

**REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF
THE CITY OF BLANCO**

**Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2023**

A regular meeting and public hearing of the City Council, City of Blanco, Texas was held on September 12, 2023, at 6:00 pm at the Byars Building, 308 Pecan Street, Blanco, Texas.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Arnold, followed by roll call announcing a quorum was present. The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Gene Triesch, 419 Messianic Group. Council members present: Mayor Arnold, Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill and Council Members Smith, Swinson, and Moses. Council Member McClellan was absent and excused by Mayor Arnold for medical reasons.

City staff present: Warren Escovy, Sasha Ricks, Laurie Cassidy, and Police Chief Scott Rubin.

Mayor Arnold made the following announcements:

- Burn Ban is On, be careful.
- Water, Currently on Stage 3 Drought Restrictions, watch your water usage.
- Blanco's Founders Day Town Square, March 23, 2024, 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. Music by Bobby Mack.

Public Comments:

- Candy Rudy, Blanco County resident spoke regarding the trucks speeding through Blanco.
- Julie Alexander, City of Blanco resident, submitted letter to be read by Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary. She is disheartened to have Weber Subdivision neighbors so distraught over the decision that Planning & Zoning (PZ) Commission recommends approval of the Blanco River Run replat project to Council. The PZ decision was made out of the rules from the city code of ordinances that are currently set forth and the rights the property owner has for the use of his property. This scenario is a prime example of why she is in favor of the council looking into the overlay project further.
- Marcy Westcott, City of Blanco resident, spoke regarding the US 281 relief route. She shared an email she received from Council Member Moses saying he is eager to discuss concerns about the 281 relief route situation and discuss further as a council item on the September agenda. She further shared her concerns over the Mayor and transparency issues as well as the attack on Council Members Thraikill and Swinson.
- Courtney Trent, Blanco County resident of The Landing spoke regarding her concerns over the US 281 relief route and the devastation of trees due to Oak Wilt. Hearing now of the widening of US 281 and relief route. She does not live in the city limits and therefore cannot vote but the proposed route could exit next to her neighbor's property. Asking the council to listen to Marcy and others. Make this an agenda item so all the concerned residents can discuss. That TxDOT meeting was a joke. Want this on the agenda and want to discuss!

Public Hearing Opened/Closed at 6:15 pm:

1. Approval of Rezoning from R-2 to R-3 at 12 Elm Street (Blanco River Addition, 0.518 acres), Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Stephen and Melinda Doster). – **No Comments.**

Presentation:

1. Sherry Jenkins spoke regarding the Blanco County Veterans Memorial. She is the Chapter President of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). DAR is a 5013c and this project will not cost the taxpayers anything. Jenkins Design and Build has donated their time to designing the structure. Being presented to the Blanco County Commissioner Court on September 26 and the site will be located in Johnson City, Texas (at bluebonnet and N. Nugent). They will have pavers and benches on site that can be engraved as part of a fundraiser. They will also have granite pieces, with the service branches.

Proclamations:

Mayor Arnold read the Hill Country Night Sky Proclamation.

Staff Presentations:

- City Hall, Warren Escovy, City Administrator shared the council will hold a special council meeting next Tuesday, regarding replacement of water meters at no additional cost to the residents. This will help with water loss and increased efficiency.
- Police Department, Chief Rubin presented and discussed the August Monthly Report. He announced the Homecoming Parade will be held tomorrow at 6:00 pm and will loop around the square and end at the high school with a pep rally. The department has been very busy, still trying to fill vacant positions, currently at one officer per shift. Note use of funds from citations is against the law. The majority of the fees collected are sent to the state.

Consent Agenda: *The following items may be acted upon in one motion.* No separate discussion or action is necessary unless requested by the Mayor or a Council Member, in which those items will be pulled for separate consideration.

2. Approval of Minutes from the August 14, 2023, Special Meeting and Public Hearing.
3. Approval of Minutes from the August 22, 2023, Special Meeting.

Consent agenda items number 1, 4, 5, and 6 were pulled from Consent and moved to New Business for discussion.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill to approve the consent agenda items two and three as presented, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Closed regular meeting at 6:39 pm and convened into executive session.

Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code: in accordance with the authority contained in the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071, 551.072, and 551.074.

ES #7 Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding Update and Progress Report on all Pending City Engineer Projects, including City Council Direction, Guidance, and Enforcement of Related Performance Standards for City Engineer.

Closed executive session at 7:07 pm and convened into regular meeting.

New Business: Consider, discuss, and take appropriate action on the following:

- C#1 Approval of Minutes from the August 8, 2023, Regular Meeting (moved from Consent Agenda item #1). **A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill to approve the minutes with correction to old business item #1 and new business item #5, seconded by Council Member Smith, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- C#4 Approval of City of Blanco Social Media Policy (moved from Consent Agenda item #4). Sasha spoke regarding the proposed social media policy. Keep City of Blanco positive and keep city business off of personal social media pages. Council discussed. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to table item for further review, seconded by Council Member Smith, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- C#5 Approval of City of Blanco Purchasing Policy (moved from Consent Agenda item #5).
- C#6 Approval of City of Blanco Accounting Policy (moved from Consent Agenda item #6). Sasha Ricks, Finance Director discussed the need for and requirement of annual audit for the purchasing and accounting policies. Both our auditor and city attorney have reviewed and approved these policies. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to approve Consent Agenda items five and six, the Purchasing Policy and the Accounting Policy, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#3 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Change Order #09 Exterior Lighting at the Water Treatment Plant (Warren Escovy, City Administrator). **Tabled**
- NB#4 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Change Order #__ Fencing at the Water Treatment Plant (Warren Escovy, City Administrator). **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to Table New Business items three and four (discussion of change orders), seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#5 Consideration and Discussion of Update and Progress Report on all Pending City Engineer Projects, including City Council Direction, Guidance, and Enforcement of Related Performance Standards for City Engineer. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to table New Business item five for 90 days and then bring back to the Council for review, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#1 Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Rezoning from R-2 to R-3 at 12 Elm Street (Blanco River Addition, 0.518 acres), Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Stephen and Melinda Doster). Warren Escovy, City Administrator discussed. The current property consists of one lot zoned R-2 and includes three structures, the home at 12 Elm, a small stone house, and another home that operates a therapy center on Main Street. The Doster's are requesting to separate their property into three lots. A zoning designation of R-3 would allow for 6,500 square foot lots. The buildings on the property currently support an R-3 or even an R-5 designation. Based on the city code of ordinances, the Planning & Zoning Commission recommends approval of this zoning change. This will allow the Doster's to sell the building off Main Street to their tenant. Also, a zoning of R-3 more accurately reflects what is on the ground. No other lot can be added. If rezoning is approved an administrative plat will need to be approved through the city.

A motion was made by Council Member Smith to approve the rezone of the entire property bound by Main Street, Fulscher and Elm Street from R2 to R3, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

- NB#2 Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Concept Plan for Blanco River Run Subdivision, Lots 4 and 5 Weber Subdivision, Blanco, Texas, (Property Owner: Tejas Heritage Homes, LLC, James Boyce Polkinghorn, Managing Member). Warren Escovy, City Administrator discussed this request for approval of the concept plan which currently has two lots to be subdivided into six lots on River Run and to include an "eyebrow" or dedicated turn around to take advantage of the reduction in lot width allowed for lots taking access to an eyebrow. R-1 is the current zone. Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval by a vote of 4-2 at their meeting of September 11, 2023. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to approve the concept plan with six lots, River Run, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#6 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Ordinance 2023-O-014 Amending Fee Schedule. Warren Escovy, City Administrator presented suggestions to the Council for line by line discussion of schedule of rates and charges. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to table discussion of amendments to the fee schedule, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#7 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Rescinding of Acceptance of a Gift of Land for Possible City Hall on Elm Street. Warren Escovy, City Administrator discussed staff's recommendation to rescind. **A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill to rescind acceptance of a gift of land for possible City Hall on Elm Street, seconded by Council Member Smith, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
- NB#8 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval to Complete Market Analysis on City Surplus Properties at Blanco Vista Estates, Lot 3 (9.43 Acres) and 202 Cherry Street (0.44 Acres). Mayor discussed the need for market analysis and bring back to the council for discussion. Doug McKinzie, broker did a market analysis (at no cost to the city) 9.43 acres at \$50-60,000 per acre with the deed restrictions modified and the property use being commercial. Small well on 9.43 acre tract and cistern at Cherry Street location. If Council decides to sell the properties, the council will need to do a budget amendment to account for the proceeds. **No action taken.**
- NB#9 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Administration Work Schedule (Sasha Ricks, Finance Director). Warren Escovy, City Administrator discussed modified work schedule for employee retention and to be competitive with other cities. 9/80 schedule (9 hours Monday through Thursday and 8 hours on Friday with every other Friday off. Teams to rotate schedule. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to approve the implementation of the 9/80 Work Schedule for a 6 month trial period, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

NB#10 Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Mediated Agreement Between the City of Blanco and Texas Water Company. Tim Tuggey, City Attorney suggested this item be discussed in executive session. Mayor Arnold asked for a brief overview before going into executive Session. July 13, 2023 prompted water rationing and Stage 6 emergency water throughout the city. As a result, the City demanded mediation with TX Water Company. On September 5, 2023 mediation occurred, with Mayor Arnold, Mayor Pro-Tem Thraillkill, Tim Tuggey, OJ Armstrong, and Warren Escovy in attendance. OJ regaled the experts with his water knowledge, Rodney kept all stable in the middle, and the Mayor at the end came up with creative idea to deal with hanging point. Bottom line, entered into interim mediation agreement which will be asking the Council to approve, establishing minimum levels for Stallion tank and schedule of other items, back into mediation within next 60-120 days, replacement of capital items, and reuse of water, good faith matter. Also establish a working group to work on communication issues (Damon to head up) and establish our own internal study group for improvement/upgrade issues. Came up with provisions to pull down public statements from city website and Facebook, agreement to last for 12 months, may extend. Mayor and OJ made it happen. **No Action Taken.**

Closed regular meeting at 8:42 pm and convened into executive session.

Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code: in accordance with the authority contained in the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071, 551.072, and 551.074.

1. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct and 551.072 (Real Estate). Confer with City Attorney regarding City Property Evaluations at Blanco Vista Estates, Lot 3 (9.43 Acres) and 202 Cherry Street (0.44 Acres), City's interest.
2. Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Consultation with City Attorney regarding Economic Development Project.
3. Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Confer with City Attorney regarding City Water Agreements with Texas Water Company
4. Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney), 551.072 (Real Estate) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Confer with City Attorney regarding Pharr Paradise Utility Easement Agreement.
5. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding legal issues associated with the Water Treatment Plant Project; Bids, Contract. Award, and Notice to Proceed.
6. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding Pending Legal Matters.
7. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding Update and Progress Report on all Pending City Engineer Projects, including City Council Direction, Guidance, and Enforcement of Related Performance Standards for City Engineer.

Closed executive session at 9:20 pm and convened into regular meeting.

New Business Item #10/Executive Session Item #3: **A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill to approve the Mediation Agreement from September 5, 2023 subject to further negotiation by the City Attorney, seconded by Council Member Smith, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

Executive Session, Items 1-2 and 4-7: **No Action Taken**

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Council Member Moses to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill, all in favor.

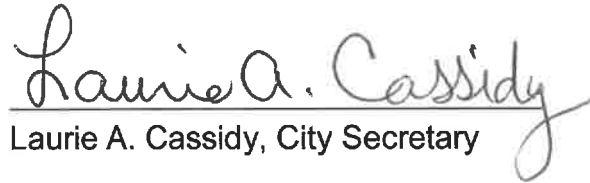
The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Arnold, Mayor

ATTEST:



Laurie A. Cassidy, City Secretary

These minutes were approved on the 10 day of October, 2023.

