

City Business
“May 9th Agenda”
by Michael Leamons

The Regular City Council Meeting will be Monday, May 9th at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The following items are scheduled for consideration at that meeting:

1. The double headed carriage light fixture under the live oak tree in front of Shy Bears has been equipped with 50 watt LED bulbs. Sometime this week it is expected TNMP will temporarily disconnect the overhead cobra style street lights so that the Council and the merchants along the Esplanade can determine whether or not it would be acceptable to permanently eliminate the overhead lights and install LED bulbs in all of the carriage lights. It is hoped the LED lighting proposal will add to the Esplanade’s ambiance and accentuate the LED Christmas lighting along the tops of the buildings, while resulting in a reduction in the City’s monthly street lighting bill.
2. Recently, the Hico Economic Development Corporation voted to have a TEEEX (Texas Engineering Extension Service of A & M) economic development team work with community leaders to put together a long term economic development plan for Hico. The team has a track record of developing successful plans in other rural Texas communities. TEEEX will fund half of the project’s cost and the EDC will fund the other half (about \$10,000). The Council is being asked to ratify that expenditure.
3. The Council has expressed an interest in transitioning to a poly cart system of garbage collection like that used in Stephenville, Hamilton, Iredell and Morgan. IESI has submitted an updated contract providing for poly carts.
4. The Council has been moving forward with plans to sell the Old Pecan Street Waterworks property. As part of that process, the property needs to be rezoned from a “public facility” use to some type of “residential use”, since it is totally surrounded by a residential district. The Council will act on a rezoning recommendation slated to come out of the May 4th Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting. The Council will consider establishing bid procedures.
5. The Council will be revisiting Nuisance Ordinance 081009A adopted in August, 2009. The ordinance prohibits certain types of noise nuisances, but doesn’t provide a concrete method for identifying what represents a “noise nuisance”. It has come to the City’s attention that many cities have adopted a 50’ rule. If the noise from a sound amplification system can be clearly heard from more than 50’ away, that noise is considered to be a nuisance. Were the Council to amend the ordinance to adopt the 50’ rule, it would make it easier for Law Enforcement personnel to enforce infractions. The Council will also be asked to consider the portion of the ordinance which requires property owners to mow all the way out to the street. Usually, a resident’s property line doesn’t extend that far. Certainly, it looks better when residents mow all the way to the street, and the City encourages citizens to do so; however, the courts have sent mixed signals about the legal disputes arising in cities where citizens have been compelled to mow and maintain property which doesn’t belong to them. Staff is recommending the Council drop this requirement from the ordinance. The Council will also review whether or not to maintain the ordinance’s requirement that all garbage set out for collection be kept in containers. While considering the possibility of going to poly carts, the Council has discussed this requirement. One member of the Council indicated citizens should be

allowed to place trash bags at the curb for collection. Finally, the provisions of the ordinance which address dilapidated structures will be reviewed. A number of sheds and a few uninhabited houses in town are disintegrating. Recently, staff took action against all the junked vehicles in Hico with a city-wide sweep. Although some citizens were disgruntled, many were placated when they learned everyone had to come into compliance---that the City wasn't showing favoritism to a few. Staff would like to use the same approach with regard to dilapidated structures.

6. The Council will consider adopting City Vision and Mission Statements.

7. The Council will consider how to respond to a straw poll of the County Commissioners Court about continuing with the current joint law enforcement agreement between the County, the City of Hamilton and the City of Hico. Commissioners Clary and Boatwright voiced support; County Judge Mills and Precinct 3 Commissioner Bonner voiced opposition; and, Commissioner Tafel, the newest member of the Court, indicated he was leaning toward opposing, but needed to become better informed before taking a position.

May God bless the City of Hico.