

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS  
OF DECEMBER 21, 2004  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS

Three public hearings of the Meadows Place City Council were called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Mark McGrath at Meadows Place City Hall, One Troyan Drive, Meadows Place, Texas, with notice of said meetings giving the time, place, date and subject thereof having been posted as prescribed by Article 6252-17, V.T.A.C.S. with the following members present and in attendance:

Mayor:	Mark McGrath
Aldermen:	Terry Henley Charles Jessup Joe McCann David Piwonka Rick Staigle
P&Z Chairman:	Steve Gardner
Commissioners:	Theresa Bathe Charles Kulhanek E.J. Messarra Marti Pattinson

thus constituting a quorum.

Mayor McGrath called to order the first public hearing as follows: A Joint public hearing before the City Council of the City of Meadows Place and the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Meadows Place to hear any and all persons desiring to be heard on or in connection with any matter or question involving a proposal to amend Chapter 24 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Meadows Place, entitled "Planning and Zoning Regulations," Article X, entitled "Signs," Section 24-1009 entitled "Signs – Commercial/Office" to regulate the use of LED display signs. He explained that there is quite a bit of development in the city and the Planning Commission is discussing what, if anything, to do about our sign ordinance, in particular lighted neon LED signs. Councilmember asked if prohibiting these signs would prohibit the city from installing one if it so chooses to do so. Councilmember Henley said that while the city is exempt from following its own ordinances, in good faith the city shouldn't install one if they are prohibited. He also said such a message display, if done correctly, is a good form of advertising and being able to change the sign from a remote location adds to its usefulness. He suggested not making the sign illegal but regulating them by detailing the rules. Sherri Carlson said she is all for new business in our city and if LED signs are "the future", and they are tastefully done, they should be allowed. Mayor McGrath said the question was whether the signs were aesthetically pleasing or too distracting. He also noted that the manager from Sterling McCall Nissan indicated he felt the businesses along the freeway should be treated differently than those within the interior of the city. Councilmember McCann said this was an issue of limens or brightness. Councilmember Jessup felt we should not over regulate businesses as they would not want to locate here if we did. Planning Commission member Theresa Bathe said the Commission looked at other cities. Missouri City allows these signs but they are not getting many commercial businesses to locate there. The cities of Sugar Land and Bellaire do not allow these signs and they are both well organized and well planned cities. At a previous P&Z meeting, Consulting Building Official Joe Edwards said a city does not have to lower its standards to get businesses. The question is: How do we want our city to look? P&Z would like to increase our standards rather than lower them. There being no further comments about LED signs, Councilmember Piwonka made a motion, seconded by Councilmember McCann to close the public hearing on LED signs. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor McGrath then called to order the second public hearing as follows: A joint public hearing before the City Council of the City of Meadows Place and the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Meadows Place to hear any and all persons desiring to be heard on or in connection with any matter or question involving a proposal to consider amending Chapter 24 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of

Meadows Place, entitled "Planning and Zoning Regulations," Article V, entitled "Zoning Regulations," Division 1, entitled "Zoning Districts and Regulations of General Applicability," by adding thereto a new Section 24-522, entitled "Window Installed Electrical Mechanical Devices Prohibited," establishing regulations and prohibitions. Mayor McGrath said the Meadows Community Improvement Association (MCIA) would like the city to consider regulating window air conditioning units on residential homes. The deed restrictions do not address this concern. Our city attorney has assured us that this ordinance is enforceable, even though it may be a touchy issue. Mike Schofield, MCIA Chairman said the Board had wrestled with the problem of window a/c units for the past 18 months. Several units, some on the front or sides of homes and some on the back are installed on city homes. The Board feels this lowers the aesthetic value of homes. About 75% of the units have been removed after residents receive a letter from the MCIA. There are currently about 10 units installed right now. Some of them have been here for 15 years and are covered by vegetation, making them almost invisible from the street. The Board would like the city to address only those units that are visible from the street, either in front or side windows and not back windows at this time. Theresa Bathe noted many of the homes in our city are old and it is difficult to heat and cool them without installing a completely new a/c unit at a high cost. Mayor McGrath noted that if it is determined window units detract from property values, the owners need to find another solution. Councilmember Jessup said even with a new roof, insulation and a new a/c unit the room on the south side of his home is very hot during the summertime. He does not see a problem with a window unit if it is not visible from the street. Councilmember Henley said he agreed totally on the detrimental aesthetics and appearances of window units but feels the majority of a/c units are not properly sized for homes in the city. He also wondered if we wanted to regulate a/c units in businesses. Mayor McGrath said not at this time. There were no further comments concerning window a/c units and Councilmember McCann made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley to close the public hearing on the issue. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor McGrath requested the Planning and Zoning Commission to meet in January to discuss the LED and window a/c unit issues and make a recommendation to council. City council will receive the recommendation at their January 25, 2005 council meeting and, with a favorable recommendation, will place it on their February 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

Mayor McGrath then called the next public hearing to order as follows: A public hearing on a proposed resolution to hear any and all persons desiring to be heard on or in connection with any matter or question involving a proposal authorizing Meadows Place Parks and Recreation Department to apply for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Grant Funds through the Small Communities Grant Program. Parks and Recreation Co-Director Terry Modeland thanked Councilmember Jessup for his help in going to Austin to speak on behalf of the City for this grant. Mrs. Modeland told Council she is seeking Council's support for a new grant. Most of the \$50,000 matching funds for this grant are to come from the Extended Day Program at Meadows Elementary. This program is prepared to donate playground equipment worth almost this amount to the school. The city can use this donation for its matching funds, contingent on a partnership with the school. There will not be a confirmed commitment on this until after school starts back again on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. If approved, an outdoor classroom will also be built. January 31, 2005 is the deadline to apply for this grant. Mayor McGrath said the city is looking at some legal issues regarding ownership and maintenance of the playground equipment. He is very excited with the synergy present between the school and the city. Councilmember Henley noted that about 10 or 12 years ago, the property in the back of the school was leased by the city from FBISD for 99 years. Councilmember Jessup said he was pleased with the work our Parks Department is doing in working with the school. He considers the school as the heartbeat of the city. There being no further comments on this issue, Councilmember Staigle made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley to adjourn the meeting.

There being no further business to consider, Councilmember Piwonka made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley to adjourn the meeting. With unanimous approval the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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Elaine Herff, City Secretary