



# CITY OF BELLAIRE TEXAS

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

DECEMBER 8, 2015

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**Council Conference Room**

**Workshop Session**

**6:00 PM**

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**7008 S. RICE AVENUE  
BELLAIRE, TX 77401**

### **I. WORKSHOP SESSION**

#### **A. Call to Order**

Chairman Frazier called the workshop to order at 6:02 PM.

#### **B. Discussion regarding the Planning and Zoning Commission's goals and objectives for 2016.**

Chairman Frazier asked the Commission members to remember that every goal needs to be specific, achievable, time bound, and measurable.

Mr. McDonald informed the Commission that the previous night, Council heard from the traffic engineer on the first phase of a mobility study for the City of Bellaire. He added that he had provided each member with a copy of the executive summary, and that the study is available, in full, on the City's website. Mr. McDonald stated that the City is already gearing up to prepare next year's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and that the Commission is projected to receive the City Manager's draft in March, with a decision from the Commission expected at the April meeting. He added that the CIP's new project list will be much smaller than it was this past year.

Commissioner Simmons urged the Commissioners to review the mobility study in more depth.

Commissioner Butler mentioned that ideally, the projects proposed by the Citizens for A Beautiful Bellaire will also eventually be included within the CIP.

Chairman Frazier mentioned that Council took action to no longer charge Condit and Horn Elementary for a sign processing fee and asked if there are other zoning regulations similar to this that the Commission should take a look at.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that the fees charged by staff are strictly an administrative issue rather than a zoning issue. He added however, that there have recently been some Supreme Court decisions on signs in general, and how sign ordinances are enforced. He explained that looking at a sign to enforce the ordinance means that you are looking at the content of the sign, making it a violation of the First Amendment. Mr. McDonald mentioned that the sign ordinance will need to be looked at in order to avoid potential lawsuits in the future.

Vice Chairman Stiggins mentioned that the Commission felt pressured to make a recommendation for last year's CIP. He suggested that the Commission go ahead and plan for an additional workshop/meeting in between the March and April meetings in order to have adequate time to review the projects.

Commissioner Thorogood suggested that during the CIP presentation, staff also mention the projects that were completed within the previous year.

Mr. McDonald stated that he could ask for that to be done. He added that staff also does a quarterly CIP report to Council, which lists every CIP project that is being worked on at the time. Mr. McDonald mentioned that it could be forwarded to the Commission.

Chairman Frazier mentioned the sidewalk discrepancy that the City has had for many years and asked if it was likely to be coming into play during 2016.

Mr. McDonald explained that there have been some discussions at the Council level regarding sidewalks, sidewalk policy, sidewalk requirements, etc. He stated that the current building code only requires that a sidewalk be replaced if it existed prior to the building of the house. Mr. McDonald added that staff is looking into those issues from a building code perspective.

Commissioner Thorogood asked what the sidewalk policy was for streets that are being rebuilt.

Mr. McDonald stated that there is really no consistent policy in place. He mentioned however that the creation of a subdivision does require the installation of sidewalks. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the consistency of sidewalks is mentioned within the Comprehensive Plan and suggested that the Commission address that during the CIP process.

Commissioner Thorogood was concerned with the pressure that is being put on the southern, central, and northern borders of the City, and suggested looking into something that could be done from a zoning standpoint that would help to enhance and protect the borders.

The Commission then had a discussion on the increase of density and how it would impact things such as transportation methods, traffic patterns/counts, etc.

Commissioner Butler stated that he feels as though there is a lot of value in holding the borders of the community and thinking long-term about how the City will survive.

Commissioner Thorogood felt that zoning regulations could be used to help address some of those concerns, and that the Commission should use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool to help move forward and begin looking to the future.

Chairman Frazier asked what the next steps for the Commission is with regard to the beautification efforts that are happening within the City.

Mr. McDonald explained that he is not sure how the recommendations from the Citizens for A Beautiful Bellaire is going to fit within the CIP.

Commissioner Thorogood asked if there is a timeline associated with the projects.

Commissioner Butler stated that currently there is no set timeline. He added that the survey may kick out some ideas for projects that would not necessarily require the approval of money from the City Council, and could be accomplished by the Commission or another board within the City.

Chairman Frazier asked that the Commission be told about meetings that are taking place with regard to Bellaire High School, in an effort to keep the members up to date on what is being proposed.

Mr. McDonald explained that currently all meetings have been put on hold. He added that they are possibly looking into simply remodeling the school rather than rebuilding, but are trying to come up with alternate funding sources since the bond was specifically for rebuilding. Mr. McDonald suggested that once the meetings proceed, the Commission members only attend the community meetings, which are a little less "in the weeds," since they will ultimately be making the decision.

Chairman Frazier mentioned that he feels as though a lot of residents have very little idea of what the Planning and Zoning Commission is charged with. He suggested possibly coming up with a way to educate the public on what the Commission does.

Mr. McDonald stated that staff will look into ways to accomplish that. He mentioned that the City publishes a quarterly newsletter that could possibly include articles highlighting some of the City's boards and commissions in the future.

Vice Chairman Stiggins was concerned with the lack of resident participation in the community and asked if there was something that could encourage more of that. He suggested possibly having an article in the paper periodically which would touch on some current events/applications that will be in front of the Commission soon.

Mr. McDonald cautioned against that type of media push. He added that the members of the Commission are appointed, based on their education and knowledge base, to provide advice to Council on certain items. Mr. McDonald stated that Council will ultimately make the political decision.

Overall, there was consensus among the Commissioners to look into the following items during 2016:

1. Sign ordinance
2. Capital Improvement Plan
3. UV-T Zoning District
4. CMU vs R-MF height allowances
5. Noise Ordinance
6. Height allowance for fencing along 610

#### **C. General Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **D. Adjournment**

Chairman Frazier adjourned the workshop session at 7:37 PM.