



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES
CITY OF ODESSA, TEXAS
MARCH 1, 2016

On March 1, 2016, a workshop of the Odessa City Council was held at 2:08 p.m., at City Hall, 5th floor conference room, 411 W. 8th St., Odessa, Texas.

Members present: Mayor David R. Turner, Council members: Dewey Bryant, District Two; Barbara Graff, District Three; Michael Gardner, District Four; and Filiberto Gonzales, District Five.

Member absent: Council member Roger McNeil, District One.

Others present: Richard Morton, City Manager; Larry Long, City Attorney; Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, City Secretary; Michael Marrero, Deputy City Manager; Konrad Hildebrandt, Assistant City Manager; Vanessa Shrauner, Development Services Manager; and Randy Brinlee, Director of Planning.

A quorum being present, the following proceedings were held:

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order and the following proceedings were held:

Council member Bryant gave the invocation.

Discuss the long range Comprehensive Master Plan. Council member Gonzales stated it was a good guide and good ideas. It was a tool to hold the City accountable and to execute a plan for the community. He stated that it would create pride and excitement on making the community attractive. Discussion was held on drill sites. The drill sites should be safe and not an eye sore for the community. Mayor Turner spoke with a Chevron representative to discuss the drill sites. A contact person would be established to get the site cleaned up. Staff made a map that identified the drill sites. He stated that the City needed to proceed with implementing the plan. Council member Graff stated that the responsibility of the staff needed to be identified to address the issues and topics of the plan. Debris and trash would be the responsibility of Code Enforcement. Mr. Morton stated that there was an action plan for implementation. Council member Graff wanted the implementation to move forward. Council member Gonzales stated that assignments should be made for accountability. Council member Graff asked about a landscaping ordinance. Mr. Morton stated that it was included in the action plan under land use for making attractive neighborhoods in the community.

Council member Graff expressed her concerns. She asked about the financing district. Mr. Morton explained the TIFF financing. Future growth of revenue would be used for the area of growth identified. Council member Graff stated if this was going to be pursued then it needed to be established at this time. It would assist in building up the downtown area. It could be a good tool for the use of Downtown Odessa. A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) was used many years ago. The TIRZ could be used if the values were increasing. She stated that it should be implemented before the construction. Mr. Morton would provide the pros and cons of the TIRZ for the Council.

Council member Graff stated that a landscape ordinance was needed. Stakeholders needed to have buy in for the ordinance. Mayor Turner was working with the developers. Mr. Brinlee stated that the landscape ordinance was almost complete to bring forward to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Council member Graff stated that the quality of life needed to be improved which would include adding more parks. She stated a park land dedication ordinance was needed. There were some districts that do not have many parks. She stated that people want parks and trails. Mayor Turner stated that the park land dedication had concerns from the community. The action plan stated to develop a parks land dedication ordinance but it was up to the Council to pursue. Mr. Morton stated that a parks land dedication ordinance was used in other cities. Council member Graff stated that some people do not like change. She reminded how the parking ordinance was passed that put requirements on citizens for their driveway. She suggested working with the developers for input on a parks land dedication ordinance.

Council member Gardner stated it was a good plan. He was concerned with the economy. He was concerned with the tenants in the downtown area. The cost of the projects may be difficult for the tenants and owners. Mayor Turner stated that if people would go downtown with businesses, they would increase the success of the business. He stated meetings were held with the Downtown tenants and their input was heard. Mr. Morton stated that the façade program will assist the tenants.

Council member Graff suggested a Buy Odessa campaign with a catchy phrase. She had complaints regarding businesses being broken into in the downtown area. She suggested that the action plan of consolidation of downtown into a single Police beat be implemented. It may deter crime with police visibility.

Mayor Turner suggested that the plan needed to be prioritized to move forward. Council member Bryant stated that there were so many topics in the plan. He stated that the key was to prioritize and communicate regarding the areas of implementation of the plan. He stated that it would be difficult to get the developer to make a park with the economy slowing down. He stated that there needed to be a game plan every year. Mayor Turner stated that the code enforcement was being addressed and there were other areas in the works. Council member Graff suggested having the homeless clean up the city and they get paid as it was done in Albuquerque. Staff was reviewing the ordinance. The Council needed to know what was happening. Council member Gardner stated having a designated vacant lot from the builders was possible and could be built in the future. Mr. Long stated that the communication issue could not violate the Open Meetings Act. Any emails should be sent to staff. Communication needed to be a priority to work as a team. An update on the long range plan should be included in the briefing sessions. Council member Bryant stated that the priorities may change due to Odessa's unique environment. Council member Gonzales wanted a prioritized list.

Council member Bryant suggested a yearly report in each district for the constituents. Council member Graff stated a town hall meeting should be held at each Council District explaining the plan. Buy in from the constituents was needed. Mayor Turner stated that communication could be improved. He stated that different generations have a different preference for the form of communication. Council member Graff suggested an interactive app to ask community questions be used to keep interaction with the citizens.

There was a short recess. The meeting reconvened at 3:35 p.m.

Council member Graff discussed the mixed-use redevelopment. She stated that Odessa College and Downtown Odessa should be the first two areas to be redeveloped as mixed-use. Mr. Morton stated that it was prioritized under land use. Council member Graff discussed housing was needed for mixed income. She had discussed with a developer to build lofts downtown. Mr. Morton stated that land was needed for the Downtown area. She stated that it would attract young citizens and assist with the revitalization in the Downtown area. Mr. Marrero stated that the Downtown Plan laid out specifics on the area including housing. Mr. Hildebrandt stated that citizens were concerned with the funding to revitalize the Downtown area.

Mayor Turner liked the plan and it needed to be about the citizens' wants. The plan outlined the responses from the citizens. Odessa needed to be on a path. The people from Odessa can get things done to be a viable city for the future. He wanted the peoples' voice to be heard. Mayor Turner stated a few changes were still being made to the plan.

Council member Graff discussed the land use categories regarding the low, medium and high density. Mr. Marrero stated that there were certain standards but included developers' vision. Mr. Brinlee discussed the land use process on the types of land for the city. He stated that staff reviewed the proposed zoning with the existing land in the area and if it was part of the Master Plan. Council member Graff stated that direction of land use should be directed from the Council and not the developers. She discussed area for retail and that Council needed to build up identified areas. Mayor Turner stated that there were issues regarding land such as Houston Endowment. Mr. Long stated that the city can incentivize but can't force the businesses to build in a certain area. Council member Bryant stated that there should be a focus on an area. Mayor Turner stated that the City has a strong retail for the citizens. Mr. Long discussed the 380 Agreement which incentivized after identifying a need and a focus. It was a great success. Mr. Morton identified the driving forces of development. Council member Graff stated that incentives should be given for an area that was identified.

Council member Graff mentioned the declining neighborhoods. The plan outlined things that the City could take action. Mayor Turner stated that engaging the churches was an avenue to assist the neighborhoods and citizens.

Ms. Shrauner stated that there was a list of projects of on-going and one-time projects. It identified resources and contact information with each project. Mayor Turner stated that it would give community pride. Ms. Shrauner stated that it could incorporate a whole block or a neighborhood. Mr. Marrero stated Federal funds were depleting and other resources were needed to be identified to assist the citizens in need. Council member Graff recommended asking the businesses and utility companies to take on a project for a group in need. It would have a lasting effect. Mr. Long stated that the prisoners picked up trash and it made a positive impact in cleaning the roads. He stated that there were other resources that needed to be identified and explored. Contact will be made with Keep Odessa Beautiful for prisoners to clean up on the roads. Council member Bryant stated that communication was needed with Council to focus on the benefits to provide the community.

Mayor Turner asked the Council members to prioritize the action plan under each category. The deadline to submit the list to Mr. Morton was Monday, March 7.

On code enforcement, Mr. Marrero stated that ordinances were implemented for Code Enforcement to enforce. Resources would become an issue. Council member Bryant stated that the representation of Council was important and suggested to focus on a specific area to make a greater positive impact. There was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, TRMC, CMC
City Secretary

David R. Turner
Mayor