

Discussion on Remember When possibly leaving down

Mayor Woodlief stated that several months ago, the back of this store was ugly in appearance. Citations have been issued by Planning Director Cheryl Hart per the City Ordinance. The DOEDC is doing what it can to ensure that Remember When stays downtown.

DOEDC Director Tanya Weary stated she's had several conversations with Remember When, leading to her working with a Department of Commerce planner to help find a solution. Merchants want the store to stay, but her recommendation is for this to go through the City's Planning Board. She will, however, provide what the Department of Commerce comes up with.

Commissioner Currin stated he was informed the business would be gone by the end of June, DD Weary stating that's not what she was told. She was informed the one piece in question would move to a location on Highway 15 but that the antique business would look at staying another year. DD Weary stated that she would probably not have any information from the Department of Commerce by the next Board meeting.

Mayor Woodlief stated that when Penny's left and the building was available, the DOEDC recruited the antique business from Youngsville. There has been a pretty good investment made in Remember When in the amount of \$3,500+ used for rent and holding the building until the business could get its feet firmly on the ground. The Mayor stated Remember When draws a lot of business downtown, and he was sorry that there were so many complaints about the mess. However, they do need to follow the rules. The merchants are hopeful that something can be worked out. There are now seven renters in the antique part of the business, and they have nothing to do with the gentleman out back who has been generating the complaints.

OTHER ISSUES

Commissioner Harris stated that at the last meeting, reseeding at Oxford Park was talked about. He asked where is the budget amendment for this work. CM Donham stated that what was done at the last meeting was appropriate and that no further action is needed.

Commissioner Harris stated that a citizen [Frank Strickland] sent an email asking to be placed on the agenda and that request is not on the agenda. Citizens have a right to address the Board, and it is not for the Board to decide that they do not have that right. People have asked to be placed on the agenda in the past, and all citizens need to be treated the same. CA Burnette stated this citizen could be asked to speak to the Personnel Committee. Commissioner Currin stated that the citizen wishes to be on the Board agenda whether in closed or open session.

CM Donham stated that the Board decides what goes on the agenda. Just because a request is made does not mean that a person has to be on the agenda. Mayor Woodlief stated that CA Burnette talked to the Board about his type of issue several weeks ago, and this goes back to that discussion. The citizen will not be talking about anything new. CA Burnette stated that if a request goes on the agenda, so does the subject matter of the request. Otherwise, such a request probably goes on Public Comment.

CM Donham stated these types of issues usually go through committee first and then to the Board. MPT Herring suggested that the citizen be given an opportunity to speak after the retreat when they have a better understanding of the general statutes. CA Burnette encouraged the Board not to put this citizen's request on any kind of agenda. The Board sets the agenda; that's the way the system is set up. A citizen can say they want to be on the agenda, but that doesn't mean they are automatically added. CA Burnette stated that it has been seven years dealing with this same issue repeatedly every two years when this citizen plans to run for election. There is probably nothing the City can do to make him happy, especially since the issue he wishes to speak about has already been through every process available.

Commissioner Harris stated there are some things in this citizen's latest email that he's never seen before and that the citizen's request needs to be honored. Mayor Woodlief stated this citizen blames the former city manager for everything that happened; the current manager was not here at the time. If this issue is going to be addressed, it needs to be done so in closed session. MPT Herring stated that in his opinion, there has never been an open discussion with the Board on what has gone on. The manager, mayor, and city attorney were the key players and the only ones with knowledge of the situation. MTP Herring feels that the citizen wants to be given the opportunity to advise the Board of things he wants to say.

CM Donham stated that this citizen has given him copious pieces of information about all his issues. He has spent time with the citizen and received tons of emails. Commissioner Harris stated it sounds like the citizen is trying to file a formal complaint. CM Donham says he has evaluated the issues and talked to key people. MPT Herring stated he was not questioning the integrity of the city manager or the city attorney. He stated that the citizen seems to want a sounding board, he wants it to be this Board, and he has not had the opportunity to do so. The Board has a right to hear what the citizen has to say, and MTP Herring feels he should have his say. It was decided that the Clerk would contact this citizen and inform him that the Board would grant him a right to speak to them after the upcoming retreat. MPT Herring and CA Burnette stated this should be done in closed session.

Commissioner Bullock stated that even if the citizen is talking about the same information, we are battling an individual's right to speak before the Board. Commissioner Sergent asked the difference between a complaint during public comment and a formal complaint. The Mayor stated we do not need individuals standing in public comment and knocking down employees; this citizen has done this in the past before he could be stopped. The subject matter he writes down on the sign in sheet is not what he ends up talking about. Human Resources Director Carol Dorsey stated our process for formal complaints about employees from citizens rests with the city manager. Commissioner Bullock asked what was the second step, since the understanding is that one of Mr. Strickland's concerns is the manager's failure to address the issues. HRD Dorsey stated she felt the recommendation that this citizen appear before the Personnel Committee would be fine and then the committee would make a recommendation to the Board about where to go from there. There should be a time limit placed on the citizen's comments and the Board should simply listen to him. MPT Herring restated that he did not feel anything should be done about Frank Strickland until after the retreat, to which the Board agreed.

Commissioner Williford stated that when going down West Street and crossing the train tracks, there is the old ice plant that neighbors are complaining of plenty of snakes coming out of. There is a 40 foot cut back into the woods to the train tracks where there is a lot of debris. This 40 foot cut belongs to the City and should be cleaned up. The people who own the ice plant should be made to clean up the ice plant. The Mayor stated that the Barnes Williams' estate owns the property; and the situation is that anything we do there, we are billing back as an assessment on the property. PD Hart stated that she does not remember cleaning the cut, but the ice plant can be taken care of if the City wants to spend the money. The Mayor stated that the City can clean its part and then PD Hart can send the property owner a letter to clean its property.

City Engineer Larry Thomas gave his opinion that if there was a paved road on the property, the City would maintain it. But since there's nothing there but the right to put a road, he did not feel the City is responsible to clean it. The owner is supposed to keep the right of way clear. The City can, however, state it is never going to put in a road and the property would revert back to the property owner. The Mayor stated this 40 foot cut could be given back to the Williams family and then the City could collect taxes on it. This has been done in the past.

PD Hart stated that she will put on the agenda to adopt a demolition ordinance for this property and try to have this taken care of by the end of the year.

Mayor Woodlief stated that the City can fly its City flag at half-staff in remembrance of Paul Kiesow on Tuesday, May 3rd, the day of his memorial service. The Board was in agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

WITH THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, MPT HERRING MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
ALL VOTES WERE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Donna B. Hosch, CMC, City Clerk

ATTEST:

Al Woodlief, Mayor