



1111 Bayou
La Marque, Texas 77568
409.938.9202

**City of La Marque
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2015**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of La Marque, Texas that was conducted on Monday, August 10, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at 1109-B Bayou Road for purpose of considering the following agenda:

(1) Mayor Hocking called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

(2) ROLL CALL

Mayor Hocking
Mayor Pro-Tem Bell
Councilmember Lane
Councilmember Brown
Councilmember Michetich
City Attorney Ortego
City Manager Buttler
City Clerk Eldridge

(3) INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Bell provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance

(4) MINUTES

- a. Minutes of Workshop Meeting of July 27, 2015
- b. Minutes of Regular Meeting of July 27, 2015
- c. Minutes of Special Called Workshop Meeting of July 30, 2015
- d. Minutes of Special Called Meeting of July 30, 2015

Councilmember Bell made a motion to approve the minutes

(5) PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

- a. Introduction of new Employee- Sydni Jackson- Municipal Court Clerk
Municipal Court Judge Stephen Baker introduced the new Municipal Court Clerk Sydni Jackson
- b. Proclamation – DSW Homes
Mayor Hocking presented a proclamation to DSW Homes
- c. Proclamation – Drake Jackson
Before Mayor Hocking presented Drake Jackson with his proclamation
- d. Presentation – 2015-2022 City of La Marque Strategic Economic and Community Plan - Bix Rathburn



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(6) CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

1. Rick Harmon asked when and if La Marque was going to get a grocery store. "We have smaller towns around us, and they have two, and we have none. I have discussed this Mrs. Buttler and she is hoping for one, but I would like to know when possibly that might take place?" Then he asked why Cedar Drive hasn't been paved yet. "For about three blocks from Avenue C to Texas Avenue. It is like a washboard over there. You drive your car down it and you bounce and rattle all over the place. The State has done Texas Avenue. I think the City could at least pave those three blocks. They have the manpower, they have the equipment, get out and do it. They will have to get out of their air-conditioned trucks, but it won't hurt them for a little while."

Mayor Hocking responded, "For the first part of your question, the City is working towards trying to get a grocery store in La Marque; and to answer the second, we do not have the equipment to pave streets in La Marque, that department is no longer functioning. But we have spoken to the County in hopes of bidding out some work to the County."

2. Lois Carelock referred to an item on the agenda regarding the possibility of changing the office hours. "At one time we had those hours, and there was a reason why we changed back, to the regular 8 to 5 hours. So, I hope in your discussion, you will clarify why you plan to go back to those hours. Another problem that I have heard discussed is that our City employees already have a hard time working through a regular day in the heat. How are they going to add another hour to their worktime during these hot days? The other thing that I see is that with our offices closed on Friday afternoon, should there be an emergency or some problem that someone had to be called out, this means more overtime to be paid to employees, which might affect our budget."

(7) NEW BUSINESS- PRESENTATION

- a. Discussion/possible action to accept the 2015-2022 City of La Marque Strategic Economic and Community Plan

Alex Getty, Executive Director of the La Marque Economic Development Corporation began, "As you all are aware, the EDC hired Dr. Rathburn several months ago, to compile a strategic plan for us to set the roadmap for our future. He is here this evening, to go through the plan and answer any questions that Council may have."

Dr. Rathburn stated, "I want to thank you and thank this City for stepping out and taking a hard and honest look at themselves and trying to move forward as a community. So many cities these days operate on a day to day mentality. In 1984, I moved my family here. My two oldest children started the first grade at Westlawn Elementary. I want to tell you when I started this process, I was a bit skeptical. I have just been back in this area for a little over a year. I drove around and looked and wondered, if La Marque could recover. La Marque had slipped. Can we see a systematic change? Can we see growth and redevelopment? I can tell you after going through this process and spending an awful lot



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of time with great citizens in this community, my answer is ‘yes’ and there are five reasons why. Number one, this is an honest community, two is the commitment, three is location, four is trends, and five is vision. Most communities don’t have vision.”

Dr. Rathburn then referred to an executive summary that he submitted to Council. He highlighted a few of the areas in the study, with one being identifying and prioritizing critical issues. Blight reduction was the number one critical issue, with the school district being the second critical issue. “The thing that I heard throughout this process, the commitment was that no matter what happened, the kids in this community deserve and this community requires that the children have a great educational experience.”

The third critical issue was infrastructure. Community image was also brought up as a critical issue, as well as economic development, which Dr. Rathburn mentioned that the City has a great team and the tools necessary to be successful. Other critical issues included City human resources, not only to have the individuals but also the resources to compensate those individuals appropriately. Communication another issue, a lot of good happened in this community, but many don’t hear about. There needs to be a defined communication strategy. When the next critical issue, which was ‘youth engagement’ was mentioned, Dr. Rathburn added, that we want to enhance and community engagement and volunteerism in this community, since every little bit helps.

He further described some goals, plans and tools to achieve these goals and plans. Enhancing code enforcement, dealing with land use on I-45, Community Center plan, or a Youth Center; and educational opportunities; expand on tax base strategy and compensation and improvement plan, by keeping and recruiting a quality staff here in La Marque.

In closing, Dr. Rathburn said, “One thing that I see and have learned from this is that La Marque not only has great people, but it has great assets to be built upon.”

Councilmember Bell had a question concerning the summary of demographic data on unemployment and age ratio within the City. Dr. Rathburn explained the source data. Renters and the numbers within the City that could be due to the storm a few years ago.

Councilmember Bell then asked, “What would you think about an ordinance that would define certain goals and certain responsibilities for those person that rent their property out to other people?”

Dr. Rathburn replied, “I think anything you can do to enhance code enforcement, particularly with landlords that are not doing what they need to do with their property, I think sends a great message. I think that would be a strong edition to this plan.”



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The possibility of a near future ordinance that deals with rental property was mentioned to come before City Council.

A question asked by Councilmember Bell was what the City could do to effect the school district indirectly. The issues that were said to be engrained in every environment of education were accountability, resources and politics. Dr. Rathburn's recommendation was "Don't settle for second best. You know the education these kids deserve and need. To express support to all players involved, that our focus, is not on politics, it is not on finance, it is on the kids."

After thanking Dr. Rathburn for all of his work, he thanked all that were involved in the process then made a motion to receive the 2015-2022 City of La Marque Strategic Economic and Community Plan. Councilmember Bell seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(8) PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Conduct Public Hearing to hear public input regarding the proposed City of La Marque FY 2015-2016 Budget

Mayor Hocking closed the Regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing at 6:44 p.m.

Geraldine Sam asked if there was more money put in the Library or if any money was taken out of the Library.

Mayor Hocking answered that the Library was fully funded and enhanced in the upcoming budget.

Mayor Hocking closed the Public Hearing and reconvened to the Regular meeting at 6:46 p.m.

(9) OLD BUSINESS

- a. Discussion/possible action regarding an appointment of member to City of La Marque Boards and Commissions (Clean City Commission)

Councilmember Michetich appointed Greg Eakins as District "C" appointment to the Clean City Commission.

(10) NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion/possible action regarding Resolution No. **R-2015-0027**, reappointing Mayor Bobby Hocking to the Galveston County Transit District

** Councilmember Bell made a motion to adopt Resolution R-2015-0027.

** Councilmember Lane seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**



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- b. Discussion/possible action regarding Resolution No. **R-2015-0028**, opposing the proposed increase in the annual fee from the City of La Marque to the Galveston Central Appraisal District (GCAD) for fiscal year 2015-2016.
- ** Councilmember Bell made a motion to adopt Resolution No. F-2015-0028.
** Councilmember Michetich seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
- c. Discussion/possible action to maintain the City of La Marque current Tax Rate of 0.490764.
- ** Councilmember Bell made a motion to maintain the City of La Marque current Tax Rate of 0.490764.
** Councilmember Michetich seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.
- d. Discussion/possible action to schedule Public Hearings on the proposed Tax Rate for August 17, 2015 and September 1, 2015.
- ** Councilmember Michetich made a motion to schedule Public Hearings on the proposed Tax Rate for August 17, 2015 and September 1, 2015.
** Councilmember Brown seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.
- e. Discussion/possible action regarding changing the office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 until noon on Fridays.
- ** Councilmember Bell made a motion to approve the changing the office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 until noon on Fridays.
** Councilmember Michetich seconded.

Councilmember Lane began, "This is an issue that will be fueled to assist the City's retention efforts. We are surrounded by cities that utilize the model of a half a day on Friday's to attract employees and if we don't adopt this, we may continue to lose employees. In this instance, I feel like all of our bases are covered. Regarding to the payment of utility bills, the City has establish five avenues that the citizens can utilize to pay their bills twenty-four hours a day. First and foremost, we have a kiosk, online payments, cell phone app, mail, and last but not least, you may come inside City Hall to pay the bill. Regarding permits, you can also use the kiosk, online payment, or face to face. Regarding Public Services, we have employees that will utilize a flex schedule and make sure that the needs of the City are met. There was a survey conducted on twelve local municipalities, and eight of those utilized the half days on Fridays."

Councilmember Bell stated, "I want it to be clear, this was based on city surveys, Councilmember do you think this will help not only with the retention of employees but also with employee morale?"



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Councilmember Lane answered, "Yes sir."

City Manager added, "This item has been discussed at a staff level. There will be employees who won't be able to take advantage of this, for various reasons. This was intended as an opportunity to allow those that wish to be off on Friday afternoons to be able to do so, and some of the employees hold second jobs and this will help those persons as well."

Further discussion included earlier when a citizen had expressed concerns about the efficiency of the city services on Friday afternoons. It would be necessary to implement a formal policy to make sure all the areas are covered and that all city services would not suffer. The subject of overtime came up and although trying to discourage overtime and use flex time, it was said that no overtime would be incurred during this time. Most employees that would continue working on Friday afternoons would be salaried employees. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(11) CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- **Police Department**
- **Fire Department**
- **Library**

In light of the Executive Session, Mayor Hocking asked for Requests and Announcements be given at this time.

(14) REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Bell congratulated Sydni Jackson on her employment and welcomed her to the City. Reminded citizens that in the proposed budget included securing close to \$60,000 for the high weeds and grass portion of the budget and also an increase in the demolition portion of the budget to reduce blight.

Mayor Hocking reminded citizens of the Push, Pull or Drag event and referred to the back table where there were flyers. These special pickups include anything from tires, appliances and or anything that could be sat out by the curb could be picked up on the specific dates provided on the flyer. Then he also congratulated Ms. Jackson on her employment with the City and also on her honors in High School as well as in college.

City Manager Carol Buttler reminded all of the burn ban, and also to be prepared to go to Stage Two of the water conservation plan.

(12) EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Council will adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with the Texas Government Code Section: City Council will adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with the Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney/Closed Meeting) -



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Discuss and provide update on Case of USOR Site PRP Group v. A&M Contractors, Inc., et al.

Mayor Hocking closed the Regular meeting and went into Executive Session at 7:04 p.m.

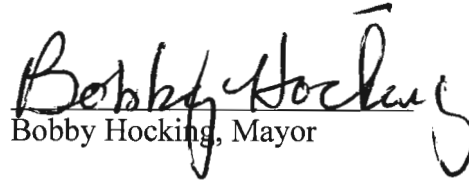
- (13) Discussion/possible action regarding Case of USOR Site PRP Group v. A&M, Inc., Case No. 4:14-cv-02441 U.S. District Court, Houston, Texas

Mayor Hocking reconvened the Regular meeting at 7:28 p.m.

There was no action taken from the Executive Session

(15) ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Bell made a motion to adjourn at 7:29 p.m. Councilmember Brown seconded. Meeting adjourned.


Bobby Hocking, Mayor

ATTEST:


Robin Eldridge, TRMC
City Clerk

**CITIZENS REQUEST TO
SPEAK BEFORE COUNCIL**

In ordered to be heard, this form must be completed and returned to the City Clerk five (5) minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Date of Meeting:	8-12-15
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Citizens who wish to address the City Council about items on the agenda which are scheduled for Council action will have **three (3) minutes** to express their positions. Please indicate below the agenda item number on which you wish to comment.

Council Agenda Item Number:	
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Citizens wishing to address Council regarding a topic **not** on the agenda are afforded the same amount of time during "Citizens Request for Hearing" section. Please indicate below the subject matter.

Subject on which person wishes to speak:	STREETS
	STORE

Please step to the podium as soon as you are recognized by the Mayor, stating your name and address before beginning your presentation. If you have written notes you wish to present to the Mayor and Council, please furnish an extra copy for the official files. Citizens who have questions concerning procedure or the registration form may request assistance from the City Clerk. Thank you for your cooperation.

Name:	rick haxman
Address:	2602 LAKE RD
Phone Number:	409-935-6945

If speaking on behalf of an organization:

Name of Organization:	
Speaker's Official Capacity:	

**CITIZENS REQUEST TO
SPEAK BEFORE COUNCIL**

In ordered to be heard, this form must be completed and returned to the City Clerk five (5) minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Date of Meeting:	8/10/15
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Citizens who wish to address the City Council about items on the agenda which are scheduled for Council action will have **three (3) minutes** to express their positions. Please indicate below the agenda item number on which you wish to comment.

Council Agenda Item Number:	10 E
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Citizens wishing to address Council regarding a topic **not** on the agenda are afforded the same amount of time during "Citizens Request for Hearing" section. Please indicate below the subject matter.

Subject on which person wishes to speak:	Change hours

Please step to the podium as soon as you are recognized by the Mayor, stating your name and address before beginning your presentation. If you have written notes you wish to present to the Mayor and Council, please furnish an extra copy for the official files. Citizens who have questions concerning procedure or the registration form may request assistance from the City Clerk. Thank you for your cooperation.

Name:	Lois J CARELOCK
Address:	2416 Meadow Lane
Phone Number:	409) 938-7629

If speaking on behalf of an organization:

Name of Organization:	
Speaker's Official Capacity:	