



Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:30 PM
8301 Westview Drive, Houston, Texas 77055

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Buesinger called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

1.A. Invocation was given by Council Member Crawford

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

1.C. Present:

Mayor Buesinger
Council Member Crawford
Mayor Pro Tem Carey
Council Member Huber
Council Member Cooper

Also present: City Attorney Paige Blakely, Olson & Olson, City Engineer Him, HDR Engineering, Spring Valley Police Captain Lane and Sergeant Menchaca, City Secretary Stephens and Clerk Ray.

Council Member Gordy arrived at 6:37 P.M.

2. **CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**

Richard Raines, Pine Creek Lane, requested a review of the street parking ordinance language. He said that the term "impede" is too broad, making it challenging for responding officers to make informed decisions. Raines suggested replacing "impede" with "hinder" for greater clarity and precision. Additionally, he highlighted that Pine Creek Lane's narrowness doesn't allow larger vehicles to pass if there's a vehicle parked on the street.

Bill Bristow, Pine Chase Drive, asked that each of the council members speak into the microphone.

Nancy Friedman Taub, Pine Chase Grove, expressed that she was unaware of Chief Schulze's appointment as the permanent Police Chief for Spring Valley Village.

3. **REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

3.A. **Spring Valley Police Report:** Sergeant Menchaca reported a total of 881 calls for service, including 744 business checks, 41 public relations, and 7 traffic stops resulting in 11 violations.

Officer Moore responded to a scene where he discovered personal items, including a Harris County offender's card. Later, a call was received from Pine Creek Lane reporting a stolen bike, which was connected to the suspicious person. The individual was apprehended, and charges were accepted by the DA's office.

Officer Moore also serves as the department's crime prevention specialist. He highlighted opportunities for training and threat assessments for residents or businesses, and mentioned that he is certified to instruct a course on how to respond to various situations. He recently met with city staff to address safety concerns at City Hall and discussed suggestions for improvement.

Council Member Cooper inquired about training for mail fraud, to which Moore responded that there are some suggestions to make it less appealing.

3.B. Building Official's Report: City Secretary Stephens reported that there are no outstanding items for discussion. Several projects are nearing completion, and others are in the preparation phase to begin.

3.C. City Engineer's Report: Engineer Vasquez provided an update on various ongoing projects:

Hilshire Green Paving, Drainage & Utility Improvements: The geotechnical phase has been completed, and lab work is currently in progress. Vasquez is expecting the results this week.

Pine Chase Grove Water Meters: A question was raised about the location of the meter readers. The City will oversee the excavation for the conduit required for City of Houston to relocate the meters further back.

Street Point Repairs: CenterPoint has resurfaced two patches on Ridgeley. The contractor has confirmed that they will warranty the work and can return for repairs if necessary. Vasquez is obtaining quotes for other spots throughout the city and ensuring that the entire scope is included in the quotes.

Wirt Road Safety Project: No significant updates; coordination with the City of Houston is ongoing.

Council Member Gordy expressed a desire to have a visual representation of the project milestones and emphasized the importance of ensuring stable funding from Harris County. He also suggested applying political pressure to the Houston administration and potentially excluding the School of the Woods section from the plans temporarily. Citizen Nancy Friedman-Taub offered to reach out to her contact at the legal department in the City of Houston and inquired if the council member for this district had been contacted.

Council Member Gordy also asked if a new vendor for ditch cleaning had been found. Vasquez is currently seeking a contractor who can handle both paving and drainage. Council Member Huber mentioned water backing up at his house due to a clog down the line and suggested changing the inlet type to prevent leaves from causing a clog. Council Member Cooper recommended reaching out to other cities

for potential vendors, and Secretary Stephens will inquire about any citizen-reported issues.

3.D. **Fire Commissioner's Report**

Deputy Chief Witte reported the following:

Annual testing on apparatus and equipment has commenced, with all tests passing so far. The underground fuel tanks have also been tested and passed. Hydrant testing has begun and is expected to be completed by May. The department has released its annual report.

In Hilshire Village, there were 3 EMS incidents and 1 fire.

The 2025 **budget workshops** are being scheduled, with submission to the Memorial Villages in June for city budget preparation.

Mayor Buesinger provided additional updates:

Three new hires joined in January. The **annex roof** is complete, and work on the main roof is ongoing. An extra ambulance was sold for \$57,000.

Regarding the **permanent Fire Chief**, a committee has been formed, chaired by the Hedwig fire commissioner, with the Spring Valley and Piney Point alternate fire commissioners also involved.

Regarding the **special financial audit** of the Fire Department, the auditor is currently working on the regular fiscal year audit and will present the findings soon.

3.E. Mayor Buesinger's Report: Nothing to report, Mayor Buesinger apologized for missing the last meeting.

3.F. City Secretary's Report: Secretary Stephens provided an overview of the Complaint Log and expressed her intention to explore the possibility of reaching a broader audience through text-based notifications. These notifications would cover both community updates and emergency alerts.

3.G. City Treasurer's Report: Secretary Stephens presented the Check Registers, there were no questions.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion made by Council Member Huber, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carey.

4.A. Approve Disbursements

4.B. Approve Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting January 23, 2024

4.C. Approve Check Registers

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

5.A. Discussion and possible action to approve of City of Hilshire Village Resolution 2024-255 designating the City Secretary to be the Investment Officer.

Motion made by Council Member Crawford, Seconded by Council Member Cooper.

Secretary Stephens said that there is certain financial reporting that require a designated investment officer to respond. This also supports the intent of the Investment Policy and establishes responsibility for the acting City Secretary, now and in the future, to be designated as the investment officer.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5.B. Discussion and possible approval of City of Hilshire Village Resolution 2024-256 denying the CenterPoint proposed rate application and consolidation.

Motion made by Council Member Huber, Seconded by Council Member Crawford

Secretary Stephens said that this resolution is in line with the recommendation from Lloyd Gosselink attorneys to reject the price increases. She said that the resolution will be provided to them to combine with the other cities against the price increase proposal.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5.C. Discussion and possible approval to release a surety bond for the installation of Verizon Cell Nodes in the City of Hilshire Village right-of-way.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Gordy

The council asked if all of the work has been completed per the agreement. Secretary Stephens said that unfortunately the landscaping around the node equipment was not in the signed agreement, but done as a courtesy. She said that the work is complete and recommended that the Council release the bond.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5.D. Discussion and possible approval of City of Hilshire Village Ordinance # 836-2024 amending the No Parking Zones.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Gordy

The council reviewed the location of the zone and Secretary Stephens confirmed that pavement striping will be made to match the other no parking zones. Council asked to confirm that a high-quality paint is being used because some areas that were painted previously are fading.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5.E. Discussion and possible action to approve of City of Hilshire Village Ordinance 837-2024 striking the entirety of Hilshire Village Ordinance # 742 Juvenile Curfew to comply with Local Government Code Title 11., Subtitle C., Chapter 370., Section 370.007

Motion made by Council Member Cooper, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carey

Secretary Stephens said that there was a state law passed that removes a city's ability to enforce a juvenile curfew, so it is being requested that this ordinance be stricken.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

5.F. Discussion and possible action to improve street lighting.

Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Mayor Pro Tem Carey

Secretary Stephens said that she expected to have received a map from CenterPoint but was informed that they do not have one readily available without sensitive infrastructure information. She asked the council to table the item until the next meeting.

The council tabled the item, no action was taken.

5.G. Discussion and possible action regarding public participation in council meetings by video calls.

Motion made by Council Member Cooper, Seconded by Council Member Crawford

Secretary Stephens noted that while such incidents haven't occurred within the city,

there have been reported cases elsewhere of individuals causing disruptions during Zoom meetings, both audibly and visually. Attorney Bailey recounted a recent incident where an attendee in a meeting drew inappropriate content on their screen, which was visible to the public, potentially causing disturbance among meeting participants.

Nancy Friedman Taub, Pine Chase Grove, emphasized the importance of maintaining avenues for public engagement, particularly through videoconferencing. She highlighted her own experience of participating in virtual meetings and the opportunity to engage in city matters remotely when attending in person wasn't feasible.

The Council deliberated on low attendance in Zoom meetings and considered various options to facilitate public participation while adhering to open meetings laws. They discussed the possibility of citizens and other members of the public communicating with the council before meetings, either directly via email or through Secretary Stephens, with the intention of having their input included in the proceedings.

Council Member Cooper amended the motion to state that virtual participants be allowed to observe but not actively participate in discussions through audio or video displays.

Voting Yea on the amended motion: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

6. DISCUSSION

6.A. **Discuss and possibly provide clarifications of City of Hilshire Village Ordinance # 745 regarding tree regulations, constraints, and objectives.**

Cheryl Wolfe, Pine Chase Grove, raised concerns about the excessive removal of trees in new construction projects, emphasizing the importance of preserving the existing canopy. She argued against penalizing lots with an abundance of trees by imposing increased fees for tree removal.

Secretary Stephens presented a flow chart illustrating the current ordinance's approach to addressing trees removed that result in a property falling below the required minimum. She explained that the current ordinance language does not grant her the authority to deny requests for tree removal. Additionally, she criticized the low permit fee, suggesting that doubling it for work done before obtaining a permit, at only fifty dollars, does not serve as a sufficient deterrent. Secretary Stephens proposed implementing separate calculations and fees for trees removed as part of new construction versus those on existing properties with an excess number of trees. She also suggested considering a provision requiring certain properties with adequate frontage width to have a tree in the front for aesthetic purposes, addressing complaints about an imbalance of trees predominantly located in the backyards affecting the city's appearance.

The Council expressed interest in revising the language of the ordinance to strike a balance between protecting trees and upholding property owners' rights to utilize their land.

7. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Council Member Cooper took on the responsibility of inviting two individuals to the next meeting and encouraged other members to do the same.
- The vegetation on the northwest side of Ridgeley extends beyond the street, obstructing drivers' views.

8. FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

March 19th Regular Council Meeting: Presentation of Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Financial Audit

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carey.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper

The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

ATTEST:

Robert F. Buesinger, Mayor

Cassie Stephens, City Secretary