

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
JULY 9, 2013

STATE OF TEXAS §
 §
COUNTY OF BRAZOS §

Present:

Nancy Berry, Mayor

Council:

Blanche Brick
Jess Fields
Karl Mooney
John Nichols
Julie Schultz
James Benham

City Staff:

Kathy Merrill, Interim City Manager
Carla Robinson, City Attorney
Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary

1. Call to Order and Announce a Quorum is Present

With a quorum present, the Special Meeting of the College Station City Council was called to order by Mayor Berry at 3:09 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 in the Council Chambers of the City of College Station City Hall, 1101 Texas Avenue, College Station, Texas 77842.

2. Presentation, possible action and discussion regarding the initial review of the findings, observations, and recommendations contained in the Planning and Development Services Organizational Report conducted by Alan Mueller; and to provide future policy direction to staff.

Alan Mueller led the Council in the organizational review of the Planning and Development Department. Five policy questions addressed perceptions/attitudes, flexibility and communication. Mr. Mueller presented his perception on each question based on the answers received in the survey.

1. Should the Planning and Development staff's primary responsibility/allegiance be to the Comprehensive Plan or to the will of the seated City Council? Staff perspective is that the Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document. The business community feels we need to be

more market-responsive, and the Comprehensive Plan is too restrictive and inflexible. The Council perspective falls between that of staff and the business community, being closer to the business point of view. Council feels the staff needs to be more responsive to the Council's directives as they relate to the business community.

2. To what extent should the seated Council and staff defer to the Comprehensive Plan vs. modifying the Plan based on the philosophy of the seated Council? Staff sees that a lot of work went into the Plan, and we should stick with it. The business community has no deference to the Plan. The Council falls in the middle; they value the Plan and believe it is important, but feel it should also reflect the political changes.

3. To what extent should homeowners and the general citizenry of College Station be considered as "customers" of the Planning and Development Department whose rights and interests must be protected by staff? Most of the general citizenry is silent, and staff sees it as their responsibility to represent those folks who are not there. The business community feels the Plan is skewed in favor of the residential community. Council is in the middle as a balancing approach; there is a responsibility to the business community, but we must protect the integrity of our neighborhoods.

4. Is the Department staff driving policy instead of Council driving policy? What is the proper role and extent of staff input and recommendation? Staff feels they present recommendations to Council, who accepts or reject the recommendation, staff then enforces what was approved. However, the business community believes that staff is more in control. Staff needs to be cognizant of the level of influence they have with Council, and what they present needs to be more in line with what the Council wants as a whole.

5. The Planning and Development Services staff has a dual role of facilitator and regulator. Which role should have a greater emphasis? Staff sees themselves in the middle; they have to facilitate, but in a balanced manner. The perception is that we want to facilitate growth and development with less roadblocks and angst.

There was much discussion and questions of clarification from the Council. Not all of it agreed with the consultant's perceptions of the view of Council. Concern was also expressed that the study did not encompass more citizens of the community, and it was noted that the Comprehensive Plan and UDO needs to be reviewed to insure that staff has adequate guidance for day-to-day decisions. The Mayor directed the Interim City Manager to proceed with finalizing the report.

3. Adjournment

MOTION: There being no further business, Mayor Berry adjourned the special meeting of the College Station City Council at 5:29 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9, 2013.



Nancy Berry, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary