

August 15, 2016

On this the 15th day of August 6:30 p.m., the City Commission of the City of Hereford, Texas, convened in a regular session in the Commission Chamber, in the City Hall, the meeting being open to the public and notice of said meeting having been given as prescribed by Chapter 551 of the Government Code, with the following members being present and in attendance, to-wit:

Tom Simons, Mayor
Jose A. Garza, Commissioner Place One
Angie Alonzo, Commissioner Place Two
Charlie Kerr, Commissioner Place Three
Linda Cumpton, Commissioner, Place Four
Cathy Bunch, Commissioner Place Five
Marcos Castro, Commissioner Place Six
Rick L. Hanna, City Manager
Suzanne Finch, City Secretary
Audie Sciumbato, City Attorney

John Carson from the Hereford Brand was in attendance to witness the proceedings. Also in attendance were Assistant City Manager Steve Bartels and Captain Kirsten Williams.

Mayor Simons called upon Commissioner Bunch to voice the invocation and then called upon Commissioner Cumpton to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag. He called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance, and introduced each item on the agenda.

REGULAR HEARINGS:

ITEM 1 – Consider approval of minutes for the July 18th, 2016 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Kerr made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Bunch seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 2 – Consider approval of street repairs to Main Street (from 7th Street to Park Avenue), 15th Street (from Hwy 385 to West end), and Victory Drive (from S. Main Street to Avenue K).

City Manager Hanna stated this is for four items – the asphalt overlay of Main Street from 7th Street to Park Avenue; seal coating and striping 15th Street from Hwy 385 to the west end; and, seal coating Victory Drive from South Main to Avenue K. He noted the asphalt overlay on Main Street would be a test pattern. Mayor Simons stated the asphalt would cover the bricks. Assistant City Manager Bartels noted the job would be from curb to curb and would cover the bricks as well as the asphalt patches. City Manager Hanna stated nuisance water on 15th Street is causing the street to deteriorate and it needs to be seal coated and then later striped; Victory Drive was included in the original seal coat but somehow got omitted.

The group discussed the condition of the brick streets in various areas (some areas much worse than others), public perception regarding the covering of the bricks with asphalt, and the lack of protests from citizens over the past year this project has been discussed.

City Manager Hanna noted one of the items was budgeted (Victory Drive) and the other three were not. He asked permission to proceed with these four projects in order to fix the problem areas before the cold weather sets in.

Commissioner Cumpston made the motion to approve the projects. Commissioner Garza seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 3 – Consider approval of plat submitted by C. P. Homes.

City Manager Hanna stated this item is for the assisted living facility to be built east of the hospital. He noted C. P. Homes is a company out of Dallas and they want to plat the property to satisfy the requirements of their lenders; they asked for the approval of the City Commission.

City Attorney Sciumbato stated they are doing one in Muleshoe also. He noted he was not positive; but, he thought a public hearing was required before the Commission could approve this item.

Commissioner Cumpston made the motion to table this item. City Attorney Sciumbato suggested the item be postponed to a date certain.

The Commission agreed to hold off on this item until City Attorney Sciumbato could get an answer as to whether or not a public hearing is required before approval of the plat.

ITEM 4 – Consider authorizing the City Manager to solicit bids for the Dry Land Farm (formerly Doug Detten Farm) Lease.

City Manager Hanna stated this would be for a five year lease plus three months beginning October 1, 2016 and ending on December 31, 2021. He noted there is a provision in the lease that the payments are due October 1, 2016 and thereafter for the subsequent four years on January 1 and if not paid by January 10th the lease will be re-bid. He stated this is non-irrigated farmland.

Commissioner Alonzo made the motion to authorize the City Manager to lease the land. Commissioner Bunch seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 5 - Consider appointment to fill vacancy on the Board of Adjustments.

City Manager Hanna stated Commissioner Metcalf served on this board; he noted it is an important board; they only meet every two to three years.

Mayor Simons stated we need to fill the vacancy and then asked for a volunteer from the Commission to serve the unexpired term.

Commissioner Cumpston indicated she would be willing to serve.

Commissioner Castro made the motion to appoint Commissioner Cumpston to fill the unexpired term [expires October 2017] of Sam Metcalf on the Board of Adjustments. Commissioner Garza seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 6 - Consider proposed tax rate and set public hearings if needed.

City Manager Hanna noted the tax rate was discussed earlier in the budget work session. He stated if the Commission wants to consider a two cent increase in taxes per one hundred dollar valuation, they must set two public hearings and a quorum must be present at each one. He proposed the dates of August 29th and September 12th with the Commission to vote on the proposed increase at the September 19th regular meeting.

Commissioner Castro spoke in favor of the public hearings stating although he understands Commissioner Alonzo's position that increasing the water rate insures everyone pays their fair share, he thinks if the Commission goes the route of only depending on water revenues and not spreading it out we could experience a deficit as we did last year when the water sales were down \$750,000.00 due to the large amount of rain we received. Commissioner Castro stated for peace of mind the two cents increase in property taxes is not a lot to ask.

Commissioner Kerr stated he owns rental property and is not fond of paying taxes; but, he doesn't like being so dependent on water for revenues. He noted we will probably never get to "fair" as the property owners are always more burdened; however, with the current data provided on what surrounding communities' tax rates are in comparison to ours now may be a good time to consider a property tax increase and then next year, if we must, consider another water rate increase.

Commissioner Alonzo stated the revenues from property taxes are going up due to the increase in the appraised values and increasing the tax itself is not being generous to our homeowners in any sense of the word. She stated if we must make up the difference then water rates should be increased.

Mayor Simons noted we are increasing water rates.

Commissioner Alonzo stated we may have to look at increasing them even more.

Commissioner Castro made the motion to schedule the two public hearings for August 29th and September 12th and publish as required in order to be able to consider approval of the proposed two cent increase in property taxes at their regular meeting to be held September 19th. Commissioner Kerr seconded the motion and it passed with the following vote: Mayor Simons aye; Commissioner Garza nay; Commissioner Alonzo nay; Commissioner Kerr aye; Commissioner Cumpston aye; Commissioner Bunch aye; and Commissioner Castro aye.

ITEM 7 - Consider cancelling regular City Commission Meeting scheduled for September 5, 2016.

The Commission agreed to cancel the regularly scheduled meeting scheduled for September 5th in observance of the Labor Day holiday, noting they will have two special meetings (August 29th and September 12th) before the next regularly scheduled meeting set for September 19th, 2016.

ITEM 8 – Announcements and comments from Mayor and City Commissioners.

Commissioner Cumpston thanked the staff for supper; stated it is great to be here; and, this is a well run organization.

Mayor Simons thanked City Manager Hanna and Assistant City Manager Bartels for their work on the budget; noting the format is very easy to understand.

ITEM 9 – Announcements and comments from City Staff.

Captain Williams praised the volunteer Fire Department for putting out the fire at the grain elevator today; noting they put themselves at great personal risk to make sure the citizens were not put at an even greater risk.

ITEM 10 – Public Comments.

There were no public comments.

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.