



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
February 12, 2024**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of council were present.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave the invocation and Councilmember Yancy led the pledge.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1. Deputy City Manager Announcement

City Manager Cesar Garcia introduced new Deputy City Manager Joshua Pritchett. Deputy City Manager Pritchett shared his appreciation and gratitude to the community and staff for pushing him to take on this new role.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Seth Sharpe (3003 Jefferson Dr) spoke regarding his concerns about Jefferson Street's potholes. He has been requesting that the street be paved for 40 years.
- Keith Pope (3010 Rose Ln) spoke on behalf of the neighborhood, who disapproved a request for access to a commercial property via a gate at the end of the dead-end street.
- Jessica Roads (Resource & Crisis Center of Galveston County) spoke to give context to item 8.IV shares some programming the organization hopes to bring to the La Marque Public Library.
- Pamela Mahan (3010 Rose Ln) spoke to ask for a sewer cleanout near 3030 Rose Ln and questioned why the inside of her PVC waterline is orange and the water inside her home is discolored.
- Jon Jones (2502 Duroux) spoke regarding the declining condition of the street on the Duroux section near his home.
- Diana Garcia (2450 Duroux) spoke regarding the declining condition of the Duroux near her home.
- Joseph Lowry (2503 Cedar) spoke regarding concerns regarding his belief that a member of Council is violating the charter, and his Civil Rights have been

violated. He shared his belief that the crime stats being presented are inaccurate.

- *William Douglas (2450 Duroux) declined to speak.*

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

***Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered into Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m. ***

6.I. Ordinance No. O-2024-0001

There was no citizen's participation.

6.II. Ordinance No. O-2024-0002

There was no citizen's participation.

7. OLD BUSINESS

***Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearings and entered into the Regular Meeting at 6:52 p.m.*

7.I. Ordinance No. O-2024-0001

Mayor Bell gave a brief recap of the joint City Council and Planning and Zoning Meeting that happened in the previous week.

Representatives of the Texas City Terminal Railroad were present to discuss this item, sharing that if there are concerns or unresolved questions, then the leadership of both organizations should sit down and work to come to a resolution. They shared that the railroad is willing to work with the community to come to an agreement on development that benefits both parties, but also was firm in that there would be some form of development.

Councilmember Ross questioned the protection that will be in place for the residents in the area as relayed by the residents.

Mayor Bell shared that the concern he is hearing from residents is a lack of communication and community buy-in from the community, which he acknowledged is being alleviated by their presence at the meeting. He identified that one of the main requests is a sound barrier to reduce sound within homes to around 50 decibels.

The representatives shared that while building "The Great Wall of La Marque" is likely not a viable option as it is cost prohibitive, there are other options, such as green space and naturescape that may achieve the desired result.

Mayor Bell questioned if there was a specific development in mind, to which it was replied that no, there is not at the moment, as they were waiting to see what the industrial zone would look like. A follow-up discussion ensued. He also requested copies of other municipal industrial zone ordinances to corroborate the notion that this ordinance is "robust," as stated in the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared his view that many of the discussions that are being held should be reserved until a development has been identified. He refers to the Texas City Terminal Railroad as a "capitalist entity with a soul". Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested continued discussions between staff and the representatives.

Councilmember Leyva Allred thanked the representatives for being frank and being

willing to continue down this path.

The representatives are willing to listen and see what can be achieved, but also have to be fair to their client organization as well.

Mayor Pro Tem asked for assurance that this item will be on the next agenda with revisions.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to table this item. Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion. **THIS ITEM WAS TABLED.**

7.II. Ordinance No. O-2024-0002

Representatives of Alpha Omega Power were available for comment if needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared his continued lack of support for this item and his annoyance at the public confusion about the ability of these battery storage facilities to power the city in the event of power disruption.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2024-0002.

Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED 4 AYES AND 1 NAY (COMPIAN).**

7.III. Proposed Resolution

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the language used in section 1.1, sharing that the district may have concerns that are unique to their districts. He questioned section 1.5 if it was consistent and comparable to the employee travel policy.

Conversation regarding per diem ensued.

Staff raised the question if a provision should be included limiting travel expenditures during election years, relegating the incumbent to only spend the amount proportional to the remaining time on their term to ensure fairness in the event a new member is elected.

Councilmember Yancy asserted her belief that since she has most of the schools in her district she should be able to attend educational events.

Mayor Bell shared that this resolution is one way for the council to be able to police themselves. This is not to regulate what training each councilmember can go to, those decisions will be left to the councilmember.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2024-0006.

Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7.IV. Proposed Resolution

City Clerk Kierra Nance identified that this is an expanded version of the policy brought at the last council meeting, identifying purchasing thresholds within the policy.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested to revise section 5 to state non-profit. It was the consensus of the council that this would be amicable as non-profit organizations would be the individuals receiving the donations or assistance. He also questioned whether there should be a limit on how often an organization can come to the city for requests.

Mayor Bell also highlighted a section discussing authorizing purchases to individuals, sharing his optimism that the current and future council will be mindful and fair.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2024-0007

Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.I. Proposed Ordinance

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the location of this property. It was determined that it is along FM 1764 in District B. He requested that Councilmembers be alerted to developments within their respective districts before they come to the council as a courtesy notification.

Data Energy representatives Syuzanna Khedoyan and Igor Lee gave a brief presentation reviewing the organization, project overview, employment opportunities, and launch date.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned where road access would be located. It was determined that an access road would be developed during the plans. He also questioned why this development is becoming so prevalent in the city.

It was reiterated that this location would also serve as a retail center and showroom, providing for sales tax with an estimated sales revenue at this location of around 1 million dollars. It was also explained that this would be approximately a 12 million-dollar investment.

Councilmember Yancy questioned if there were any environmental hazards associated with this project. It was clarified that the immersion oil used is a mineral oil with no projected environmental concerns or hazardous output.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adopt the proposed ordinance. Mayor Bell seconded the motion and opened the floor for discussion.

Councilmember Ross requested more information on what data storage is.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that he is uncomfortable with all of this.

Mayor Bell withdrew his second.

Councilmember Yancy withdrew her motion.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to table. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **THIS ITEM WAS TABLED.**

8.II. Proposed Ordinance

City Clerk Nance shared that this ordinance is an attempt by staff to create uniformity within boards and commissions, establishing a uniform quorum, board size, and adjusting appointment dates.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared his belief that this should be implemented by attrition.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-0003.

Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.III. Proposed Resolution

It was clarified that this item concerns Centerpoint's gas rates, not electricity.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2024-0008.

Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.IV. Memorandum of Understanding

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the one-year term.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to authorize a Memorandum of Understanding between the La Marque Public Library and the Resource & Crisis Center of Galveston County. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.V. Lloyd Gosselink Agreement

Lloyd Gosselink is the firm that handles the city's TCEQ engagements. This item identifies that the city's representative's rate is increasing. However, it is at a discounted rate due to the city being a governmental entity.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the Lloyd Gosselink Agreement. Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.VI. Emergency Sanitary Sewer Pipeline Construction

On Westward, an emergency repair was completed, replacing a collapsed line of approximately 325 feet of piping. Due to the nature of the replacement, it was required to be completed before council approval. This item ratifies that expense.

***Councilmember Yancy exited the meeting at 8:54 p.m.*

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested that during budgeting, consideration be taken to reserve funds for emergency repairs such as this.

Mayor Bell clarified statements in the agenda form stating that this was an undeclared line, not reflected in the city's maps.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to ratify the emergency sanitary sewer pipeline construction for \$68,450.00. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH 4 AYES AND 1 ABSENT (YANCY).**

8.VII. Mahan Boat Ramp Project

***Councilmember Yancy returned at 9:01 p.m.*

City Manager Garcia gave a brief history of this project, sharing that the figures included in the packet also represent the federal share, the City's shareproject share will be updated with the Parks Board at a future meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to accept the approval of The Texas Parks & Wildlife Division for the construction of the Mahan Park Boat Ramp Improvements in the amount of \$470,475.00 and authorizing City Manager Garcia to approve and sign documents and contracts related to the project.

Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. CITY MANAGER REPORT

9.I. 2023 Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award

Library Director Amy Miller shared that the La Marque Public Library received the 2023 Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award, an honor reserved for the top 15% of libraries in Texas. The Council gave their support and congratulations to Director Miller and her team.

9.II. GLO Projects Update

City Manager Garcia gave a brief overview of the status of the General Land Office Grant Projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian clarified the area identified as Westlawn.

Mayor Bell shared concerns of the residents near the Westlawn project. City Manager Garcia shared that he is aware of the concerns and will be bringing a follow up report at the next meeting.

9.III. Juneteenth Art Project

This item stood as submitted.

9.IV. Annual Police Report

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned what "pre-existing knowledge" meant. Chief Aragon shared that it means that there was some knowledge of misconduct that led to stops.

Councilmember Yancy requested a meeting with Chief Aragon to discuss some of the numbers in the report as she has some concerns.

9.V. Delany Road Closure

Encouraging all residents to utilize FM 1764 or FM 1765 instead of I45 in this area as the closure will begin on the upcoming Friday. Fervent discussion ensued.

9.VI. TIRZ Board Update

***This item was addressed after Citizen's Participation*

Leslie Cruz and Sherryl Farrell of the Omega Bay TIRZ Board #2 were available for discussion.

City Attorney Knebel gave a brief overview, sharing that the TIRZ Board has met numerous times over the past year. After meeting with partners, it was determined that the initial "pay as you go" financing plan that was initially presented is no longer a viable option and the financing plan will need to be revised. After meeting with representatives of Stifel, the city's financial advisor, it was determined that pursuing debt secured by TIRZ receipts would be the best course of action. In the interim, the board will contact other taxing entities to ask for their participation in the TIRZ fund. In order for this to be a potential resolution, the streets would need to be conveyed to the city as they are currently private streets, which at this time is agreeable by the residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared a brief history of development within the city, and shared that Omega Bay was one of the city's earliest attempts at a planned development and there were some weaknesses at the time. He requested a comprehensive discussion surrounding planned developments. He questioned the fairness of issuing debt for one development when just tonight the council has heard of other areas within the city with similar concerns.

Mayor Bell requested a resolution encouraging the other taxing entities, Texas City Independent School District and Galveston County to participate in this TIRZ. He also requested the City Attorney to bring back information regarding voter approved debt as soon as possible.

Councilmember Leyva Allred shared her gratitude for moving forward resolving this issue.

9.VII. Departmental Customer Service Training Plan

This item is in development and will be brought back at a later date.

10. APPOINTMENTS

Councilmember Ross appointed Sally Austin to the Building Standards Commission.

Mayor Bell appointed Jackie Pennington to the Civil Service Commission.

Councilmember Yancy seconded both appointments.

APPOINTMENTS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Ross announced his excitement about the parade on February 24th and the library event on the same day, encouraging the community to come and support these events. He shared his hopes of becoming a judge for the art contest.

Congratulations to J.B. Pritchett on his new position. He thanked all the employees who had kept him updated on what was happening in the city. He closed by announcing that on February 14, the Pitcher and Catchers Report would be released.

Councilmember Yancy began by wishing everyone a Happy Valentine's Valentine's week.

This would be a great week to show appreciation for the staff. She followed with

Jefferson & Brown Streets deserve projected timelines for street repairs. On February

22, Ms. Harrington will be in town for a book signing. She asked for a Black History

Month proclamation and requested southern soul artists for Bayou Fest. She also

reiterated her excitement about the parade on February 24th, and the BAHEP meeting on February 13th with the state economic developer.

Councilmember Leyva Allred asked, when thinking about loved ones, to remember the elderly in the neighborhoods who may not have anyone to celebrate with.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian expressed that there is a special meeting of the Economic Development Corporation Board on February 13 and asked the community to share their support for the Art of Coffee.

Mayor Bell shared his support for the Art of Coffee, touting it as the only part of the city where every segment of the community feels safe. He spoke to the historical street and infrastructure concerns addressed tonight; specifically Jefferson St. He reiterated to the residents that there is a street maintenance program in development, and funding sources are being considered. He congratulated the La Marque Public Library; it is a big deal to be in the top 15% of libraries, considering that approximately 10 years ago, the city lost an entire school system. He also congratulated Deputy City Manager Pritchett on his new position. He requested the City Manager provide an answer to the concerns of the residents on Rose Street.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

13. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No actions were taken.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*****Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.***