

STATE OF TEXAS §  
COUNTY OF CAMERON §  
TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA §

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAGUNA VISTA TOWN COUNCIL

DATE: June 13, 2017  
TIME: 6:00 p.m.  
PLACE: City Hall Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susie Houston, Mayor  
Michael Carter, Councilmember Place 1  
Frank Davalos, Jr., Councilmember Place 3  
Gary Meschi, Councilmember Place 5  
  
Rolando Vela, City Manager  
Ricardo Morado, City Attorney  
Alma Deckard, City Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: Johvonne Howard, Councilmember Place 2  
Rolando Gonzalez, Councilmember Place 4  
Nadine Smith, Councilmember Place 6

ALSO PRESENT: Janie Petty, Citizen  
Rusty Justice, Citizen  
Felicia Justice, Citizen  
Margie Jacobs, Laguna Madre Youth Center  
Holly Valdez, Laguna Madre Youth Center  
Richard Lane, Citizen  
Victor Worrell, Citizen  
Rudy Garcia, Citizen  
Jerry Harbin, Citizen  
Bud Sherman, Citizen  
Donna Sherman, Citizen  
Martha McClain, Citizen  
Nicole Ekstrom, Citizen  
Boyd Blihovde, Laguna Atascosa Manager

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Houston called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Council Member Meschi.
3. **Roll Call/Excused Absences – Council Member Johvonne Howard, Rolando Gonzalez and Nadine Smith were absent.**

**Mayor Houston made a motion to excuse Council Members Johvonne Howard, and Nadine Smith were out of town and Council Member Gonzalez had a death in the family, Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

#### 4. **PRESENTATION/RESOLUTIONS**

- A. **RESOLUTION NUMBER 2017-13** – To approve Resolution Number 2017-13 honoring former Council Member Wanda Reyes for her years of service. (City Manager)

**Council Member Carter made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2017-13 honoring former Council Member Wanda Reyes, Council Member Davalos seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

- B. **RESOLUTION NUMBER 2017-14** – To approve Resolution Number 2017-14 honoring former Council Member Leti Keplinger for her years of service. (City Manager)

**Mayor Houston made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2017-14 honoring former Council Member Leti Keplinger, Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

#### 5. **OPEN FORUM:**

**Curt Chamberlain addressed the Council stating that the issue with the marina is really an economic issue. Our property taxes is the largest revenue we receive. We don't get a lot of services for our money and streets don't get repairs unless there is a grant available. Beach Blvd has had sales up to 3 million dollars for lots and homes sold. Those lots and homes are purchased because of the availability to the marina.**

**David Lohse addressed the Council stating that he found out that the town attorney issued a memo to the Council stating that it is unethical for them to vote on the marina lease if they are members of the LVRA. Who does the city attorney work for, only the mayor or at the direction of the Council in full? Who directs the city attorney?**

**Michael Carter addressed the Council stating that he was given a memo from the town attorney stating that if we are members of the Laguna Vista**

**Recreational Association (LVRA) it is a conflict concerning the lease agreement. I am resigning as member of the LVRA, right now, and am handing my marina key to David Lohse who is the President of the LVRA. Now I can discuss anything about the issue.**

6. **NEW BUSINESS:** Discussion, consideration and possible action on each of the following items:

A. **PROJECT AMERICA** - Presentation on Project America and request of letter of support for this project. (Mayor Houston)

**Council Member Carter made a motion to support the Project America with a letter of support, Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

B. **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE** – Presentation and request by Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager at Laguna Atascosa NWR, for use of some of the property at the Town-owned 23 acres on Highway 100 for a visitor contact station. (City Manager)  
**Boyd Blihovde addressed the council requesting that they consider donating a portion of the 23 acres for a Parks & Wildlife area, which will be located adjacent to the Visitors Center that Cameron County will be building.**

**Council Member Meschi suggested that all the entities involved meet and come to some kind of agreement to share the property.**

**Boyd Blihovde stated he would be open to meeting with Cameron County and will come back to the Council for a follow up report.**

C. **LAGUNA MADRE YOUTH CENTER** – Request by the Laguna Madre Youth Center for funding. (City Manager)

**Council Member Davalos recused himself, for the Laguna Madre Youth Center agenda item because he is on the Board of Directors for the organization, and left the room.**

**Holly Valdez addressed the Council explaining that the Laguna Madre Youth Center has regrouped from the original Boys and Girls Club. She stated that they are requesting funding from the Town as they have also requested from the City of SPI and Port Isabel. The City of Port Isabel is also contributing in kind funding by paying all the utilities for the building. There are also employees from the City of Port Isabel that assist at the center.**

**Margie Jacobs addressed the Council, she is a City of Port Isabel employee that with helping out at the Laguna Madre Youth Center. She has filed 5 grant applications, with 2 that have been approved. There is a \$25,000 grant application to Lowes for building maintenance because the building is in need of repairs.**

**The after school program runs 4 hours, however during the summer it runs from 8 am to 5 pm. The summer program currently has 90 kids enrolled, with 80 on the waiting list. There is also soccer and basketball leagues held during the year.**

**Council Member Meschi asked if it is the same Board of Directors in place, or if there is a new board in place. Also, the last time the organization requesting funding there were no financials or a budget available; are financials and budgets available now?**

**Margie Jacobs stated that there is an audit currently being conducted. They estimated a budget of \$304,000. She stated that the financial and budget would be made available, once completed.**

**D. MINUTES – Consideration and action to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2017 Regular Meeting. (City Secretary)**

**Council Member Meschi made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2017 Regular Meeting, Mayor Houston seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**E. MAYOR PRO TEM – Consideration and action to appoint a Mayor Pro Tem pursuant to the Home Rule Charter, Section 2.03(b). (City Manager)**

**Council Member Davalos made a motion to appoint Council Member Carter as Mayor Pro-Tem pursuant to the Home Rule Charter, Section 2.03(b), Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**F. ORDINANCE NUMBER 2017 - 15 – First Reading – To consider Ordinance Number 2017-15 – amending Ordinance 2014-17, requiring a two-car garage for all new single family residential construction. (City Manager)**

**Ricardo Morado indicated some changes for the second reading. No action was taken for the first reading.**

**G. ORDINANCE NUMBER 2017-16 – First Reading – To consider Ordinance Number 2017-16, repealing Ordinance Number 10-59 concerning livestock. (City Manager)**

**Ricardo Morado made some revisions to the ordinance body, which will be presented for the second reading. No action was taken for the first reading.**

**H. ORANGE LANE STREET IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT AWARD – Consideration and action to award TDA Project Number 7616279 to G & T Paving, LLC in the amount of \$178,307 for street improvements to Orange Lane. (City Manager)**

**Mayor Houston made a motion to award the TCDP 7616279 contract for the Orange Lane street improvements to G&T Paving for \$178,307, Council**

**Member Davalos seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**I. LVRA LEASE** – An update from the City Attorney on his conversation with the LVRA attorney (Council Members Carter and Gonzalez)

**Ricardo Morado reported to the Council that he spoke with Cathy Cunningham, attorney for the LVRA, on May 15, 2017 concerning the negotiations for the LVRA lease. They agreed to hold off until the Town Council gave directions for the lease, in view of the new council members.**

**Council Member Carter asked if anything was discussed. Ricardo Morado stated that Ms. Cunningham did not have any questions concerning the lease.**

**J. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

i. Independence Day Parade and Celebration

**Rolando Vela stated that the Independence day celebration is set for Saturday, July 1, 2017. The parade will begin at 5:30 pm, with the music in the park from 6 – 10:00 pm. Hector Guzman with the All Nighters will be playing. We are looking for vendors and there will also be a run and walk in the morning.**

ii. TML Excellence Awards Entries

**Rolando Vela stated that he has submitted 4 entries for the Texas Municipal League (TML) Excellence Awards. These are awards issued to cities over 25,000 population and under 25000 population. Awards are announced at the TML conference in October. The four categories include:**

- ✚ Management Innovations (financial reports)**
- ✚ Communication with community**
- ✚ City Spirit – community events**
- ✚ Public Safety – police department**

**K. EXECUTIVE SESSION** - There will be an Executive Session in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, pursuant to Section §551.071; consultation with Town Attorney regarding legal issues pertaining to ongoing negotiations with LVRA. (Council Members Carter and Gonzalez)

**Council Member Davalos made a motion to go into executive session, at 7:27 pm, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, pursuant to Section §551.071; consultation with Town Attorney regarding legal issues pertaining to ongoing negotiations with LVRA, Council Member Carter seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**Town Council came out of executive session at 7:55 pm.**

**L. OPEN SESSION** – Action, if any, on the items discussed in Executive Session

**Council Member Carter made a motion to authorize the City Attorney to proceed as instructed in executive session, Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member Davalos made a motion to adjourn meeting at 7:58 pm, Council Member Meschi seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

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Susie Houston, Mayor

Attest:

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Alma Deckard, City Secretary



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