



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
January 22, 2024**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of council were physically present.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pastor Jervie Windom of Resonate Church gave the invocation and Councilmember Yancy led the pledge.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.I. Introduction of new staff members

City Manager Garcia introduced Stacy Froschner, the new court administrator.

4.II. Retirement Announcement - Curtis Barber, La Marque Fire Department (27 years)

Fire Captain Curtis Barber was honored for his 27 years of service by the presentation of a flag, a retirement plaque, and a proclamation honoring his service to the community.

4.III. Proclamation - Delta Sigma Theta Founder's Day

Councilmember Yancy read a proclamation honoring the La Marque Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew) spoke about the need for using the Central Fire Station as a polling location.
- Alan Honish (2609 Meadow Ln) spoke about his objections to the I-3 Heavy Industrial Zone Ordinance.
- Bradley Stephenson (2603 Meadow Ln) objected to the I-3 Heavy Industrial Zone Ordinance.
- Re'Chard Loftis (309 Johnson) thanked the city administration for fixing a leak in front of his rental property. He also spoke to the need for education regarding illegal dumping.
- Jervie Windom (Resonate Church) spoke to invite the community to Night to Shine, 6 p.m. on February 9, 2024, at College of the Mainland.

- Joseph Lowry (230 Cedar) spoke regarding open records and began to speak regarding a personal issue with Mayor Bell. *He was repeatedly asked to refrain from personal attacks. He was subsequently removed from the meeting due to his consistent disruptions.*

6. MINUTES

6.I. Regular City Council Minutes 01.08.2024

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Minutes of January 8, 2024. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

***Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered into a Public Hearing at 6:39 p.m.*

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

Robert Michetich spoke, sharing that there is a lot of history regarding this item. His concerns are regarding the lack of physical boundaries.

Brad Stephenson (2603 Meadow Ln) spoke, asking that the city be proactive and careful in the ordinance's wording. He is asking for environmental protection.

Beatrice McKinsey (404 Poplar St) spoke as a resident of the area and stated that she loves the area because it is quiet and peaceful. She shared concerns regarding the noise.

Alan Honish (2609 Meadow Ln) shared different instances across the country where railroad incidents occurred and potential adverse actions that could occur from development.

***Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearings and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 6:49 p.m.*

8. CITY MANAGER REPORT

Stood as submitted.

8.I. December 2023 Library Statistics

8.II. December 2023 Sales Tax Report

8.III. 2022-2023 Audit Findings Resolution Report

***Councilmember Leyva Allred exited the room at 7:41 p.m. and returned at 7:42 p.m.*

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested that the Auditor notes be uploaded to the City's website.

8.IV. Report from the La Marque Economic Development Corporation

EDC Director Alex Getty gave a brief presentation regarding the Economic Development Corporation.

8.V. LMPD Calendar Year 2023 Crime Statistics

Police Chief Aragon gave a brief overview of the 2023 crime statistics. He shared that over the last three calendar years, the violent crime rate has been down 11%, property crime has been down 20%, and crime has been down 19% overall. He also discussed some factors contributing to crime, citing socioeconomic challenges as a key factor.

Councilmember Yancy questioned the role of the community partners that the city has a Memorandum of Understandings within the crime reduction efforts. Chief Aragon shared that this has been done in partnership with the Resource Crisis Center, Gulf Coast Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the TAPS Program.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked for clarification regarding the statistics shown for "Theft from Coin Operated Machinery." He also questioned the "Shoplifting" category, leading to a conversation about Walmart's loss prevention practices.

Mayor Bell questioned what constitutes a robbery. Chief Aragon determined that a robbery occurs when something is physically taken from somebody by force, additional conversation surrounding robbery statistics ensued. The mayor questioned where the crime statistics come from. It was reassured that these statistics come from the City of League City as part of its membership in the League City Consortium.

9. OLD BUSINESS

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

Mayor Bell enlisted the assistance of City Attorney Knebel in this matter, sharing that he would be amicable to additional input from the citizens. City Attorney Knebel reminded everyone that this is not a new item. This has been an ongoing discussion for the past eight years. He clarified that nothing in this ordinance exempts the Heavy Industrial Zone from the noise ordinance. He also reminded the Council and community that this ordinance does not, at this moment, rezone any property. Any development that would like rezoned would need to speak before the Council.

Councilmember Allred agreed that this item needs more input from the citizens. Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that this results from mediation regarding an issue including the Texas City Terminal Railroad and the La Marque Economic Development Corporation. He requested that this be restricted to a very specific location. He shared that the affected area has been significantly reduced due to the proposed settlement agreement and federal law preempting the state and local laws. He reiterated that this is simply creating this heavy industrial category, although the city understands that an organization will request a rezone in the future. He shared a significant liability that the City has done its best to limit. Councilmember Yancy shared that this has been a major issue for as long as she has been on council. The residents should see what the Council has had to "unravel" to understand how we got to this point.

Councilmember Ross shared some of the concerns he has heard from residents surrounding the anticipated affected area. He also requested review of some of the restricted uses included in the ordinance.

Brad Stephenson (2603 Meadow Ln) approached, stating that he understands the powers that be from before made some bad decisions, but if the ordinance is passed as written it eliminates the ability for additional protection for the citizens.

Alan Honish again spoke regarding the environmental concerns and demanded that the citizens be allowed to decide.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave additional clarification regarding the authority of the City in this issue. This is merely a good-faith step, to fulfill the most important step of this agreement. Reminding the public that the City does not have the money to fulfill the potential liabilities.

Mayor Bell spoke to the historical nature of this item. He shared his support for tabling the item to further discuss with the community. He shared that the Council moved forward with the first reading because the City understands that fighting with the Texas City Terminal Railroad would be futile, as they are a behemoth of an organization.

Mayor Bell made a motion to table. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.I. Proposed Ordinance

Development Services Director Kathleen Van Stavern introduced representatives of Alpha Omega Power. This is a request for a 200MW battery storage facility to sit on 6 acres of a 35-acre plot of land. The facility can hold enough energy to power the city for approximately 48 hours and will have virtually no visibility from FM 1764.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian clarified that while the facility has the equivalent amount of power for 48 hours of use, it will not be utilized in that manner it is to support the grid.

Discussions relating to training for emergency personnel, projected tax revenue, and the type of batteries being used ensued.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve the proposed ordinance.

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

10.II. Proposed Resolution

Mayor Pro Tem Comipan made a motion to adopt the proposed resolution.

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

10.III. Proposed Resolution

Mayor Bell shared his purpose for requesting this item, Council funds are a relatively new development and parameters should be set in the form of a policy.

Councilmember Leyva Allred spoke to agree that discretionary funds should be used within the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared his opinion that these two subjects should be addressed in two separate policies.

Councilmember Yancy requested additional time to review the policy, sharing her concern that some of the travel that she attends does affect the city even if the conference or class is not explicitly related to city business.

Mayor Bell clarified that this item is just a blueprint, and will be reviewed after the seating of each council. This is the beginning of a series of policies to help the council govern themselves.

No action was taken on this item.

10.IV. Request for Proposal

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the release of a Request for Proposal for a strategic plan for the City of La Marque. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.V. Elections Contract

Discussions relating to voting locations and the process of requesting additional locations ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve a contract with the Galveston County Elections Division with the request to include the Central Fire Station as an early voting location. Councilmember Leyva Allred seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.VI. Grant Application

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to submit an application to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department for grant funding. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

11. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Compian reappointed Diane Winston (Building Standards Commission), Kurt Koopman (Cemetery Board), Kathy Herrin-Keith (Keep La Marque Beautiful), and Alan Waters (Planning & Zoning Commission).

Mayor Bell reappointed Crystal Cooper (Board of Adjustments), Lyndsey Gonzales (Keep La Marque Beautiful), Mike "Rock" Bock (Parks), Michel Wev (Parks), and Grayling Alexander (Planning & Zoning), provided they are all in good standing.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve all appointments as submitted. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

13. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action was taken.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Leyva Allred started by saying "Let's all have a good new year and be kind to one another."

Councilmember Ross again thanked Curtis Barber for his 27 years of service. He shared that the Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast was an amazing event and his belief that it

will be an interesting year. he closed by encouraging anyone who would like to run for office to turn in their paperwork by February 16, 2024.

Councilmember Yancy shared that the following day is the day for the groundbreaking of the new La Marque High School. On February 22, 2024, Shirley Harrington will be hosted at the La Marque Public Library, sponsored by Councilmember Yancy. She requested that the associate judge position be on the next agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that there has been crazy weather here; anyone using electric heaters please plug them into the wall, not the extension cord. He also encouraged everyone to come out to the groundbreaking of the new high school. He asked that a street program be brought to the council. He requested a quarterly workshop moving forward.

Mayor Bell reiterated his previous request for a street maintenance program, reviewing streets that were previously identified, identifying new streets, and earmarking monies towards this project. He also requested a Customer Service Plan, a comprehensive report of the Code Enforcement Division since being under the Fire Department, scheduling a joint meeting between the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Council regarding the Heavy Industrial Ordinance. He congratulated the Parks Board on receiving the Clent Brown Volunteerism Award for 2023. He gave kudos to the Public Works Department for repairing over 700 leaks; as a result, water loss has been reduced to 40%. He also gave kudos to the Finance Department for their Audit Finding mitigation policy. Lots of wonderful things are happening in our community and city.

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

***Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M.*