

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF JANUARY 24, 2012
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS

The regular meeting of the Meadows Place City Council was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Mayor Charles Jessup, 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 Section 551.041, TGC with the following members present and in attendance:

Mayor: Charles Jessup

Aldermen: Heidi Case
Terry Henley
Shirley Isbell
John Whiteman
Dave Wilkens

thus constituting a quorum

The Pledge to the Flag was led by former Mayor Jim McDonald. Councilmember Wilkens gave the invocation

Police Captain Jack Ashton reported on Police activities since the December regular Council Meeting. He noted there were five reportable accidents, 12 arrests, 1613 calls for service, 47 offense reports, 188 traffic citations issued, no code ordinance violation citations issued, 52 traffic warnings and no city ordinance warnings issued. There was one motor vehicle burglary, no residential burglaries and no business burglaries reported. Officers made 456 business checks, 314 house watches and 596 property checks this past month. The department was able to purchase ten radios with the funds received from a grant. The radios are out being programmed right now. The van which we received just for the cost of picking it up has been painted and built out at Huntsville State Prison. The department hopes to find funds to stripe it to match its other vehicles. Officer Somersall stopped a vehicle Saturday night that resulted in the arrest of a female who was wanted in Fort Bend County on an aggravated robbery charge. Captain Ashton has been working with Public Works Director Dan McGraw to ready the Annex building on Kirkwood for Laser Shot fire arms training thereby turning an underutilized city owned building into a useable training center.

Parks and Recreation Director Monya Keenen then gave a report on activities in her department since the October regular Council Meeting. She said that the Halloween Carnival was a large success due in large part to Shelley Brough of Meadows Place Swim Team contacting the other Meadows Place agencies - Baseball, Garden Club and Scouts and coordinating the event with them. Christmas Memories held December 9th was a huge success. The police Department was a great help in securing the area the night before from any would be vandals. The man made hills worked out great with the snow. Residents agree that we have an awesome place to hold our events. With the help of a \$2,500 donation from HDR Claunch & Miller, Monya was able to hold the event within budget. The Parks Department has experienced two recent personnel changes. Kristina Hickle has left to return to school. She is being replaced by Monica Parsons who is working on several new and exciting events to be held this year, including a Meadows Place Skeeters Night to be held possibly on May 13th. Scot Herff has resigned as Aquatic Director. He has agreed to train his replacement, Tracey Spiller, and to continue to share his expertise with the City. Geno Sanchez is working on several projects, including the building up of the jogging trail and of granite on the exercise hill, which was washed out with the recent six inch rainfall. Two Master Naturalists that live in the city have contacted Mrs. Keenen. They would like to plant native grasses to help the duck nesting areas. Everyone seems to love the lake improvements. Mayor Jessup and Council congratulated Mrs. Keenen on holding the most successful Christmas Memories event ever!

During Mayor's comments, Mayor Jessup said: a) A very successful meeting was held recently with Police Chief Baker, Fire Chief DiCamillo, Public Works Director McGraw and himself in attendance. Common goals were set and it was agreed to meet this way more often. b) Although the Texas Direct Auto project has been at a standstill due to the property owner's financial problems, TDA owners are confident the problems are being worked out and work on renovations to the mall will be up and running by this time next month. c) A joint meeting is being planned with City Council, Meadows Place EDC and The Retail Coach, a business hired by the EDC to complete a data gathering demographic study. They have identified 21 developers willing to work with the city and hope to provide us with a list of 25 retailers, zeroing in on specific retailers that would be a good fit in our city. d) The Fort Bend Subsidence District was discussed at a Mayor Lunch Meeting last week. The city is fortunate to be part of a group joined with Ft. Bend WC&ID #2. Water will soon be our most costly utility. Meadows Place will host the Fort Bend Mayor and Council Association meeting in February.

Councilmember Isbell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Case, to approve the minutes of the October 31, 2011 special meeting and the December 22, 2011 workshop, public hearing and regular meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

Captain Ashton then presented Council with a copy of the 2011 Racial Profile Report. Councilmember Wilkens made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley, that we accept the report as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jessup then read the caption to the following Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS, PROVIDING RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF COVERINGS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES WITHIN THE TERRITORIAL LIMITS OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS; PROVIDING A PENALTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Councilmember Henley made a motion to adopt the ordinance as written. His motion was seconded by Councilmember Case. Councilmember Wilkens then made a motion to add an amendment to the ordinance, requiring the car cover to be secured to the vehicle and to be of a color that is not bright or obnoxious. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Henley. The amendment carried unanimously. A vote on the first motion was then conducted. The motion to adopt the ordinance, numbered **2012-01**, as amended carried unanimously.

Mayor Jessup then read the caption to the following Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS, REPEALING SECTION 150.09 OF CHAPTER 150 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 150.09 OF CHAPTER 150; PROVIDING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR OCCUPANCY PERMITS; PROVIDING A PENALTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Councilmember Henley made a motion to approve the ordinance. His motion was seconded by Councilmember Wilkens. Councilmember Henley then made a motion to amend the ordinance by inserting the word "commercial" in Section 150.09 (D) between "any" and "building" to insure residential homeowners and landlords would have electricity while preparing their homes for new move-ins. Councilmember Whiteman seconded this amendment which carried with unanimous approval. The original motion to approve the ordinance, numbered **2012-02**, as amended was unanimously approved.

Mayor Jessup then read the caption to the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE INSTRUCTING, AUTHORIZING AND ALLOWING THE MAYOR AND INVOLVED CITY OFFICIALS TO CHANGE THE SOUTH KIRKWOOD PROJECT, CONTROL SECTION JOB: 975, AS FOUND IN THE 2011-2014 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AS LISTED BY THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL FROM THE CURRENTLY LISTED AND PROPOSED DESCRIPTION: 2-LANE ROADWAY WITH ROUNDABOUTS TO THE PROPOSED DESCRIPTION: 4-LANE BOULEVARD WITH TRAFFIC CONTROLS THAT ARE TO BE DETERMINED IN THE FUTURE.

Councilmember Whiteman made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Wilkens, to adopt the ordinance as presented. Mayor Jessup called for a discussion and allowed Councilmember Whiteman to explain his viewpoint first. Councilmember Whiteman said the city has proposed the South Kirkwood be changed from a four lane Boulevard to two lanes with roundabouts at intersections. They first notified the public of this choice during a public meeting held at the Meadows Place Community Building on Splash Night in June of 2010. Citizens came to City Council meetings, wrote letters, signed a 750 signature petition and elected Councilmember Isbell and himself because they said they were against the roundabouts. To date, nothing has changed. The project is still on the rolls of the Houston-Galveston Area Council TIP program, listed as Control Section Job 975 in their TIP program. Councilmember Whiteman feels this project can and should be changed. The Mayor and several Councilmembers like roundabouts. Former Councilmember Rick Staigle has noted that his engineering firm will do the engineering work needed on the project, but only if the two lanes with four roundabouts are considered. His firm will not engineer the project if it stays a four lane boulevard. Councilmember Whiteman said he believes that a four lane Boulevard is in the best interest of the City. He said he is doing what the citizens have elected him into office for by opposing the roundabouts.

Councilmember Henley said he has been on Council many, many years and his actions have always been based on what all residents want, not just a few. He said as we become more educated, we find that roundabouts are being installed worldwide as they are considered a best practice in calming and slowing traffic. The ordinance proposed this evening leaves traffic control open for future four, four way stop signs. This traffic calming method will not be allowed when we rebuild Kirkwood. Leaving no stop signs will not calm traffic but make it worse. A four lane Boulevard will also add a quarter million dollars to the cost of the project.

Councilmember Isbell said that although roundabouts were an issue with both her and her opponent when running for Council, her main issue was to bring new, family friendly, businesses into the City. She has since educated herself on roundabouts with newspaper and internet articles as well as traveling up and down the East Coast where roundabouts are an effective, safe solution to traffic calming. She has personally visited several roundabouts and they all work perfectly. The suggestion to put a traffic light on Dorrance at Kirkwood is not a good one. It would add to noise and light pollution as well as invite littering while traffic is stopped for the red light as she can attest by living near the traffic light on Dairy Ashford and Alston. Also, a traffic light will necessitate an 11% tax increase to residents to pay for its installation and maintenance. Adding any four way stop signs on Kirkwood is not legal and cannot be considered. Councilmember Isbell pleaded with Council and residents to become better educated and employ a wait and see attitude, checking out the new roundabouts planned for the ballpark area and Sugar Land, before making a decision to change the Kirkwood roundabouts back to a four lane Boulevard design.

Resident Harry Hamilton, 12300 block of Level Run, said that an 11% tax increase would not be a good idea, common sense says that tearing out and reinstalling the four lane boulevard would be cheaper than moving utilities and installing a new two lane roadway in the center of the street. Former Councilmember Rick Staigle said that the cost savings came from having to pour half the amount of cement. Also, the old roadway would need to be torn out and totally rebuilt.

Resident John Isbell, 12300 block of Scottsdale, said there are human factors to consider in the equation. Residents along Dorrance should be able to enjoy their properties without a traffic light slowing down traffic and the resulting litter, noise and air pollution.

Resident Nathaniel Johnson, 11400 block Brook Meadows, noted he voted in the election to incorporate rather than become a part of the City of Stafford. Education is the best means to come to a correct decision. He said the back door is the wrong door.

Mayor Jessup said he was doubter from the beginning. He has since educated himself and has even put together a packet about roundabout which he will distribute to anyone who wants a copy.

At this time the roundabout discussion was interrupted to allow for the hearing from a citizen, Tyler Bezner. Tyler, from the 11800 block of Amblewood, is a Dulles Junior High student. He asked Council if it is possible for fish to travel from the lake to the ditch via the overflow box in the lake. Mayor Jessup said that although this is a possibility, he hopes this never happens and we do our best to make sure the lake level below the overflow box.

Continuing the roundabout discussion, Mayor Jessup noted that roundabouts are now being mentioned in the Texas Driving Safety Course. Also, HDR Claunch & Miller are advertising roundabouts in their monthly brochure. Insurance companies are touting them to their customers. Missouri City's Code of Ordinances now specify roundabouts are the preferred safety and traffic calming devise to be used in their city as they cut vehicle omissions and reduce stops by 95%. We currently tell vehicles to stop 45,000 times a day on Kirkwood. Roundabouts will reduce the noise and cost less money. Mayor Jessup concluded by reading an email he received from a resident noting that after studying the issue, this resident is convinced the city should take a positive step into the future and install the roundabouts on Kirkwood.

Councilman Whiteman rebutted by noting the issue was not just about roundabouts but roundabouts with lane reductions. All the options have not been explored by the City. Residents still don't want them here and he feels they will be an eyesore.

Councilmember Henley said he was initially concerned about causing a bottleneck in the traffic flow but the H-GAC study completed noted bottlenecks would not occur with two lane roundabouts. The H-GAC study, which was completed at no cost to the city, basically stated that roundabouts would be better that what we currently have. Mayor Jessup said the roundabouts will be a cost savings of a quarter million dollars to the city and they will be a beautiful landscaped addition to the city. Mayor Jessup called for a vote on the motion. The motion failed two votes to three with Councilmembers Whiteman and Wilkens voting "aye" and Councilmembers Case, Henley and Isbell voting "nay".

The quarterly Investment Report was then discussed. Only \$1,300 in interest was earned but the funds are safe and liquid. Councilmember Henley made a motion to accept the Investment Report as presented. Councilmember Case seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Councilmember Isbell then made a motion to pay the bills (to McCall Gibson Swedlund Barfoot PLLC for \$17,000; to Randle Law Office for \$5,580.75 and to The Retail Coach, LLC - to come out of EDC funds- for \$5,000.00) as presented on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Case and approved unanimously.

Councilmember Wilkens made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley, to ratify the expenditure to Laser Shot for \$13,505.05. The motion carried unanimously.

During audience comments, Anna Fultz, Councilmember Isbell's mother who was in the audience asked to address Council. She noted she is from Ocean City, Maryland and reports on city and other community events in her local newspaper. She congratulated Council on their organization and conduction of business.

Resident Sharon Kitchen, 12000 block of Pender, said thank you to all current and past officers of the City. While we will never get totally away from noise pollution, we can make it less noticeable. She said she lives here because she chooses to live here and it is your choice to live here. For the record, she is in favor of the roundabouts.

There being no further business to consider, Councilmember Isbell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Whiteman, to adjourn the meeting. With unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Elaine Herff, City Secretary