

**MINUTES: CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION MINUTES
January 6, 2009**

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Mayor Joe Higgs, Councilman Andy Garza, Councilman Glenn Ervin, Councilman Robert Patton, Councilman Mike Walker, Councilman Thomas Muir.

OTHERS

PRESENT: City Manager Mike Brice, City Secretary/Asst. City Manager Rose Chavez, Director of Development Services Joseph Iliff

1. Call Meeting to Order.

Mayor Higgs called meeting to order.

2. Review and Update of City Financials and Waste Water Treatment Plant.

City Manager addressed this item and proceeded with a discussion concerning the City's financial state and status of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The discussion covered the information that was provided to Upper Trinity concerning housing, property tax collections, and sewer tap revenues. The decline in growth has impacted these revenues sources. In summary the revenues that were projected to help with the cost of the sewer plant are no longer there. The impact fee study will not be completed until June, and at that time those fees will be implemented. The concern factor is this only applies to new development and unless development turns around those impact fees and tap fees revenues will not be generated as it has in the past. The comprehensive water and wastewater study will determine the initial size of the new plant for the future needs of the City. The City Manager indicated Upper Trinity is in agreement of not proceeding with the engineering of the wastewater treatment plant until the comprehensive study is completed. After completion of the study, they will reevaluate the City's revenue sources. The economy is a determining factor concerning future growth.

City Manager discussed the current bond debt that will be paid off within the next couple of years. The Wal-Mart tax abatement goes off in 2010 and goes on the tax roll at 100% generating increase revenues. The sales tax revenues are remaining constant. This could be triggered by local residents shopping at local establishments and eating at fast food and restaurants in Sanger. The advantage the City has is that 4A and 4B are financially stable to help with infrastructure development. The City's overall financial status is still good.

A brief discussion followed concerning the taxable value on Wal-Mart's personal property for 2008.

There was an overview of the Comptroller's Economic Outlook that provided information of the latest economic indicators.

Discussion concerning the requirements of TCEQ regarding infiltration to the sewer plant.

City Manager advised that due to the fact that problems are caused by infiltration, TCEQ is more understanding than if the City was having the problem due to growth factors. The other benefit is that the City is in the process of building; and if the City continues to move forward with the new sewer plant, he does not think the City will have any issues with TCEQ. City Manager discussed current capacity is at 70% and the requirement to be in the planning stages is at 90%. The City is in the planning stages, and we are in compliance.

3. Overview of New Sign Ordinance.

The City Manager gave a review of the proposed sign ordinance submitted by the Sign Committee. The new ordinance addresses many issues that are not addressed in the current ordinance. It also contains significant changes and requirements.

The major changes on signs were as follows:

- Light-illuminating signs are not allowed including LED or projection signs.**
- Signs on fences or railing are not allowed except for Agricultural signs.**
- Banners or pennants, except where specifically allowed, are prohibited.**
- Neon signs are still prohibited.**
- Off-Premise Signs other than billboard signs are prohibited. Billboard signs are allowed in I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.**
- Portable Signs are prohibited.**
- Pole Signs are allowed but are more restrictive than the past.**

Councilman Garza indicated that the Council voted several years ago to ban billboard signs in the City limits. He advised that the City Attorney had also reviewed and approved the change.

The City Manager advised this is not in the ordinance, and a City can't outlaw billboard signs.

Lengthy discussion continued concerning the existing ordinance to ban billboard signs and State requirements.

Councilman Patton asked if the Committee took the existing ordinance and worked from it or did they use a model from another similar City.

The City Manager advised, after reviewing several ordinances from other cities, they used the model from the City of McKinney. The Sign Committee compared it our existing sign ordinance for recommended changes.

The City Manager continued to discuss the changes as follows:

- On windows, no more than 25% can be covered with signage.
- Non-Premise directional signs are prohibited.
- A meritorious exception for unique situations and it is at Council's discretion.

Councilman Garza asked who controls the distribution of handbills within the City. He also inquired on who regulates the abandonment of signs.

The City Manager indicated that the only way we can regulate hand bills is if someone calls to complain. In the matter concerning the abandonment of signs, the new ordinance allows the City to act within 180 days after a business closes. If the sign becomes inappropriate, then it must be covered up or taken down depending on the structure and condition of the sign.

Discussion followed concerning issues regarding signage.

The City Manager advised if Council is comfortable with the proposed ordinance it will be an action item in the first meeting in February.

Councilman Ervin asked if the Planning and Zoning Commission could review the new ordinance.

City Manager advised that he would submit the ordinance to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their recommendations.

Councilman Garza asked that staff research if the City has an ordinance to ban billboard signs. He indicated there are several cities that are very stringent with their signs and do not have any billboards.

Discussion continued regarding the new restrictions to pole signs. The existing signs are grandfathered in.

4. Overview of Items on Regular Agenda.
5. Adjournment.

Mayor Higgs adjourned the meeting.