

STATE OF TEXAS §  
COUNTY OF CAMERON §  
TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA §

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE LAGUNA VISTA TOWN COUNCIL**

DATE: June 8, 2021

TIME: 6:00 pm

PLACE: City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nadine Smith, Mayor  
Michael Carter, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Johvonne Howard, Council Member Place 2  
Bettina Tolin, Council Member Place 3  
Rolando Gonzalez, Council Member Place 4  
Victor Worrell, Council Member Place 5  
Silke De Gobeo, Council Member Place 6

Ed Meza, City Manager  
Ana Hernandez, City Secretary  
Rendie Gonzales, Town Bookkeeper  
Alan Ozuna, Town Attorney  
Anthony David, Police Chief

MEMBERS ABSENT: All Present

ALSO PRESENT: Judge Jim Hunter  
Francisco Briones  
Daisy Flores, Tanglewood Apts

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- 1) **Call to Order** Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2) **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Mayor Smith.
- 3) **OPEN FORUM** - At this time, audience is allowed 5 minutes per person to address the Council on any topic. There is no discussion or formal action taken during this agenda item. The speaker must identify themselves before speaking. A speaker request form must be presented to the City Secretary prior to the meeting.

**No Open Forum.**

- 4) **OATH OF OFFICE** – Administration of Oath of Elected Officials to Council Members Rolando Gonzalez, Place 4, Victor Worrell, Place 5, and Silke de Gobeo, Place 6. (City Secretary)

**Administration of Oath of elected officials was administered by Judge Jim Hunter to Council Member Rolando Gonzalez, Council Member Victor Worrell, and Council Member Silke de Gobeo.**

**5) ROLL CALL/EXCUSED ABSENCES – ALL PRESENT**

**6) CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS** – All matters listed under this item are routine by the Council and will be enacted for approval by one motion. There will not be a separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately.

**a) MINUTES** – Consideration and action to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2021, Regular Meeting. (City Secretary)

**b) MINUTES** - Consideration and action to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2021, Special Meeting. (City Secretary)

**Council Member Worrell made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 11, 2021 & May 25, 2021, with corrections, Council Member Gonzalez seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo, and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**c) FINANCIAL REPORTS** – Review of monthly financial reports (City Manager)

**No Discussion**

**7) NEW BUSINESS** – Discussion, consideration, and possible action on each of the following items:

**a) PUBLIC HEARING** – Conduct public hearing for the submittal of funding application under the Texas General Land Office (GLO) 2021 Affordable Rental Program (ARP) to assist the Cameron County Housing Authority with rehabilitation of the Tanglewood Apartments and/or development and construction of affordable rental units.

**Public Hearing  
Opened at 6:06 p.m.  
Closed at 6:07 p.m.**

**No Comments**

**b) MAYOR PRO-TEM** – Consideration and possible action to appoint/re-appoint a Mayor pro-tem as per Home Rule Charter. (City Manager)

**Council Member Worrell made a motion to appoint Council Member Johvonne Howard as the Mayor Pro-Tem, Council Member Gonzalez seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo, and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- c) **RESOLUTION 2021-15** - Consideration and action to approve Resolution 2021-15 authorizing the submission of grant application(s) to the Texas General Land Office (GLO) 2021 Affordable Rental Program ARP. (City Manager)

Francisco Briones addressed the Council he stated this grant is for 1,694,000 for repairs to the Tanglewood Apts, Mr. Briones introduced Daisy Flores who is the director for the Cameron County Housing authority who owns and operates the Tanglewood Apts. The deadline for this grant will be June 13, 2021.

Council Member Worrell asked how the 1,694,000 was calculated.

Answer: Mr. Briones replied that the numbers come from Ms. Flores, Ms. Flores added that she based this number on previous construction that is ongoing and came pretty close but went over just a bit to make sure.

Council Member Worrell asked what exactly was being done tearing down? remodeling?

Answer: Ms. Flores replied that the building that are there are going to be remodeled and add and additional 60 units.

Council Member Worrell asked what will happen to existing tenants.

Answer: Ms. Flores replied that the new units will be built 1<sup>st</sup> that way existing tenants will be moved to new units while the old ones get remodeled.

Council Member Gonzalez asked that it wasn't just a remodel then that it will actually be redone completely

Answer: Mr. Briones said yes

Council Member Carter asked which way will they be going East or West

Answer: East

Mayor Smith confirmed with Ms. Flores if they were also getting funding so if we get this grant we would be working in conjunction.

Answer: Ms. Flores confirmed

Mayor Smith also asked about the park saying that if we do get this grant can we use some of the money to enhance the park.

Answer: Ms. Flores said the park enhancement is in the works.

Council Member Worrell asked if the rent would stay the same for tenants

Answer: Ms. Flores replied they will go according to the fair market, but a lot of the families have vouchers. Tanglewood belongs to a non-profit and the other side is the Housing Authority which gives out vouchers. The families that are there now get vouchers which means we pay a percentage, and they pay the other percentage. Mr. Briones stepped in and stated that the rent amount depends on income and Ms. Flores stated that rent cannot be more than 30% of income.

Mayor Smith stated that on her prior communication with Daisy stated that Tanglewood was moving ahead with this project but when she heard about this, she thought about looking for a grant to help out and also enhance the park with this option we can make the park better and make the apartments look nicer.

Council Member Tolin asked Ms. Flores if they were moving forward with project whether we applied for grant.

Answer: Yes

Council Member Tolin asked what would the financial impact be to the project if we don't get the grant would it only affect the park or is there an impact on remodeling?

Answer: Ms. Flores stated if we get grant we will not have much debt on the property which will allow us to do more projects.

Council Member De Gobeo asked Ms. Flores if all tenants had vouchers and if they would be able to move to new buildings.

Answer: Ms. Flores said most do but everyone will be giving the opportunity but it depends if they are on the program or not.

**Council Member Tolin made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-15 authorizing the submission of grant application(s) to Texas General Land Office (GLO) 2021 Affordable Rental Program ARP, Mayor Smith seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye”, motion carried.**

- d) RESOLUTION 2021-16** - Consideration and action to approve Resolution 2021-16 authorizing the submission of grant application(s) to the GLO Coastal Management Program for the “Laguna Vista Memorial Park”. (City Manager)

Mr. Meza stated that this property is the one located between Paradise Cove and Laguna Heights (Yturria property). Mr. Meza stated that he has reached out to the Yturria Family and working with them.

Francisco Briones stated that the deadline for this grant is tomorrow June 9, 2021. Pre-application is a basic concept of what the city wants to do with this property. If the state accepts the pre-proposal, then we would authorize the full application which would be 3-6 months down the road. At the time the state will require full details of the project.

Council Member Carter made a motion to go into Executive Session, Council

Member Gonzalez seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo, voted “aye” Mayor Smith voted “nay”, motion carried.

Council went into Executive Session at 6:25 p.m.  
Council came out of Executive Session at 6:42 pm

**NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON ITEM d**

- e) **SECURITY AGREEMENT WITH TDHCA** – Consideration and possible action to ratify approval of Security Agreement with TDHCA regarding the Covid Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. (City Manager)

Mr. Briones stated that this item along with item f are related. These items are required for the funding which require the Mayor’s signature which states that we will not release any personal information of applicants and the second sheet which is for item f is the funding agreement the effective date is June 15.

Council Member Worrell asked if Mr. Briones was handling all the funds and distribution.

Answer: Mr. Briones replied yes

Mr. Briones stated that the city along with his office will do the outreach, but applications will be given at City Hall. Mr. Briones went over the process. He stated that once a family get approved it will be the Council that authorizes payment to the mortgage company. The request for funds will then come to the City and then from there a check will be cut.

Mayor Smith asked if he (Mr. Briones) will handle all the paperwork.

Answer: Yes

Council Member Worrell stated that the contract asks for very specific IT requirements and asked Mr. Briones if his system met all the requirements.

Answer: Yes

Council Member De Gobeo asked what would happen if we only got 30 applicants instead of 50 what happens to his percentage, and will the difference have to be repaid.

Answer: Mr. Briones stated that it would be adjusted accordingly.

Mayor Smith asked what he meant by accordingly and restated the question stating if we have money left over do we have to pay back.

Answer: Mr. Briones stated that the state will only release the amount we are requesting we will not get a lump sum. He also stated that there are some benchmarks that need to be met.

Council Member Carter asked so if we do not meet benchmarks the grants stops?

Answer: Yes

Council Member Carter asked what our indirect cost rate is?

Answer: Mr. Briones stated there is no formula to his knowledge. It is a percentage of what the government identifies and to his knowledge the city does not have an indirect cost attached to this.

Council Member asked if he would be applying for indirect funds.

Answer: Mr. Briones replied no, and he is not authorized; the city is the grantee.

Council Member Howard asked who is the subrecipient?

Answer: It's the City

Ms. Howard asked to be walked through the whole process. She also asked who the check is made payable to. The check is payable to the mortgage company.

Council Member De Gobeo asked if the assistance is only for first mortgage loans.

Answer: Yes

Council Member Worrell asked if GI Bill will be accepted?

Answer: Yes

Council Member Carter asked if accounting was ready and that a separate G/L will need to be created for this.

Answer: Mr. Meza replied that we are.

Attorney Alan Ozuna added that the contract actually involves the next 2 items which includes IT security policy item g.

**Council Member Tolin made a motion to ratify approval of Security Agreement with TDHCA regarding the Covid Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program item (e) and item (f) to ratify approval of the Funding Grant Agreement with TDHCA, Mayor Smith seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- f) FUNDING GRANT AGREEMENT WITH TDHCA** – Consideration and possible action to ratify approval of the Funding Grant Agreement with TDHCA regarding the Covid Emergency Mortgage Assistance Programs. (City Manager)

**Motion passed along with item (e)**

- g) IT SECURITY POLICY** – Consideration and possible action concerning Town IT Security Policy (City Manager)

Attorney Alan Ozuna stated he developed this policy in response to the requirement with the agreement with TDHCA, but it is a good idea to have this in place. These are requirements that the Texas Legislature imposes on member of city staff. He

recommended that all council members take this 40-minute course and get certified.

**Council Member Worrell made a motion to adopt of the IT Security Policy, Council Member Gonzalez seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- h) REPLAT** – Consideration and possible action to approve the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission to replat Original Townsite, Block 520, Lot 2, and the South 30 feet of vacated 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Council Member Carter made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission to replat Original Townsite, Block 520, Lot 2 and the South 30 feet of vacated 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Council Member Howard seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- i) LAGUNA VISTA FIRE DEPT** – Consideration and possible action to approve the recommendation from the CDC for a project at the Laguna Vista Fire Department for public safety facility improvements for the construction a prepared parking lot on North side of the Fire Hall.(City Manager)

**Council Member Howard made a motion to approve the recommendation from the CDC for a project at the Laguna Vista Fire Department for public safety facility improvements for the construction a prepared parking lot on North side of the Fire Hall, Council Member Tolin seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- j) MESQUITE SCULPTURE** – Consideration and possible action to approve the recommendation from the CDC for a project to fund the restoration of the mesquite sculptures in front of City Hall. (City Manager)

**Mayor Smith made a motion to approve the recommendation from the CDC for a project to fund the restoration of the mesquite sculptures in front of City Hall, Council Member Carter seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- k) LAGUNA VISTA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FY 2021-22 BUDGET** – Consideration and possible action to ratify Laguna Vista Community Development Corporation FY 2021-22 Budget. (City Manager)

Mr. Meza reviewed the budget for the council. Council Member Carter asked for a balance sheet.

**Council Member Carter made a motion to approve the Laguna Vista Community Development Corporation FY 2021-22 Budget, Council Member De Gobeo seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- D) CITY TREE** – Discussion and possible action regarding the designation of the Official Town Tree. (Mayor Smith)

Mayor Smith addressed the Council stating she is bringing this item back and hopes everyone went out and did some research. Many kept mentioning the mesquite tree, but Mayor was looking for a flower tree. After everyone’s input it was decided that the Retama would be the best choice.

**Council Member Worrell made a motion to designate the Retama as the official town tree, Council Member Carter seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- m) 4<sup>th</sup> of July** - Discussion and possible action to approve the budget for 4<sup>th</sup> of July expenses. (City Manager)

Mr. Meza reviewed the expenses for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event. Almost all expenses are being paid out of HOT. Council Member De Gobeo is not ok with the ponies nor the petting zoo. Council Member Gonzalez asked what animals will be at the petting zoo. Council Member Howard agrees with Council Member De Gobeo and feels it is inhumane. Mayor Smith disagrees and is not unopposed. Council Member Carter supports the ponies and he himself loves the idea and his kids enjoyed it. Council Member Worrell suggested to add postcards to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July budget which will be \$800 total or less. Council Member Carter would like to see one of the banners like Port Isabel puts across Hwy 100. Mayor Smith instructed Mr. Meza to find out what we need to set up a banner like that.

**Council Member Worrell made a motion to amend the 4<sup>th</sup> of July budget by \$800 for EDD and printing, Council Member De Gobeo seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**Council Member Tolin made a motion to approve the 4<sup>th</sup> of July budget, Council Member Howard seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith**



**voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**n) ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS** – Consideration and possible action to appoint residents to the following advisory boards:

**i) CDC Board – 2 Members**

**Council Member Tolin made a motion to re-appoint Terri Galloway to the CDC Board, Council Member Worrell seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**Council Member Tolin made a motion to appoint Ed Rivera to the CDC Board, Council Member Worrell seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**ii) Parks & Recreation – 5 Members**

**Mayor Smith made a motion to re-appoint Duvie Alcocer, Irene Hernandez, Karen Watt and Stephanie Wilson to the Parks and Recreation Board, Council Member Gonzalez seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo and Mayor Smith voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**o) CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

**i) Update on South Texas Eco-Tourism Information Center**

Mr. Meza addressed the Council he stated the meeting with Council needs to be rescheduled due to rain. Project is about 90% completed, working on exhibits. It is a world class facility. Commissioner Garza wants it to be a part of our community. The Center will be rented for weddings but if any organization wants to use it for meetings there will not be a charge. It looks like it will be completed by the end of July. Bahia Grande trails was given a tour and they thought it was amazing.

**ii) Update on Town of Laguna Vista Master Plan**

Mr. Meza told the Council that he needs about another month and a half to finish. He has been using information from town of Forney which is close to what we have. It will be about 80 pages. He is working on all the statistics.

**iii) Update on design guidelines and design overlay of business District**

Mr. Meza addressed the council he stated that he found out that previous

management was already on the second reading, but he knows the council wants to update. He got the overlay from Port Isabel, the Island, and Harlingen just to compare to see if we can update and work on design guidelines so we can set color. This is for commercial.

- p) EXECUTIVE SESSION** - The Town Council may convene in Executive closed session in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, regarding any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to Section 551.071 - consultation with Town Attorney; 551.074 – Personnel deliberations; and 551.087 – deliberation regarding economic development negotiations.

**THIS ITEM TOOK PLACE DURING ITEM (d)**

- q) ADJOURNMENT** -

**Mayor Smith made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 pm, Council Member Tolin seconded the motion. Council Members Carter, Howard, Tolin, Gonzalez, Worrell, De Gobeo, and Mayor Smith voted “aye”, motion carried.**

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Nadine Smith, Mayor

Attest:

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Ana Hernandez, City Secretary