

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF JULY 27, 2010
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS

The regular meeting of the Meadows Place City Council was called to order at 7:30 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 Rick Staigle Dave Wilkens

thus constituting a quorum.

The pledge to the flag was led by Mayor Charlie Jessup, and the invocation was given by Councilmember David Wilkens.

During Mayor's comments, Mayor Jessup: 1: Thanked Boy Scouts from Troop 1115 and Cub Scouts from Pack 301 for the roll they played in the July 4th parade.. 2: Noted the importance of citizen's input concerning problems around the city such as mosquito control at the townhomes and police dispatch after hour problems. 3 Announced that city department heads have had several meetings to discuss what we will do to keep our city running in case of an emergency. This is done with our COOP-COG program and all city employees will be involved.

Councilmember Staigle gave an update of the status of the West Airport Boulevard redesign project. He said that HDR/Claunch & Miller has submitted a proposal to TxDOT for their approval but we have not yet received word back. Hopefully we will be able to approve the design services contract at our next meeting. If so, 30% of the design work should be completed by November 1st, 60% by January 20, 2011, 90% by March 19th and 100% by May 7th which will allow us to advertise for construction bids by June 7th and start construction in July, 2011.

Police Captain Jack Ashton reported on Police activities since the June regular Council Meeting. He noted there were five reportable accidents, 13 arrests, 2034 calls for service, 64 offense reports, 559 traffic citations, three code citations and 252 traffic and 16 city ordinance warnings issued. There were eight burglaries of motor vehicles - five of which occurred at Pappas Grill, one residential burglaries, no building burglaries and five vehicle accidents, four of which occurred at the corner of Dairy Ashford and West Airport.. Officers made 634 business checks, 565 house watches and 638 property checks. Police will be present at the 4th of July parade. The r.a.d.KIDS program for this year has been cancelled due to a lack of participants. Office Sommersall was responsible for recovering items stolen from a beauty/wholesale business when she stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation. Police continually work traffic as part of the city's border defense.

Parks Co-Director Terry Modeland reported on continuing summer activities. She noted the two audits of our twelve life guard staff this year have both received an "exceeded" rating. Monday Matinee movies will be held until Aug. 16th. Wednesday Bingo will continue until Aug. 18th. The last Barefoot 'n Friday will be held on Aug. 20th. Swim lessons are continuing. Adult lap swim takes place from 7 - 8 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There were 30 entries in the July 4th parade. The lake project is continuing on schedule. Laura Sterner put together a Park's booklet showcasing the department. Higinio Sanchez rebuilt the lost dog bulletin board on Dorrance.

Councilmember Wilkens then made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 22, 2010 workshop and regular meetings and the June 22, July 6 and July 20, 2010

workshop meetings. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Staigle and approved unanimously.

Councilmember Case made a motion to accept the city's investment report as presented. Councilmember Isbell seconded this motion which carried unanimously.

Mayor Jessup then read the caption to the following resolution

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS TO JOIN A COALITION PERTAINING TO CENTERPOINT ENERGY HOUSTON ELECTRIC, LLC APPLICATION TO CHANGE ELECTRIC RATES PENDING AS DOCKET NO. 38339 AND RELATED PROCEEDINGS.

Randy Prior, Service Manager for the Fort Bend, Sugar Land area was available to answer Council's questions. Councilmember Staigle made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley to adopt the resolution, numbered **2010-06** as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jessup then read the caption to the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE RETAIL ELECTRIC RATES OF CENTERPOINT ENERGY HOUSTON ELECTRIC, LLC WITHIN THE CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE, TEXAS; SUSPENDING FOR NINETY DAYS THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF NEW RATES; MAINTAINING THE CURRENT RATES IN EFFECT; CONTAINING FINDINGS AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE FOREGOING SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Prior explained that on June 30, CenterPoint filed for a rate change. The last time they filed, in 2006, they were awarded an increase but were required to freeze the rates for 4 years. They are asking for a \$94 million rate increase which amounts to a 5% overall increase to electricity bills. Now, instead of every four years, they are asking for an annual "true up" which could be an increase or a decrease in the rates. There may be some franchise applications to the request also. Councilmember Henley made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Staigle to adopt the ordinance, numbered **2010-13** suspending the CenterPoint Energy Houston rate increase for ninety days, as presented.

A discussion then followed about why the use of roundabouts in Meadows Place has not been put to the voters of Meadows Place as a non-binding referendum. Resident John Whiteman, 11400 block of Brook Meadows, said he would like to maintain Kirkwood as a four lane divided street as opposed to two lanes with four roundabouts.

Nate Johnson, 11400 block of Brook Meadows, said he was here when we voted to become a city. He has never understood why the roundabout issue got so far without a referendum because we are trying to beautify Meadows Place.

Scott Holland, 12200 block of Hoggard, said he received many questions from residents while he was campaigning for office in April about why the idea of roundabouts could not be put to a vote.

Councilmember Isbell said there is a lot of time before the city is ready to install roundabouts. She, personally, visited about 30 roundabouts on the east coast and has collected data to give to Council. This took countless hours and she was shocked as to how well the roundabouts worked when she saw them in action. She was told that almost every single person was against roundabouts at first. She, as a Councilmember, will only vote for them if she's convinced they will be perfect for the City. She reminded everyone that Council was working for the Citizens and the Citizens need to trust Council, or let them know differently.

Councilmember Henley said a study was recently completed by the TTI (Texas Transportation Institute). Councilmember Henley was concerned about the roundabouts from day one. The Houston-Galveston Area Council asked him if they could contract with TTI to do a study on the issue. They serve as an objective transportation resource. They examined current traffic controls, warrants and guidelines. They determined that, according to state law, stop signs should not be used to control speed. If we repair Kirkwood and leave it the same (four lanes), most of the stop signs would go away. If the existing street stays, there will be more air pollution from traffic. Any redesign of Kirkwood will not include stop signs on Kirkwood.

Mayor Jessup assured residents that the City would not be yanking any stop signs right now.

Councilmember Staigle said when he forwarded the question of putting roundabouts on the ballot for a non-binding referendum vote, he was informed that, unless we were a Home Rule City with a charter that specifically states referendums are allowed, we cannot put referendums on the ballot. Meadows Place is a General Law City which must abide by the rules of the state of Texas. Therefore, it would be illegal for Meadows Place to have a non-binding referendum vote on roundabouts - or any other matter.

Mayor Jessup noted there are three "E's" to every project - Engineering, Exposure, and Education. In his exuberance about roundabouts, he put the exposure portion first. The TTI study indicates there are no fatal flaws in the roundabout design.

Councilmember Staigle made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Henley to table the next agenda item - ratification of expenditures. The motion carried unanimously.

During audience comments, Mr. Whiteman again stated he, along with many other residents, was against roundabouts. He doesn't care if the stop signs are there or not, he still wants a four lane divided Kirkwood.

Abby Murphy, 12100 block of Alston Dr, said no one loves the 4 way stop signs. She doesn't believe Council has addressed the east/west foot traffic on Kirkwood. Councilmember Staigle noted the traffic would be controlled by the traffic signals at West Bellfort and West Airport, with each cycle allowing approximately ten cars down the street. He requested she drive to the intersection of Washington and Westcott in Houston to see how foot traffic is handled at that roundabout. A one lane roundabout has been proven safer for kids, bicycles and older drivers.

Mike Schofield, 12100 block of Meadowdale, said he is concerned about paying for the street and park improvements and the effect their maintenance will have on future budgets.

Charles McClurkin, 11900 block of Brighton, said he is concerned about defending our borders. He said there was a lot of traffic on Amblewood and wondered if we could close any of our streets.

Scott Holland said he doesn't want to lose a lot of good residents, so he hopes some compromise can be reached. He is also concerned with a group of teens that seems to be vandalizing the park.

There being no further business to consider, Councilmember Isbell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Wilkens to adjourn the meeting. With unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Elaine Herff, City Secretary