

MINUTES OF AN ONLINE STUDY SESSION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, AT 8:07 A.M. ON TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021.

Prior to the study session, Joanna Mekeal, Town Secretary, explained that as provided by the State of Texas, this online Town Council study session could be viewed via the Town's website, or listened to by telephone, and gave the toll-free and alternate telephone numbers, as well as the access number for citizens to call. Mrs. Mekeal conducted a roll call of the Town Council Members. Present at the meeting were Mayor Margo Goodwin, Mayor Pro Tem David Dowler, and Town Council Members Jimmy Grisham, Lydia Novakov, and Craig Penfold. Absent from the meeting was Council Member Marc Myers.

UPCOMING AGENDA DISCUSSION

Action

Review, discuss, and consider approval of a construction contract for the Mockingbird Lane and Airline Road Rehabilitation and Utility Improvements project. Lori Chapin, Director of Engineering, stated the Town Council discussed this item at the study session held on February 2, 2021, and requested staff research points raised by residents for additional design considerations for pedestrian and vehicle safety. Town staff recommends approving two (2) options to improve pedestrian safety. The first option provides a designation for a five-foot wide area, on the road surface, along the western side of the road as a pedestrian pathway. The designation would be accomplished by striping the roadway and installing signage. The second option provides the construction of a five-foot concrete sidewalk in the parkway area. Both residents on the west side between Cornell Avenue and Katy Trail are in concurrence with adding the sidewalk. A condition to adding the sidewalk is to remove three (3) trees. The Town's arborist recommends removing the trees due to the poor health condition. The Mayor asked if the residents residing near the trees have been informed of the removal. Ms. Chapin confirmed staff has contacted the residents and they are in support to remove the trees. Council Member Penfold recommended other safety measures for the pedestrians including to reduce the speed limit from 30 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour and install a "No Parking" sign along the Cornell Avenue block. Tom Grant, Vice President of Kimley Horn, explained State level rules would require a study to be completed with the minimum of 25 miles per hour. Mayor Goodwin asked Chief Paul Sandman, Director of Public Safety, his thoughts on reducing the speed limit on this street or adding additional signage. Chief Sandman stated he agreed with the original plans that were presented today. He suggested that when construction is complete, the street can then be observed, and staff can reevaluate if further adjustments are necessary. Mayor Goodwin and Council Member Penfold agreed, and there were no further questions. On a motion by Council Member Novakov, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Dowler, the Town Council voted unanimously to approve a construction contract for the Mockingbird Lane and Airline Road Rehabilitation and Utility Improvements project.

Review, discuss, and consider approval of an annual contract for the purchase of materials necessary to maintain and repair the Town's water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Lori Chapin, Director of Engineering, stated this item is routine as each year the Town solicits sealed competitive bids from qualified vendors for the purchase of materials necessary for the maintenance and repair of the Town's water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

Invitations to bid were sent to seven (7) identified potential vendors. Core & Main, previously known as HD Supply, has performed this service in the past and maintained a good relationship with the Town by providing fast, dependable service. A price comparison of the top 50 items the Town uses demonstrates the nominal savings. Mayor Goodwin asked if there were any questions from the Town Council, to which there were none. On a motion by Council Member Penfold, seconded by Council Member Novakov, the Town Council voted unanimously to approve an annual contract for the purchase of materials necessary to maintain and repair the Town's water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

Consent

Review and discuss a contract for the purchase and installation of traffic signal equipment upgrades at the Mockingbird Lane/Preston Road, Mockingbird Lane/Hillcrest Avenue, and Mockingbird Lane/Douglas Avenue intersections. Lori Chapin, Director of Engineering, stated Kimley-Horn performed a study in 2019 to review each of Mockingbird Lane's traffic signals, and provide recommendations on traffic signal upgrades to replace outdated equipment, and to improve the traffic flow and pedestrian accessibility at each of the signals. The study results were prioritized into different fiscal years. Town staff has been working with Kimley-Horn and Consolidated Traffic Controls ("CTC") to procure the purchase and installation of the traffic signal equipment upgrades. Council Member Penfold asked when the equipment was originally installed. Ms. Chapin stated approximately 20 years ago. Mayor Goodwin asked if there were any questions from the Town Council, to which there were none.

Reports

Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending January 31, 2021. Karen Kurtin, Controller, presented highlights of the Financial and Investment Report. This report is for the periods ending January 31, 2021, which marks the completion of the fourth month of the 2020 - 2021 fiscal year. Therefore, the year-to-date percentage for budgetary comparison purposes is 33.3%. General and Utility Fund combined revenues as of December 31, 2020, amount to \$19,200,963 which is 53.9% of the annual budgeted amounts. As of December 31, the General and Utility Fund combined expenditures and encumbrances amount to \$12,073,784 or 32.6% of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Combined Budget. The total market value of the Town's cash and investment portfolio on January 31, was \$47,673,411, yielding an average weighted return of 0.52%, with an average maturity of 18 days. Compared to year-to-date projections, property taxes are 100.7%, sales taxes are 131.6%, building permits are 200.7% and water sales are 98.1%. Building permit revenue continues to be significantly ahead of the year-to-date projection which is related to the revenue received from the Dallas Country Club in October. The Mayor asked the Town Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Review and discuss the progress of the Library Master Plan initiatives. Kortney Nelson, Town Librarian, stated in Fiscal Year ("FY") 2019, the Highland Park Harvey R. "Bum" Bright Library ("Library") staff began instituting projects to support the strategic areas of focus and goals outlined in the Library's Master Plan ("Plan"), "Inspiring a New Chapter: Preserving the Best of the Past While Providing the Best of the Future." The Plan includes five (5) strategic areas of focus for the Library, as well as initiatives, which span from FY 2019 through the current year, for each focus area. The areas included: (1) Back to Basics: Building the Framework for a High-Performing

Future; (2) Customer Service: Deliver Excellence and Welcome Surprises; (3) Service to Children, Tweens, and Teens: Connecting with the Next Generations; (4) Branding and Marketing: Amplifying the Message; and (5) A Library Without Walls: Leveraging Virtual and External Assets. Most of the initiatives had been instituted or begun by the second quarter of FY 2020. Due to various changes to the Library's policies and new objectives taking precedence to the Plan's specific initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, certain initiatives may not be completed by the end of FY 2021. Library staff would like to extend the Plan through FY 2022. This would allow for additional time on initiatives, as well as give an opportunity to implement supplemental projects. The Mayor and the Town Council agreed and complimented Mrs. Nelson and Library staff for their great efforts with the Library. The Mayor asked the Town Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Review and discuss the Highland Park Department of Public Safety's Texas Law Enforcement Agency Racial Profiling Report for 2020, and a report on the Highland Park Municipal Court best practices and disposition of citations for 2020. Dr. Alex Del Carmen, the Town's consultant, explained that the Town should be commended for not only having the ability of foresight but being able to engage in this level of analysis on both Municipal Court and Department of Public Safety ("DPS"). Dr. Del Carmen stated that he often uses the Town of Highland Park as an example of what to do in both departments.

Dr. Del Carmen explained that his work with the Municipal Court included reviewing and assessing current policies. His findings were: (1) cases filed are mostly related to Caucasian defendants, followed by Hispanics and African Americans; (2) cases closed by the court are proportionally distributed among Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics; (3) cases involving juvenile offenders are mostly Caucasian defendants; (4) cases dismissed at the counter and those dismissed via U.S. mail are proportionally distributed among all races; (5) a significant percentage of cases by all races and ethnicities were disposed through the payment of fines; and (6) the data shows that there were various methods of disposing cases by all racial and ethnic groups. The findings suggest practices of fairness across the board regarding court-related matters. Dr. Del Carmen recommended increasing efforts on behalf of the Court by continuing to reach out to all defendants to settle their pending cases, especially defendants that are not native English speakers, and continuing to monitor court data collection and processing.

The DPS report showed no racial profiling complaints filed in 2020; compared to other municipalities in Texas, the Town of Highland Park is in the top 5% in the State of Texas. DPS is in compliance with Senate Bill 1074 and the Sandra Bland Act. There are posters in the lobby with instructions on how to file a complaint on a racial profiling violation, and DPS informs the public, on qualifying contacts deemed by the Sandra Bland Act, and how to file a compliment or complaint. Dr. Del Carmen's reported that in 2020, most traffic stops involved Caucasian male drivers; the most frequent reason for a stop was "moving traffic violation;" and there were no instances of force used which resulted in bodily injury. He recommended continuing to collect and analyze data, as well as continuing to provide training on new data requirements and implicit bias.

Mayor Pro Tem Dowler asked if the number of stops was analyzed and if he noticed a trend or changes from the prior year. Dr. Del Carmen stated the frequency did change from the prior year due to COVID-19 and that this was seen across the State; however, the distribution was comparable to previous years. The Mayor asked the Town Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Review and discuss Town's public swimming pool program and schedule for the 2021 swim season. John Eaglen, Assistant Director of Development Services, explained this item is provided annually as an opportunity for the Town Council to review the summer swim program. A survey of some municipal pool operators indicates cities with outdoor pools anticipate opening this season with basic COVID-19 protocols. The Town has added 75 days of operation since 2018, when the pool heater and aerator were added. Residents' interest in use of the swimming pool is evident by an increase of 28.5% by lap swimmers and 57% with regular swim when comparing the 2019 to the 2020 swim season. In response to recent requests by lap swimmers, an additional 16 operational days will be added to the upcoming season for lap swim at a cost of approximately \$8,000. The Town's public swimming pool will be operated under the following standards for the 2021 swim season: (1) the concession stand will be operated with the sale of packaged offerings and canned drinks; (2) the swimming pool will open for lap swim on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 through Friday, October 29, 2021; (3) the regular season will begin on Friday, May 28, 2021, through Sunday, August 15, 2021; and (4) the swimming pool will be available for public swim when the water temperature is at least 78 degrees and the outdoor air temperature is at least 55 degrees. Mayor Goodwin asked if the process of selecting and hiring pool lifeguards was completed. Mr. Eaglen said he believed the pool manager has selected the candidates and began the enrollment process. The Mayor asked the Town Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the Town Council meeting at 9:15 a.m.

APPROVED on this 20th day of April 2021.

APPROVED:


Margo Goodwin
Mayor

ATTEST:


Joanna Mekeal
Town Secretary