

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 4700 DREXEL DRIVE, ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020, AT 8:00 A.M.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Margo Goodwin and Town Council Members David L. Dowler, Eric Gambrell, Jimmy Grisham, and Craig Penfold. Mayor Pro Tem John McKnight attended the meeting via teleconference.

Mayor Goodwin called the meeting to order, and explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss, consider, and act on a Declaration of Health Emergency regarding SARS-CoV2, including the possible adoption of appropriate restrictions, and the designation of authority to the Mayor and/or the Town Administrator. On March 13, 2020, Mayor Goodwin signed a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency ("Declaration"), in response to the ongoing national pandemic caused by SARS-CoV2 which causes COVID-19, also known as coronavirus disease. Pursuant to the Texas Local Government Code, the Mayor has the authority to make the Declaration for a period of up to seven days; the governing body of the Town is required to take action for the Declaration to continue. The proposed declaration was amended to reference Article 1.09 of the Town's Code of Ordinances dealing with emergency management, and references the Amended Order from Dallas County issued on March 16, 2020. The proposed extension of the Declaration dies when the Dallas County Amended Order is either rescinded, superseded, or amended pursuant to applicable law. Steven Alexander, Director of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer, explained that the proposed Declaration references the Dallas County Amended Order of March 16, 2020, which limits social gatherings to ten (10) people. Matthew Boyle, Town Attorney, added that the Town can set more stringent rules, but cannot lessen the limit set by Dallas County. He further stated that this Declaration triggers the Town's Emergency Plan, allowing the implementation of actions without further Town Council approval.

The Town Council discussed communications between the Mayor and Town Council Members related to the Open Meetings Act. In response to questions, Steven Alexander explained that the Mayor is the Town's Emergency Management Director, and as such, the Mayor has the ability to send emails to the Town Council Members. Matthew Boyle stated that the Council Members should reply to such emails only to the Mayor, and specifically cautioned against utilizing the "Reply to All" function to avoid violating the Open Meeting Act. Matthew Boyle confirmed that conference call meetings are allowed during this time as long as they are properly noticed and the dial-in number is publicized.

On a motion by Council Member Penfold, seconded by Council Member Grisham, the Council voted unanimously to approve a Declaration of Health Emergency regarding SARS-CoV2, including possible adoption of appropriate restrictions and the delegation of authority to the Mayor and/or the Town Administrator.

The Town Council discussed the implementation of limiting social gatherings to ten people in relation to the parks and playgrounds. Steven Alexander explained that signs will be posted in the parks in an effort to obtain voluntary compliance from the public. Kathleen Stewart, Director of Town Services, explained the placement of bollards as a barrier to prevent the public from using playground equipment. Mayor Goodwin referenced the soccer areas and the challenge with no more than 10 people maintaining a distance of ten feet apart. She suggested that if signage is not effective, chains could be installed to cordon off the area. Rick Pyle, Director of Public Safety,

expressed concern that the Town's Public Safety Officers ("PSOs") would be required to enforce the ten-person limit. The Town Council and staff discussed the impact upon tennis courts. Steven Alexander stated that he observed 16 people on the tennis courts at Fairfax Park the previous day, and suggested placing signs to obtain voluntary compliance. He stated a preference not to criminalize non-compliance, and if necessary, direct staff to place barriers at the tennis courts. Council Member Gambrell asked about best practices in scenarios such as a mother and child walking through a park, two friends in a park maintaining a distance from each other, the number of people in tennis courts, and rules for traversing through a park. Mayor Goodwin commented that the PSOs would have to count heads. She stated that she would not include closing the play fields at this time, and was not concerned about the tennis courts. The Mayor added that if there were no restrictions regarding playing on the fields, there would be no issue with walking across the park.

Kathleen Stewart stated that she counted four players per court, plus a trainer at the tennis courts in Fairfax Park the previous day. Council Member Gambrell suggested leaving only two courts open at Fairfax Park. Council Member Grisham suggested taking the nets down at two of the four tennis courts; Mayor Pro Tem McKnight voiced support of the suggestion, adding that it would resolve any confusion regarding how patrons are counted. Council Member Penfold suggested leaving the nets up at the outer courts for maximum distance separation.

Mayor Goodwin asked Rick Pyle if there is a need to do more. Director Pyle stated that the Town receives a daily update from Dallas County, and the Town is on several lists to obtain personal protection equipment supplies as soon as possible. The Department has made modifications to responding to certain calls; all staff practice social distancing and personal hygiene practices.

Council Member Dowler suggested consideration of a message to the residents at some point. Mayor Goodwin stated that volunteers have been told to stay at home. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight suggested an edict stating that the parks are open, but the playgrounds are closed, and include that patrons cannot come in an organized fashion that exceeds ten. The Town Council discussed the need to encourage park patrons to spread out within the open spaces. Following the discussion, Steven Alexander stated that he would get clarification from Dallas County.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 8:36 a.m.

APPROVED on this the 21st day of April, 2020.

BY:



Margo Goodwin
Mayor

ATTEST:



Gayle Kirby
Town Secretary