

**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF GREY FOREST, TEXAS  
GREY FOREST COMMUNITY CENTER  
18249 SHERWOOD TRAIL  
HELOTES, TX 78023  
May 25, 2021, 6:30 PM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Thornton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mayor Charles M. Thornton Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Geri Poss, Council Member Susan Darst, Council Member Jennifer Nottingham, Council Member Sean Skaggs, and Council Member Kimberly Verity

Staff Present: City Attorney Sonya Herrera, City Secretary Miguel Cantu, Chief of Police Rene Rodriguez, Sgt Scott Ristow, Reserve Officer Raymond Yee

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION**

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS/OATH OF OFFICE**

City Secretary Miguel Cantu administered the Oath of Office to Council Member Kimberly Verity, Council Member Sean Skaggs, and Council Member Geri Poss.

**V. PRESENTATIONS BY CITIZENS AND VISITORS**

Mr. Lou Hoffman wished to address the City Council regarding posting the meeting on the City's marquee and asked the City to continue to send emails notifying the public about the City Council Meetings.

Mrs. Becky Locke stated she wished to address the City Council regarding mailboxes and sign ordinances. She asked how City Council would disregard the desire of the residents to leave the mailboxes where they are and remain operational. She added she felt her rights were being stripped away and losing her voice, not be heard or taken into consideration. Mrs. Locke asked a City Council member reach out to her to discuss her concern.

Ms. Mandy Waldroup asked City Council to request Public Works to have a brush pick up since quite a few people were losing trees. There has been a considerable amount of rain and has noticed other residents have brush that needs to be picked up. Also, she requested that the meetings continue to be announced on the City's marquee. Additionally, she stated a petition had been signed by 119 people addressing the mailboxes be left alone. Ms. Waldroup submitted a copy of a petition she had presented before. Regarding the sign ordinance, Ms. Waldroup felt the sign ordinance would possibly start new litigation for the city.

Mr. Neil Verity informed City Council he wanted to voice his support for the sign ordinance. It was well crafted and is not too far reaching. He added the sign ordinance still preserved the right for the people to have signs in their yard.

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS / REPORTS / MAYOR AND CITY EMPLOYEES**

- a) **Mayor Announcements**
  - 1) **Future Financials**
  - 2) **April 2021 Check Detail**

Mayor Thornton presented the Future Financials and April 2021 Check Details. He announced the hiring of Administrative Assistant Nichole Gomez (Heinrich), provided an update to the installation of the mailboxes, and informed City Council city hall would be closed on May 31, 2021 in observance of Memorial Day. Council Member Poss requested financials to include statement of accounts for each month.

**b) Council/Staff Announcements:** None

**c) Committee Announcements/Reports:** None

**d) Grey Forest Community Board Update:** Mayor Thornton called on Ms. Madeline McCloskey, Community Board Chairman. Ms. McCloskey announced that the Annual Community Wide Garage Sale on May 15, 2021 went well despite the rain. She added the Board was preparing for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July events. She announced that the events included a time for decorating vehicles, a parade, and lunch was planned for the festivities. Additionally, Ms. McCloskey announced the board is working on the playground equipment, including an architect to create a design for the playground. The architect has volunteered to help the board create a natural playscape out of natural materials.

**e) Senator Frank L. Madla Natural Area Update:** Mayor Thornton called on Council Member Jennifer Nottingham. Council Member Nottingham stated there was a concern that visitors are going off the trails. She mentioned the board would continue to discuss barriers to keep the visitors inside the trails. She has been receiving information from a visitor who has been watching birds at Madla Park. There have been seven different species reported. Furthermore, Council Member Nottingham reported she had a copy of the City of San Antonio and Edward Aquifer Authority letter regarding their visit and offered copies to the public.

**f) Board of Adjustment Update:** None

**g) Police Department Monthly Report:** Mayor Thornton called on Chief Rene Rodriguez. Chief Rodriguez reviewed the Police Department Monthly Report for April 2021. Chief Rodriguez included a Police Manpower Schedule Roster to demonstrate the city had 24-hour coverage. Furthermore, he informed the City Council and the public there were yellow stickers being placed on privately owned signs, such as, the "Save Historic Grey Forest" signs. The stickers are not being authorized or adhered by the City of Grey Forest Police Department.

Officer Raymond Yee informed City Council about grants awarded in the previous and past fiscal years and highlighted pursuits for grants in the upcoming year; to include tasers and ticket writer equipment.

**h) Public Works Monthly Report:** None

**i) Fire Department Monthly Report:** Mayor Thornton reported ESD #8 Facilities Manager Mr. Don Reddout had provided a report for City Council's review.

**j) Grey Forest Utilities Update:** Mayor Thornton informed City Council CEO of Grey Forest Utilities Jeff English was on vacation.

## VII. PUBLIC HEARING

- a) None

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MAY BE CONSIDERED AT ANY TIME DURING THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING:**

## VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

- a) **Approval of Minutes: April 21, 2021 Workshop and April 27, 2021 Regular Meeting**  
MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POSS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR

APRIL 21, 2021 WORKSHOP AND APRIL 27, 2021 REGULAR MEETING. MAYOR PRO TEM DARST SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**a) Discuss and take possible action on appointment of Mayor Pro Tem.**

Mayor Thornton recommended Council Member Poss as the Mayor Pro Tem. Council Member Nottingham asked Council Member Poss if she would accept the nomination. Council Member Poss accepted the nomination.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINGHAM TO APPROVE COUNCIL MEMBER POSS AS THE MAYOR PRO TEM. COUNCIL MEMBER DARST SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**b) Discuss and take possible action on appointment of a council person to the Grey Forest Community Supervisory Board pursuant to Ordinance No. 215.**

COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINGHAM MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER SKAGGS TO THE GREY FOREST COMMUNITY SUPERVISORY BOARD. MAYOR PRO POSS SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**c) Discuss and take possible action on appointment of a council person to the Senator Frank L. Madla, Jr. Natural Area Board of Directors pursuant to amendment of Ordinance No. 180.**

Mayor Thornton called on Mrs. Susan Beavin to speak on the agenda item. Mrs. Beavin requested Council Member Nottingham continue to be the council person appointed to the Senator Frank L. Madla, Jr. Natural Area Board of Directors.

MOTION WAS MADE MAYOR PRO TEM POSS TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINGHAM TO THE SENATOR FRANK L. MADLA, JR. NATURAL AREA BOARD OF DIRECTORS. COUNCIL MEMBER DARST SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**d) Discuss and take possible action on appointment of a City Attorney for the term expiring May 2022 pursuant to Ordinance 79.**

Mayor Thornton asked for the appointment of the Law Offices of Ryan Henry, PLLC as the City Attorney.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DARST TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE LAW OFFICES OF RYAN HENRY, PLLC AS THE CITY ATTORNEY. COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINGHAM SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**e) Discuss and take possible action on Resolution No. 2021-08R, a resolution of the City Council of the City of Grey Forest, Texas, hereby authorizing the Mayor, or his designee, to dispose of City surplus property by discarding, selling, or donating.**

Council Member Verity requested that the Resolution provide clarity to the resolution by adding the words "discarding, selling, or donating."

MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM POSS TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2021-08R A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREY FOREST, TEXAS, HEREBY AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO DISPOSE OF CITY SURPLUS PROPERTY BY DISCARDING, SELLING, OR DONATING. COUNCIL MEMBER SKAGGS SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**f) Discuss and take possible action on Resolution No. 2021-09R, a resolution of the City Council of the City of Grey Forest, Texas electing not to require the remittance of a PEG Fee by holders the state issued certificate of franchise authority.**

Mayor Thornton explained the funds were restricted and can only be used for public access television. It would be in the City's best interest to opt out of the fee and use the funds for a website upgrade, if possible.

MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM POSS TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2021-09R. COUNCIL MEMBER VERITY SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**g) Discussion and take possible action on Ordinance No. 2021-08, an ordinance by the City Council of the City of Grey Forest, Texas, amending Ordinance 200; Article 2.01 General Provisions Sec. 2.01.001 definitions, "Restraint" providing for a penalty; repealing all parts of ordinances in conflict; providing a severability clause; and open meetings clause.**

Mayor Thornton explained the only action was to amend as follows:

**Restraint.** Any animal secured by a physical leash or lead attached to an animal collar or harness ~~otherwise under the control of a responsible person and obedient to that person's commands~~. At all other times, a dog or other animal shall be confined to the realty or premises of the owner of such dog or other animal by a substantial fence of sufficient strength and height to prevent such dog or other animal from escaping therefrom; or inside a house on such premises; or secured on such premises by a leash consisting of a material of sufficient strength to prevent said dog or other animal from escaping such premises. It shall be unlawful for the leash to be arranged in a manner that allows the dog or other animal to get on or across any street, park, or other public land. Any animal so arranged shall be considered dangerous to the public in general and declared a nuisance, and shall be impounded.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINGHAM TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2021-08. COUNCIL MEMBER DARST SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

## **X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a) Discuss and take possible action regarding issues related to code enforcement and possible amendments to the Nuisance Ordinance.**

Mayor Thornton stated the agenda item was for discussion.

Council Member Nottingham stated she would like for the ordinance to focus on health and safety.

Council Member Verity clarified the complaints should be received by three different resident complaints and not just one resident.

Mayor Thornton stated at this time the City may need more tools in order to enforce the rules of complaints; however, the Police Department is handling the complaints as reasonable as possible.

Council Member Skaggs stated the City Council can review the ordinance quarterly.

Mayor Pro Tem Poss agreed the City Council could revisit the ordinance in three months. She also asked that SGT Ristow to provide a report on the major code compliance issues he has been addressing.

SGT Ristow stated he would look into creating a volunteer program with young residents. He understands that at this time the city would have to find other resources to assist residents because the cost has risen on construction material.

Council Member Darst stated Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) and Bexar County could also be resources for the City. She stated AACOG had provided assistance with hazardous waste removal and with weatherization of homes.

Mayor Thornton stated the City would look into these programs and how to make the services available to residents.

**b) Discuss and take possible action on Ordinance 2021-07; an ordinance establishing Chapter 15 – Signs of the City of Grey Forest Code of Ordinances, providing for regulations on non-traffic control signs, licenses, and permits, and providing for civil and criminal penalties.**

Mayor Thornton called on Mr. John Fiest to make a public comment regarding any specific agenda items. Mr. Fiest stated that he filled out the form just in case he wanted to address anything on the agenda.

Mayor Thornton called on Mr. Ed Sharnhorst to speak on the agenda item. Mr. Sharnhorst read the definition of a sign. Additionally, he stated he had four signs on his home and believed to be out of compliance. According to the proposed ordinance, the cost of the fine would be \$1,000. He stated the ordinance was poorly proposed; specifically, addressing the number of signs and the type of signs, such as political signs.

Mayor Thornton called on Ms. Madeline McCloskey to speak on the agenda item. Ms. McCloskey asked City Council to exempt trespassing signs from two sides. Ms. McCloskey stated that there are some residents with two sides to their yard and are located close to the creek. She felt that it was important to let those walking to know where real/personal property started.

Mayor Thornton stated there is work to do on the definitions in the sign ordinance.

Attorney Herrera added the purpose of the sign ordinance is to try and see if the City could have some structure with regulations that are not so overbroad and step on your first amendment right (Freedom of Speech). At the same time, the City wants to make sure it maintains a little bit of the aesthetic and not have signs that are falling apart or that can potentially pose a danger. From speaking with the Council, most citizens do not want billboards to go up in the City of Grey Forest. Sometimes, City's will have a sign ordinance that will specifically say no billboards permitted, or have signs being put upon posts everywhere that might pose a danger to traffic. Initially, when the sign ordinance was started it was lengthy. Attorney Herrera believes in going and speaking with council and getting feedback, the content has been narrowed down. So, it is a lot less regulations than was started. Attorney Herrera stated there were several items in the sign ordinance to offer suggestions and continue to reconsider options. This would ultimately fit the city and it serves all. The ordinance may be designed not be overly restrictive.

Council Member Verity stated that it was important that citizens understood the intentions. One of those intentions was to keep the right of ways clear and not having signs hanging out of trees or falling on fences.

Council Member Nottingham stated the ordinance still needed more work to it and would be best to hear from citizens. She asked if any Council Member had received any responses from the citizens. Most of the Council Members stated they had received one email.

Council Member Verity stated that she hoped the residents would attend the meetings to help develop an ordinance that is reasonable.

Mayor Thornton stated the city marquee would now have the date and time of the City Council meeting posted. Additionally, once the new mailboxes are ready, they will also be posted on the City's marquee.

Mayor Pro Tem Poss stated that she would like to have a workshop to work on the sign ordinance.

Council Member Nottingham stated that she would like citizens to provide input regarding the agenda and receive comments June 4, 2021.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER SKAGGS TO SET A WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING CHAPTER 15 – SIGNS OF THE CITY OF GREY FOREST CODE OF ORDINANCES, PROVIDING FOR REGULATIONS ON NON-TRAFFIC**

CONTROL SIGNS, LICENSES, AND PERMITS, AND PROVIDING FOR CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES ON JUNE 10, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M. AND HAVE ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE CITY SECRETARY ON JUNE 4, 2021 BY 5:00 P.M. COUNCIL MEMBER NOTTINHAM SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

a) None

**XII. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS & FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS REQUESTED**

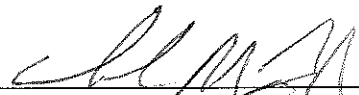
a) None

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER SKAGGS TO ADJOURN AT 8:28 P.M. MAYOR PRO TEM POSS SECONDED THE MOTION. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 22<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2021.**

APPROVED:



Charles Mitchell Thornton, Jr.

ATTEST:



Miguel Cantu, TRMC  
City Secretary

