

CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL
June 11, 2018

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Alamo Heights, Texas was held at Council Chambers, located at 6116 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 11, 2018.

Present and composing a quorum were:

Mayor Bobby Rosenthal
Councilmember Lawson Jessee
Councilmember Wes Sharples
Councilmember Fred Prassel
Councilmember John Savage

Also attending were:

City Manager J. Mark Browne
Fire Chief/Assistant City Manager Buddy Kuhn
Assistant to the City Manager Marian V. Mendoza
City Attorney Mike Brenan
Finance Director Robert Galindo
Human Resources Manager Lori Harris
Community Development Services Department Director Jason Lutz
Chief Police Rick Pruitt
Public Works Director Pat Sullivan

Absent were:

Mayor Pro Tempore Lynda Billa Burke
City Secretary Jennifer Reyna

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Mayor Bobby Rosenthal opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

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Item # 1 Approval of Minutes

Mayor Rosenthal asked City Council for any revisions to the minutes of the May 29, 2018, Council Meeting. A motion was made by Councilmember Lawson Jessee to approve the minutes of May 29, 2018. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Wes Sharples and passed by unanimous vote.

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Item # 2 Announcements

Mayor Rosenthal read the following captions.

a. 49th Annual Fourth of July Parade

Community Development Services Department Director Jason Lutz invited residents to the 49th annual Alamo Heights Fourth of July parade on Wednesday, July 4th, at 10:00 a.m. beginning at Estes and Patterson Avenue. Councilmember Fred Prassel added a large attendance is expected and shared he will be leading the singing for the celebration event.

b. 39th Annual San Antonio Roadrunner's 5K/10K, July 14th

Mr. Lutz announced the San Antonio Roadrunners (S.A.R.R.) will host their 38th annual 5k/10k walk/run on Saturday, July 15, 2017. He presented the route and stated the event will begin at 7:30 a.m. at HEB Lincoln Heights.

c. Movie Nights in the Heights, July 15th

Assistant to the City Manager Marian V. Mendoza welcomed the public to the annual movie nights in the heights summer series. She invited family to enjoy "Paddington 2" scheduled on Friday, July 15, 2018, beginning at 8:30 p.m. at the Nature Trails Parking Lot Area, 250 Viesca. She reminded residents to come early to get good seating and not to forget to bring their chairs, blankets, and snacks. She stated all movies during the summer are sponsored by the Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union (RBFCU).

d. Cancellation of July 23rd Council Meeting

Ms. Mendoza announced there was a typo on the agenda and the July 9th, 2018 Council meeting will be cancelled instead of the July 23, 2018 Council meeting.

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Item # 3 Citizens to be heard concerning items not on the agenda

There were no citizens that signed up to speak.

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Items for Individual Consideration

Item # 4 Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CHAPTER 15, SIGN REGULATIONS, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES AND ADOPTING A NEW CHAPTER 15, SIGN REGULATIONS

Community Development Services Department Director Jason Lutz made a PowerPoint presentation that included background information and proposed amendments.

Mr. Lutz informed Council of the department's outreach to the public. He stated staff held three public workshops during the evenings and lunch hour to allow citizens and business owners to provide comments. He stated announcements were on the City's website and social media. Flyers were hand delivered to businesses along Broadway and Austin Highway.

Definitions were added to ensure types of signs are regulated accordingly and to provide guidance on how signs will be measured. Amendments were made to definitions of freestanding business or office building, shopping center (multi-tenant building). He provided a few examples of shopping centers that would not need a sign and others that would. He noted the placement of monument signs for multi-tenant building or a business or office in a shopping center and respective height measurements. He explained the amendments' purpose to identify the businesses and signs not become redundant. He stated there is general language in the Code information that allows the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to modify regulations and consider on a case-by-case basis to hinder process for minor changes. New definitions include multi-tenant signs, wall signs, canopy/awning signs, and window signs/graphic. Councilmember John Savage commented there may be current signs that will be out of compliance. Mr. Lutz acknowledged there are large signs and stated staff would work with businesses to bring into compliance within the year or present to ARB.

There was a brief discussion among Council regarding signage: measurement, classification and windows. Mr. Lutz stated ARB would like to prohibit window signage, unless there are special circumstances. He explained window signage is discouraged because the pedestrian reads three or four business signs for one business because the business logos are located on the door, building, monument sign, and window.

Mr. Lutz stated the proposed amendments are effective immediately for new sign applications. A six-month grace period for non-structural signs, for example, window signs. Structural non-confirming signs will be given one year after adoption to bring signs into compliance. The owner of the sign may apply to ARB to keep the existing non-confirming sign.

The following citizen spoke on this matter:

Margaret Houston, resident, asked if the City is becoming business non-friendly mandating new amendments to the sign code.

Mayor Rosenthal responded to Ms. Houston the code is being cleaned up. Mr. Lutz added sign control needs to be enforced to eliminate sign congestion. Mayor Rosenthal asked about temporary window murals.

Mr. Lutz stated temporary window signage is an inclusive definition and prohibited. There was a brief discussion regarding defining holidays or occasions when temporary window signage may be considered, enforcement, and impact. Enforcement must be all across and not specific businesses. Mr. Lutz explained the need to amend the sign code due to enforcement issues, denied and approved ARB cases, and citizens referenced other City's sign code. Councilmember Wes Sharples asked how many existing business signs would be impacted. Mr. Lutz responded majority business signs are window signs. He explained the differences between wall and window signage.

City Manager Mark Browne asked what will ARB consider.

Mr. Lutz responded to Mr. Browne that all signs will continue to go to ARB with the exception of re-facing. Mr. Browne stated there is an appeal process which is considered by Council. He asked what are the next steps for a business to keep a permanent non-confirming sign. Mr. Lutz stated the business owner may petition to ARB and may submit an appeal to Council.

Councilmember Jessee expressed concern on the lack of design material guidelines to bring their new monument sign into compliance to the proposed new sign code.

Mr. Lutz stated there are a few materials listed that are allowed. Mr. Browne explained ARB will review and may reject sign requests if the sign does not represent character of the City and noted design criteria was not discussed.

Council agreed on consideration of unintended consequences and briefly discussed signs, compliance, and other options such as grandfathering. Mr. Lutz shared the benefits of ARB reviewing sign applications. Mr. Browne suggested signs may be grandfathered in; however, it will slow progress of updating sign code. Mayor Rosenthal asked how many signs will be impacted to modify a monument sign or have minor variances. Mr. Lutz added pole signs are prohibited and commented some pole signs are erected that were not legally erected. Councilmember Jessee asked if there is a state grandfathering law that may be considered. City Attorney Mike Brenan shared when billboards were illuminated and downsized. He stated one of the City's first ordinances was illuminated billboards. Mr. Browne noted this action would not impact grandfathering law.

Mayor Rosenthal asked for an accurate number of how many businesses would be impacted. He noted the sizes vary within the City.

Mr. Lutz stated a survey may be initiated and asked if the Council agreed on the proposed measurements. He explained photocopies of images placed on windows are not considered window signage. He provided an example of window signage, Bird Bakery displays their logos on their windows. He noted an appeal from Board and Brush is currently on hold until a decision is made regarding proposed sign code amendments.

Council agreed on the proposed amendments to serve as a baseline, survey business to gain an accurate database of how many businesses are impacted and marginal in consideration of proposed sign amendments.

Mr. Browne stated a survey will be conducted and asked Council if staff may seek feedback from the community. He informed Council the proposed sign code amendments on available on the City's website. Mr. Lutz stated letters may be mailed out to tenant and property owners. Mayor Rosenthal directed staff to conduct informational outreach.

Councilmember Jessee commented on temporary holiday window decor. Mr. Lutz stated in the past he had received comments from the community in support and in opposition of window decor. He stated he will present options for Council to consider related to holiday window decor.

Council agreed to table the item to receive a presentation in the future regarding a survey that identifies businesses in compliance with proposed code amendments to serve as a baseline of survey.

Item # 5 Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

ORDINANCE NO. 2102

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO CREATE A
NEW ALL-WAY STOP INTERSECTION ON PRIMROSE
PLACE AT THE INTERSECTION WITH BUTTERCUP
DRIVE**

Police Chief Rick Pruitt made a PowerPoint presentation that included background information.

Police Chief Pruitt stated residents on Primrose Place had requested consideration for a new stop sign on Primrose Place at the intersection with Buttercup Drive due to expressed concern of heavy volume of commuter traffic. He stated currently a stop sign is erected on Primrose Place at the intersection with Wintergreen Drive. Police Chief Pruitt stated the width of the street is 30 feet and does not have sidewalks for pedestrians and neighborhood children. Primrose Place is a residential street frequently used by walkers/joggers and students attending Alamo Heights High School. Vehicles traveling in an easterly direction past Buttercup Drive experience a downhill grade in the roadway to the intersection with N. New Braunfels.

Police officers monitored the driving behaviors of vehicles traveling on Primrose Place for a two-week period. Police officers observed traffic speeds to be within tolerances and confirmed vehicles committing stop sign violations on Primrose Place at Wintergreen Drive. A mechanical traffic survey was contracted to record vehicle speeds and volume. Traffic survey results of 100 and 200 blocks of Primrose Place were

presented. Police Chief Pruitt commented there is no concern for displacing commuter traffic onto neighboring streets as majority of the neighboring streets have existing all-way stop signs. Police Chief Pruitt also presented costs for new stop sign and installation.

Letters were mailed to residents in the 100, 200 and 300 blocks of Primrose Place requesting their input for a new stop sign on Primrose Place. Staff received eight responses in favor and two responses in opposition of a new stop sign.

The following citizens spoke on this matter:

Pruyn Hildebrand, property owner, shared she had been a resident for 33 years when her family resided on Primrose, and stated she never allowed her children to ride their bikes on Primrose. She recalled a "No Through Traffic Sign" for commercial vehicles that was removed years ago and brought it to the City's attention. The City noted the unknown status of the sign and commented it is a public street. She expressed support of a stop sign located at Primrose Place and Buttercup Drive.

Robert Browning, resident, shared he is a resident since 1977. He expressed in his opinion a stop sign is an inconvenience. He commented it is unpleasant to be pulled over for not making a complete stop sign. He expressed support in removing the stop sign located on his block.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if the survey was distributed within the perimeter where the stop sign is proposed and also asked for Police Chief's thoughts.

Police Chief Pruitt stated he reviewed the survey results and acknowledged majority of drivers are within compliance of the speed limit. He recommended the location may be monitored and noted the time period the survey was conducted was near the end of the school year.

Councilmember Prassel commented there had not been fatalities at the location that he was aware of.

Tony Turner, resident, informed Council he requested the consideration of a new stop sign. He stated the concerns are speed and volume of traffic. He shared he did not allow his daughters or grandchildren to play in the front yard.

Police Chief Pruitt stated the controlled intersections allow safer areas for pedestrians to cross the street.

Council discussed options and possible impact of volume. Councilmember Prassel noted College Blvd, is impacted by volume.

A motion for approval was made by Councilmember Prassel. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jessee and passed by unanimous vote.

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There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilmember Prassel to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jesse and passed by unanimous vote. Mayor Rosenthal adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.


Jennifer Reyna
City Secretary


Bobby Rosenthal
Mayor