

Council Minutes July 13, 2021

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Work Session at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 13th day of July, 2021 with the following members present:

Michael Boyter	Mayor
Amy Sabol	Mayor Pro Tem
Cindy Almendarez	Councilmembers
Dan Cogan	
Ruth Culver	
Rob Gagliardi	

constituting a quorum.

Staff present included:

Jimmy Stathatos	City Manager
Cliff Blackwell	Assistant City Manager
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Molly Fox	Communications Director
Andrea Roy	Development Director
Cheryl Taylor	City Engineer
Bill Walker	Fire Chief
Jeff Williams	Police Chief

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The Strategic Planning Session began at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS

Mayor Boyter called the meeting to order.

- **Council Strategic Planning Session to include discussion regarding the Council's visions, goals and related topics.**

Discuss a possible Charter Review Commission

City Manager Jimmy Stathatos stated the catalyst for the possibility of forming a Charter Review Commission was to include defined ethics procedures, to see how the City's Charter compared to other cities, and the possibility of including an attendance policy.

City Secretary Michael Wells stated that Council is required to hold a public hearing and consider appointing a Charter Review Commission every five years after a change to the Charter; however, Council is not required to appoint a Commission, just consider appointing one. He stated previous

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Commissions were given carte blanche on points of discussion and the City Attorney was present to advise of changes in state law that need to be updated. There was discussion on Council making suggestions to the Commission. The next steps in the process are to bring an item back to Council in August to appoint members. Mr. Wells stated the previous Commission met prior to regular City Council meetings, and the Commission's work would need to be completed by December or January to put on the May ballot. Council was of the consensus to appoint a Charter Review Commission.

Discuss a Potential Master Parks, Trails and Bike Plan

Mr. Stathatos recommended appointing a steering committee for this project, along with a consultant to help guide the process. He stated the Master Parks Plan should be updated every five years to help the City be eligible for grants from the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife. The last update to the City's Plan was done in 2016. There was discussion on citizen involvement in the steering committee, using the City of Southlake's recent long-term parks and recreation plan as a template, and Council setting the appropriate expectations and direction for the steering committee. Council was of the consensus for a seven-person steering committee consisting of Councilmembers Almendarez, Culver, and Gagliardi, a member each of the Beautification Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Cultural Commission, and one additional resident chosen by the Mayor, with staff serving as ex-officio members.

Discuss Plan for Improving the Audio/Visual Performance at City Hall

Mr. Stathatos stated the contract for the audio/visual upgrades will be presented to Council at their meeting on July 27, 2021. Communications Director Molly Fox stated the upgrades are an all-in-one package, which includes new equipment, larger televisions, live streaming, remote production capabilities, live captioning, and a new voting system. The total initial cost is approximately \$275,000 being paid out of the cable franchise fees, with annual support costs of approximately \$32,000.

Discuss a Potential Bedford Citizen's Academy

Mr. Stathatos stated the academy would be held annually and be open to 15 to 20 residents, with a different department being profiled each week, culminating with a graduation ceremony during a Council meeting. The goal of the academy is to give people a deeper understanding and appreciation of local government. He stated the academy is very staff intensive, so the goal is to start it in 2022.

Comprehensive Master Plan Review / Subdivision Regulations (Code of Ordinances) Update / Zoning Ordinance Update

Mr. Stathatos stated the Comprehensive Master Plan review costs approximately \$125,000 to \$150,000; the Code of Ordinances update costs approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000; and the Zoning Ordinance update costs approximately \$100,000. He recommended funding the Comprehensive Master Plan review in the upcoming budget, as staff felt it to be the more important component of the three.

Mr. Stathatos stated the Code of Ordinances is not really focused on redevelopment, and potential updates would help with clarity and standardize the City. He discussed potential updates to the Zoning Ordinance, including requiring certain uses to have a specific use permit. He stated staff would be presenting updates to the Code of Ordinances soon to deal with the biggest

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impediments to code enforcement and development. Development Director Andrea Roy presented information on the purpose and importance of the Master Plan as well as the process and timeframe for the update, including potential citizen involvement.

Mural Program

Mr. Stathatos stated the new Cultural Arts Manager Krissi Oden will be driving the program, which includes painting the utility boxes. Staff will work on guidelines for the program to bring to Council.

Code Enforcement

Mr. Stathatos stated the new Neighborhood Services/Planning Manager will start the following week. He felt the amendments to the Code of Ordinances being brought to Council will help with code enforcement. Staff is changing the way they do business and the culture of Neighborhood Services.

Ms. Roy discussed the multi-level effort involved with code enforcement, including the officers, the City's codes, the court system, other staff, and internal policies. She stated staff now utilizes a complaint-based system whereby a summons to appear in Municipal Court is delivered to a violator. There was discussion on staffing, including that there are four Neighborhood Services Officers.

Citywide Wi-Fi

Mr. Stathatos stated staff is examining utilizing the new phase of COVID-19 relief funds, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to make this project happen, with the plan being to start with Generations Park. He discussed an upcoming presentation to Council regarding a program for the use of ARPA funds. There was discussion on other cities offering Wi-Fi at parks; increased connectivity for people in the City; infrastructure for the project, including at the water towers; potential privacy issues and firewalls; the possibility of offsetting the need to replace the outdoor sirens; prioritizing streets and public safety pay over Wi-Fi with the ARPA funding Wi-Fi for students who do not have internet access; and other "smart" city options.

Economic Development

Bedford Commons – Mr. Stathatos stated Council previously established the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ), which was subsequently approved by Tarrant County. Tarrant Community College is expected to consider their component of the TIRZ in August. Staff has started discussions with private stakeholders with whom to potentially partner. He stated the TIRZ board should be created once the development partner is determined and the TIRZ financing plan is finalized. He recommended continuing to use David Pettit Economic Development for the financing plan. There was discussion on redeveloping the codes for Bedford Commons and redevelopment in Fort Worth.

Economic Development Zones – Mr. Stathatos discussed the zones, including requirements that may be an impediment to development. He felt that Bedford Road should be included due to its proximity to the Bedford Commons project. He stated the benefit of such zones is the predictability it gives to the market, stakeholders, and developers. The zones would act much like overlay districts with their own standards separate from the rest of the City. The City could also incentivize high sales or property tax generating businesses. Mr. Stathatos discussed redevelopment in the City of Roanoke, including incentivizing residents for improvements to their property and the City

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serving as a stakeholder in commercial development. There was discussion on previous state legislation that restricted municipal regulations on building materials.

Redevelopment Strategic Plan – Mr. Stathatos discussed looking at different consultants that have done such plans to see what has and has not worked.

Performing Arts Center Update

Mr. Stathatos stated the steering committee for the project completed its third workshop with BRW Architects. Concept plans and square footages have been developed on future buildings, including the Performing Arts Center. The next step in the process is to brief the full Council and to hold a charette for public input. There was discussion on removing the old gray house on the property.

Generations Park Proforma

Mr. Stathatos recommended a steering committee to include members of Council to provide guidance on financially managing the facility. He stated there are no new employees included in the upcoming budget; however, staff has worked on determining operating costs and revenue for Generations Park. Council was of the consensus for Mayor Boyter and Councilmembers Culver and Gagliardi to serve on the steering committee.

Generations Park Phase 2/Possible Heritage Plaza

Mayor Boyter discussed items that were not included in the current iteration of Generations Park, including tennis courts. He wanted to look into adding a heritage plaza to give a sense of community and to create a family-friendly space to tell the history of the City and the Boys Ranch. Council was of the consensus to include this item in the purview of the Master Parks Plan steering committee.

Citizens Surveys

Mr. Stathatos stated the Communications Division will be performing a citizen survey in the fall, both via regular mail and online. Staff will also perform a restaurant and retail survey, which would help with recruiting businesses. There was discussion on the consultant for the surveys and the previous citizen survey performed in 2014.

Boards & Commissions

Mayor Boyter discussed reviewing the Boards and Commissions annually and bringing the chairs of the Boards and Commissions to the next strategic planning session to discuss what they are working on and possibly modernizing the Board and Commission purpose statements. There was discussion on encouraging citizen involvement and engaging the Boards and Commissions in City projects. Council was of the consensus to move forward with the Mayor's proposal.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Possible Projects

Mr. Stathatos stated public safety is a priority for use of the ARPA funds. He recommended the ARPA funds be used to remount the box of an ambulance that was recently involved in an accident onto a new chassis, as well as to replace an ambulance that was put into service in 2009. There was discussion of deficiencies at public safety facilities, including lack of gender

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segregated sleeping quarters at the fire stations; replacing the roof at the Law Enforcement Center; facility space and the turning radius for vehicles at Fire Station 3; and space issues at Fire Station 2. There was further discussion on the timing for release of the ARPA funding.

Budget

Capital Asset Strategic Plan – Mr. Stathatos stated staff previously presented a vehicle replacement plan and is now working with Enterprise on returning underutilized vehicles, which will be included in the upcoming budget.

Homestead Exemption/Tax Rate Decrease – Mr. Stathatos stated that Council at their strategic planning session on June 1, 2021 directed staff to look at a tax rate decrease as opposed to a homestead exemption, and that staff will be presenting a proposed budget that has a firm tax rate decrease.

Charging Stations in the City

Councilmember Cogan stated the City needs to be forward thinking and anticipate the market for electric vehicles in new developments. There was discussion on encouraging developers to set aside areas for charging stations and pursuing a grant for charging stations at Generations Park. Council agreed with Councilmember Cogan's thoughts regarding charging stations.

Discuss a Signature Festival

Councilmember Cogan stated the City has a full year to plan the festival and wanted to ensure staff is working on it. Mr. Stathatos stated that the discussion on reimagining the event needs to start before the end of the year. There was discussion on the components, location, and timing for the festival.

Develop a Strategic Sidewalk Plan

Councilmember Cogan stated Council recently approved a strategic plan for the City's streets and now needs to look at sidewalks, especially in the southern portion of the City. There was discussion on the costs of sidewalks, providing guidance to the Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation (SIEDC) for a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for sidewalks, and current funding in the SIEDC budget for sidewalk repairs. City Engineer Cheryl Taylor confirmed the current sidewalk plan only includes sidewalks in need of repair. Council was of the consensus for staff to work with the SIEDC on prioritization of sidewalks.

Increase Civilian Oversight of the Police Department

Councilmember Cogan stated the City recently executed a contract for detention services with the City of Euless, which will save Bedford approximately \$300,000 and protect the City from potential liability. He stated the nature of police work opens the City to liability lawsuits. He discussed the history of use of force complaints in the City's Police Department. He stated Council was not made aware of such complaints and asked that in the future, Council be made aware of these potential liability issues. There was discussion on communication and providing more information to Council.

ADJOURNMENT

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Mayor Boyer adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Michael Boyter, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary