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CITY OF BELEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
JUNE 24, 2013

Chairman Rod Storey called the regular meeting of the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll call being taken is as follows:

PRESENT: Chairman Rod Storey
Vice-Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla
Commissioner Max Cordova
Commissioner Tom Greer

CITY STAFF: Lisa Miller, Zoning Enforcement Specialist
Steven Tomita, Planning & Zoning Director

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chairman Rod Storey asked to combine Discussion and Open Comments/Requests.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked if under Discussion the item of Planning & Zoning Commission discussion with City Manager be added.

Chairman Rod Storey said that they would address that under one heading and that is Open Comments/Requests.

Commissioner Tom Greer moved to approve the Agenda combining Discussion and Open Comments/Requests.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

APPROVE OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of May 28, 2013 were reviewed.

Commissioner Max Cordova moved to approve the Minutes of May 28, 2013 as corrected.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Rod Storey informed the Commission that he had requested the City Manager be present to discuss communication issues. The City Manager declined saying that she would meet with him individually with the Planning & Zoning Commission issues. He was asked to relay any questions that the Commission had to the Chairman and then meet with her to discuss them. He contacted Councilman Jarah Cordova and he contacted the Municipal League and found out that it does need to be at a public meeting. The City Manager obviously does not believe that it needs to be done that way.

Lisa Miller asked Chairman Rod Storey to email her a copy of the email that he received from Councilman Jarah Cordova.

Chairman Rod Storey said that he understands that it an uncomfortable subject to talk about publicly but he felt that it should be done publicly. He does not feel comfortable meeting with her privately. He asked the Commission to send him their concerns so that they can be forwarded to the City Manager.

Commissioner Max Cordova said that he emailed the City Manager which listed his concerns and questions and has received no response.

Chairman Rod Storey said that that seems typical.

Commissioner Max Cordova said that he was informed that she had discussed the issue of compensation with the staff. He asked Steven Tomita if he knew who the staff was.

Steven Tomita said the Mayor, Leona, City Manager, he was in the meeting and he was not sure but he thought that Roseann was also in the meeting.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked if the City Manager made the decision herself.

Steven Tomita said that the City Manager asked for input from the finance department and asked Leona to survey different agencies to find out if their P & Z Commission was compensated.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked what other communities were checked.

Steven Tomita said that he did not know but they were informed that Leona checked with several communities.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla asked if there was a discussion at that meeting on how the Planning & Zoning Commission was to be notified of the change.

Steven Tomita said no.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla asked if in the future that the P & Z Commission be informed of policy changes, etc.

Steven Tomita said that the City Manager did apologize for the way that they were informed by email because she thought that was sufficient. In the future she said that the P & Z Commission would be notified in writing.

Chairman Max Cordova said that she should have done was approached them as a group, in a public meeting and discussed with the Commission what was she was doing, justification on what is being done, etc. instead of in the middle of nowhere it was decided to discontinue the compensation.

Chairman Rod Storey said that these questions do not need to be answered by Mr. Tomita but by the City Manager.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked if there was a vote on this issue.

Steven Tomita said it was the City Managers decision. If it is an administrative decision the Manager makes them.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked what his input was at the meetings.

Steven Tomita said that he informed her that he had dealt with several Commissions, some were paid and some were not. Most of the Commissions that he has served on were not paid.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked if he knew how long the P & Z Commission has been receiving the stipend.

Steven Tomita said that was one of the questions that came up.

Lisa Miller said that she has researched this and has found no evidence that there was an Ordinance, Referendum, Resolution, minutes, etc. concerning the stipend.

Chairman Rod Storey said that it has been 10 plus years that the P & Z has been getting it.

Commissioner Max Cordova said that he has asked and has not gotten any response from the City Manager.

Chairman Rod Storey said that he does not know what else to do. Maybe contact the Municipal League himself.

Steven Tomita said that he does not think that the Municipal League has any jurisdiction over an administrative decision.

Chairman Rod Storey said that is not the issue. The Commission understands it was an administrative decision. They would just like answers to questions that they have. The manager has offered to meet with him to answer questions. He did not know if he was willing to meet with the Manager because he did not want to violate any Ordinances or anything of that nature. He will bring it up with the Council for input.

Commissioner Tom Greer said the issue is more the process and the notification. It would have been better to have better framework in which it was presented to us.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked how long each Commissioner serves on the Commission.

Steven Tomita said that they basically serve on the request of the Mayor. You serve a four year term and if the Mayor feels that someone is not fulfilling their responsibilities he would then go to the Council and request to have that person removed.

Commissioner Max Cordova said that his point is why they did not wait until the Commissioners time is up and then say that this is what is going on and that the policy has changed.

Vice-Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla said that she was in agreement with Commissioner Tom Greer in that every organization it is vital how issues are handled, internal and external, and it is the communication of the organization and its staff. They should have been brought before the Commission to discuss and handle these issues. She can understand policy changes but it needs to be handled in a different manner.

Chairman Rod Storey said the Manager did authorize payment for the May meeting and asked the Commission if they had received the one for April, because he had not.

Lisa Miller informed the Commission that they were turned in.

Chairman Rod Storey said that he has emailed Steven Tomita regarding outside meetings and notifying the Commission of such meetings so that we are aware of these meetings. He received a reply saying that he would be notified if they concerned the Commission.

Lisa Miller explained to the Commission that if they meet as a group or attend a meeting when the majority of the Commission is there, it has to be published.

Steven Tomita asked if they wanted to know every meeting that he attends.

Chairman Rod Storey said that anything that has to do with Planning & Zoning or issues that affect Planning & Zoning.

Steven Tomita said that he had no problem with that. There are a lot of meetings that he attends being a Planning & Zoning Director that are not advertised to the public and feels that it is a part of his job to attend these and not everyone needs to be reported to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Tom Greer asked if there was a schedule of meetings that are attended, that goes out to members of the Council about events like the Adelante event and some of the other things going on. I know the Adelante event was a thank you to the Fire Department and he was not aware of it.

Steven Tomita said that he was not aware of it until that day.

Commissioner Tom Greer said that the Mayor spoke at this event and feels that the Commissioners need to be aware of some of those things to help represent the City. He feels that the Commissioners would be happy to show their colors if they were informed of these events.

Vice-Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla said that is what she is talking about. The biggest breakdown of any organization is communication.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla said that she was not sure how the notification was on the Town Hall meeting.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that it was the second meeting. The first was advertised in the newspaper and there was no response so the next went to the paper and text notification through City Hall notifications. This meeting was to be held outside any public body. They were not really invited and that is part of the State Statute. Rhona was asked to get the word out so that there would be more attendance so that the City could apply for the Metropolitan Re-Development Grant. This is part of the Grant process.

Commissioner Tom Greer said that he attended and there were at least a dozen new Belenites in attendance who were taking an interest in the City. He feels that is a bright spot for us because you don't usually see that.

Steven Tomita said that they were pretty negative coming into the meeting but when the meeting was over they said that they were excited, they wanted to get involved, come to Council Meetings, etc.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla said that electronic signs boards are a good way to let the public know what is going on

OPEN COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that the movie Filming would start on July 8th, however; they will be closing that whole area on July 5th and are trying to decide whether to even do it on July 3rd. It will start on Reinken Ave. and Second St. then go down to Baca Ave., then from Third St. down to First St. It will be a total of six blocks that will be completely shut down for the filming. All residence in the area have been notified on this. The filming will last until the 18th of July.

Commissioner Tom Greer asked if there is any status on the Car Wash on Reinken Ave. and the temporary fencing around where the Del Rio Plaza building was brought down.

Lisa Miller informed the Commission that Mr. Gentry was supposed to have it up and running by now but has either heard or seen anything.

Commissioner Tom Greer asked if they could find out what the progress report is on that.

Steven Tomita said that they would.

Commissioner Max Cordova asked if there was any progress on the hospital.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that he has no answer to that. The County Commission is trying to get the MOU on the Agenda for approval. The mill levy is to operate and maintain the hospital once it is built, for eight years. If the hospital does not get built, the County has to return the money from the mill levy.

The Commission asked Steven Tomita what the progress of the Noblin issue was.

Steven Tomita said that it was tabled at the last Council meeting and will be heard at the next Council meeting. Final vote will depend on the Council.

Vice Chair Dubra Karnes-Padilla said that she has learned a great deal and was happy to serve on the Commission but this is her last meeting. She has recommend to the Council that they have a recognition board for the volunteers' to acknowledge their time and service to the City.

Lisa Miller said that there was a recognition plaque at the gazebo.

The Commission thanks Dubra Karnes-Padilla for her time and knowledge that she brought to the Commission. They appreciate all she has done.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission, Commissioner Max Cordova moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Tom Greer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission adjourned at 7:05 pm.

/s/ _____
Roderick Storey, Chairman

ATTEST:

//s _____
Steven P. Tomita, Planning and Zoning Director