

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
OF FEBRUARY 28, 2006  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS

The public hearing before the Meadows Place City Council was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Mayor Mark McGrath at Meadows Place City Hall, One Troyan Drive, Meadows Place, Texas, with notice of said meeting 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

thus constituting a quorum.

Mayor McGrath explained the idea for this curfew came about after he attended a gang task force meeting at the FBISD together with Captain Stewart. Although we currently have no gang problems in our city, the meeting pointed out that gang activity exists all around us. Children as young as 5<sup>th</sup> grade are being recruited. This ordinance would give our police a tool to keep juvenile delinquency down in our city. It's purpose is not to pick up kids. It is patterned on an ordinance currently in effect in the City of Missouri City. Rosenberg also has a curfew ordinance. It will affect children below the age of 17 who are out on the streets between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. from Sunday through Thursday and between midnight and 6:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Children going to and from work, religious functions, on interstate travel, on a parent's directive or on private property will not be stopped. They are not an issue. However, gang members do pass through our city. The first time a juvenile is picked up by our Police Department for a curfew violation he/she will be picked up and taken to his home. The second time the juvenile's parent will be contacted. Beyond that, a citation with a fine of up to \$500.00 plus court costs will be issued. Councilmember Jessup asked if the fine could be lessened. Mayor McGrath said that would be up to the judge.

Helen Rothenback, who lives on Sturdivant Street, said there are times when her children, when they were younger than 17, came home after 11:00 p.m. and she allowed them to go out to walk their dog. She feels it is unconstitutional to single out a person just because they are under a certain age.

Councilmember Jessup said this was the most troubling issue he has experienced since beginning his service on Council. He feels the ordinance would take away the civil rights of a group who, by law, cannot speak for themselves. On the other hand, the ordinance has many good points. It is a good tool, but we must be carefull about using it. We must train our officers so they enforce the ordinance in the right way. By state law, the ordinance must be revisited every three years. While he is philosophically against it, he believes if we move forward we must work hard to make sure it is enforced in the right way and make it a positive thing for the City of Meadows Place. Currently our crime statistics are great and he would like to see them stay that way but he is still concerned about taking citizen rights away.

Councilmember Piwonka said if one incident is stopped, then it is worth passing the ordinance.

Charles Kulhanek, who lives on Monticeto, voiced his support. He said generally, if children under 17 years of age are out after 11:00 or 12:00 at night they are probably not doing something that is community oriented. He believes the

ordinance would be very effective and would want to know if his child was out without his knowledge.

Ben Coatsworth, who lives on Meadowdale, said his feelings are somewhat conflicted. He, as a child, and his own children after him, suffered consequences if they disregarded curfews set by parents. He is concerned, however by what is going on in the communities surrounding us so he would support the measure. He believes our police would treat people fairly when they enforce it.

Mayor McGrath said that he, as a parent, made sure his children obeyed his curfew. Unfortunately, there are other parents who do not live up to these standards. He is not necessarily worried about the kids in our city but about those in areas surrounding us.

Pat Standard, who lives on Bloomington, said that there are many Friday and Saturday nights with teens gather during the hours of midnight and 2:00 a.m. in the alley behind her residence.

There were no further comments from the audience or council.

There being no further business to consider, Councilmember Henley made a motion, seconded by Councilmember McCann to adjourn the public hearing. With unanimous approval the public hearing was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

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Elaine Herff, City Secretary