

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
HELOTES CITY COUNCIL
June 22, 2023

The City of Helotes City Council met for a regular meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 12951 Bandera Road, Helotes, Texas. This was an open meeting, subject to the open meeting laws of the State of Texas.

Present: Rich Whitehead, Mayor
Craig Sanders
Jen Sones
Dave Cato
Matthew Merchant

Absent: Cynthia Massey

Staff Present: Marian Mendoza, City Administrator
Celina Perez, City Secretary
Glenn Goolsby, HEDC Executive Director
Frank Garza, City Attorney

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Whitehead called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Council Member Merchant led the invocation. Mayor Whitehead led the pledges to the U.S. flag and to the Texas flag.

RECOGNITION:

2. Civic Award presented to the following in recognition of their public service on the City of Helotes Planning & Zoning Commission:

- **Ron Hozza, 23 years of public service;**
- **Jeff Wade, 8 years of public service; and**
- **Mario Rios; 7 years of public service.**

Before the award presentation, Mayor Whitehead invited Gregg Michel, Chair of the Planning Zoning Commission, to share a few words of appreciation. Chair Michel acknowledged the award recipients for their commitment, stating the Commission played a role in overseeing the city's growth. Mayor Whitehead proceeded to present Civic Awards to Ron Hozza and Mario Rios (Jeff Wade could not attend).

OPEN SESSION:

3. Citizens to be Heard. *The speakers are grouped by subject matter.*

Anne Carraway, Robert James, David Banks, and Terry Banks spoke in opposition of the proposed refacing of the Old Town Helotes Special District sign located on S.H. 16 (Agenda Item No. 8). The speakers agreed that the proposed refacing should not remove the “Old Town Helotes” text, as this designation directs visitors to the historic district.

Mario Rios thanked the City Council for the recognition, stating it was an honor to serve on the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Richard Hawk and Rhonda Fay spoke about the (membership) change on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mayor Whitehead advised responses to speakers are limited to a statement of specific factual information. The City Council discussed on previous agendas and approved reducing the Planning & Zoning Commission membership composition (from eight to five members). The new membership composition is consistent with the other city board (Board of Adjustment) and other Planning & Zoning Commissions of similar city size. The decrease also aids in maintaining quorum.

CONSENT AGENDA: All items marked with an asterisk (*) on the consent agenda were voted on by one motion. Motion was made by Council Member Sanders, second by Council Member Merchant to approve item 4 on the consent agenda. Motion to approve carried unanimously by those present.

4.* Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting dated June 8, 2023. (Staff)

MAYOR’S REPORT:

5. Updates on the following:

- **TxDOT improvements;**
- **Water quality permit application for the Guajolote Ranch Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP); and**
- **Reminder of the Helotes Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks event on Monday, July 3 at the Helotes Festival Fairgrounds.**

Mayor Whitehead provided an update on the S.H. 16 (Bandera Road) improvement project by TxDOT. A lot more construction activity has occurred in the last month by the TxDOT contractors. TxDOT continues to hold a weekly meeting regarding project updates, and Fire Chief Moreland attends this meeting. Next, Mayor Whitehead advised the city passed a resolution (on May 25, 2023) expressing opposition to the water quality permit application for the Guajolote Ranch Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). Representative Mark Dorazio (District 122) and Senator Roland Gutierrez (District 19) have also expressed opposition. A contested case hearing was requested (by Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance); however, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has yet to announce a hearing date. Finally, the Helotes Independence Day Celebration is on Monday, July 3, at the Helotes Festival Grounds. Mayor Whitehead invited the community to attend this fun, family event.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

6. **Discussion of and action on the following appointments/*reappointments to the Ethics Commission, all to serve concurrently with the corresponding council member's term:**
- **Council Member Cato nominee - Maggie Scheuneman, Pl. 3, term expiring May 2025;**
 - ***Council Member Merchant reappointment - Derek Mathis, Pl. 5, term expiring May 2025;**
 - ***Mayor Whitehead reappointment - Jesse Saldana, Pl. 6, term expiring May 2025; and**
 - ***Mayor Whitehead reappointment - Robert Hoepfner, Pl. 7, term expiring May 2025. (City Council)**

Motion was made by Council Member Merchant, second by Council Member Cato, to discuss and act on this item as written.

Motion to approve the item as written carried unanimously by those present.

7. **Discussion of and action on a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Helotes, Texas authorizing the execution of a Contingent Fee Contract between the City of Helotes and Linebarger, Goggan, Blair, & Sampson, L.L.P. for the collection of delinquent property taxes owed to the city; approving Extension No. 2 for a period of five (5) years beginning on July 1, 2023, and expiring on June 30, 2028; and authorizing the Mayor to execute said extension. (Staff)**

Motion was made by Council Member Sanders, second by Council Member Sones, to discuss and act on this item as written.

Motion to approve the item as written carried unanimously by those present.

8. **Discussion of and information on the maintenance of the existing sign that identifies the Old Town Helotes Special District, located on S.H. 16. (Staff)**

Discussion included the origin of the Old Town Helotes Special District sign as follows:

- February 7, 2012 – the Helotes Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) submitted a Creative Sign item to the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- March 22, 2012 – The Creative Sign item advanced to the City Council, and the sign was approved with a cost not to exceed \$14,000.00. The sign was erected at 14392 Bandera Road, on property not owned by the city, but rather leased by the city for parking.
- February 7, 2017 – City Staff (at the time) submitted the sign as an Exempted Sign item to the Planning & Zoning Commission, for the purpose of refacing. The Commission requested additional design samples.
- March 7, 2017 – The Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed additional design samples and approved the refacing that exists on the sign present day. The refacing of the sign was not taken to the City Council.

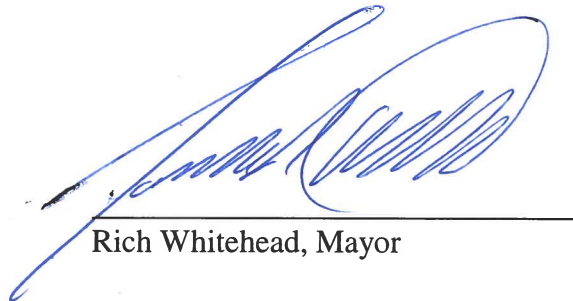
Due to the inconsistent submission methods noted above, Staff determined that the City Council should discuss and provide procedural direction. Glenn Goolsby, HEDC Executive Director, added that the proposed refacing design uses the *Visit Helotes* rebranding since seven Old Town Helotes signs already exist in the district. The HEDC Board felt the sign refacing was an opportunity to use *Visit Helotes* because no signage in the city promotes the rebrand.

The City Council agreed the proposed sign refacing should include the Old Town Helotes text and requested that the HEDC Board consider keeping the text in the new design. The Council understood this was a professional request to the HEDC Board, and ultimately, the design choice was in their purview. Lastly, the Council affirmed the sign type is a Creative Sign (due to associated size/height variances), and the HEDC needs to follow the sign application process of submitting the item to the Planning & Zoning Commission for recommendation and the City Council for final approval.

Glenn confirmed he would relay the design feedback to the HEDC Board for reconsideration. The HEDC will follow the sign application process and submit a Creative Sign item to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council.

Adjourn.

With no more business to come before Council, Mayor Whitehead adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.



Rich Whitehead, Mayor

ATTEST:



Celina Perez, City Secretary

