently only two rooms that has the virtual capability and rooms at other City facilities will have to be retrofit so that virtual meetings can be held for boards and commissions.
 - In response to City Manager Beach's question as to Council's desire to return to in-person meetings using the hybrid model, Council all agreed to return to in-person meetings with the hybrid model beginning with the Council meeting on July 28.
 - City Manager Beach said July 28 will be the same date for boards and commissions to resume in-person meetings. He said the in-person board and commission meetings will depend on scheduling due to only having two rooms that can assist with the virtual option.

7. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Matters related to the FY 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. *Recommended Action: Receive Report. Ms. Katherine DuBose, Finance Director*

Finance Director DuBose presented and introduced Sarah Roberts, Weaver Consultants, who provided an overview of the audit process and results.

Ms. Roberts stated that Weaver performed the audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GASS), and Uniform Guidance (Single Audit) and stated that the results of the audit were as follows:

- Financial Statements: Unmodified opinion "Clean opinion" which is the highest level of assurance that can be given that the financial statements are free of material misstatement.
- Internal Controls: No material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal controls
- Compliance: No instances of noncompliance material to the financial statements; unmodified opinion on compliance for Federal awards

After the presentation, Councilmember Barnes moved to accept the City's FY2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Councilmember Bell seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Sample, Montgomery, Barnes, Bell, Carroll
Noes: None
Absent: None

Audio of this presentation is on the City's website. A copy of the presentation is available in the City Secretary's Office.

8. 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 Meeting Minutes

Approve Minutes of May 24, 2021 and May 26, 2021 City Council Meeting. *Recommended Action: Approve Minutes of May 24, 2021 and May 26, 2021. Ms. Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary*

B. Harris ERP Support and Maintenance Contract Renewal

Matters related to renewal of the annual contract with Harris Innoprise. *Recommended Action: Approve contract extension with Harris Systems USA, Inc., for a period of one year and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract and make a payment to Harris ERP for support and maintenance series in the amount of \$73,234.07. Mr. Kevin Davenport, IT Director*

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

Ayes: Sample, Montgomery, Barnes, Bell, Carroll
Noes: None
Absent: None

9. Adjourn Meeting

10. Adjourn

With no other business before the Council, Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Prepared by: Thelma A. Gilliam, TRMC, City Secretary

Council Approved: June 28, 2021