

MINUTES OF SPECIAL  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
NOVEMBER 9, 2015

The City Council of Olmos Park, Texas held a special meeting on November 9, 2015 commencing at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Kenneth Farrimond presided and Council members present were Casey Fry, Kenyon McDonald, Deb Prost, Juliana Dusek and Ronald Hornberger. Staff present was City Manager, Celia M DeLeon; City Secretary, Diane Gonzales. Also present were City Attorney, Frank Garza, Andres Andujar, 126 E. Mandalay, Pat Meier, 140 Stanford and A.T. Brainerd, 201 E. Mandalay.

Mayor Farrimond called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and determined a quorum was present.

Receive and discuss an Olmos Park Economic Development Corporation ("OPEDC) 2016 Budget/Work Plan; take possible action

Councilwoman Prost stated I don't see anything on the budget in regards to recruiting of companies. We have had some empty spaces and how are we going to develop a relationship with our commercial district which I think would be more of a Work Plan. The Work Plan usually accompanies the budget.

Sharon Plant stated the work plan is the stripping plan. We will have further details as we can present something. Going out and enticing businesses to come in Olmos Park was not done by the prior EDC.

Councilman Hornberger moved to approve the OPEDC 2016 Budget/Work Plan.

Councilman McDonald seconded the motion.

The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

Receive and discuss an Olmos Park Economic Development Corporation ("OPEDC) project. The OPEDC proposes to extend existing consultants' scope of professional services to develop, design and execute a striping plan for the McCullough business corridor in an amount not to exceed \$110,220; take possible action (first reading)

Andres Andujar gave a presentation on the proposed design project plan. At last month's EDC meeting we approved the 50% documents with minor modifications and what we are seeking today is approval for the 50% design with minor modifications so we can use those to develop a stripping plan. Part of the proposal with the documents that have been developed today is a proposal that the next option for the Corridor Plan is to do a stripping plan so instead of getting into immediate construction of curbs, concrete, drainage and landscaping that we do a test of what's being proposed which is done by stripping of the street. The stripping allows the community to "test drive" the Corridor Plan. The other consideration is for pedestrian crossings where the bus stops are, I believe there are 5 bus stops on the Corridor and the ones on the East of McCullough are unimproved and non-compliant with the Federal requirements for accessibility which is all subject to further study and coordination with P&Z. The plan shows 11.6 foot lanes with 5 foot bike lanes and it is the minimum bike lane recommended. I recommend that you test drive 10.6 foot lanes and the narrower the lanes reduces the speed. This narrowing of the lane is not a reduction in a curb to curb dimension but would give the bike lanes more room. I would also recommend that we reduce the speed limit down to 25 mph and as long as we are "test driving" these then we can include the speed of the corridor. We are requesting your approval of the 50% design as developed by the prior EDC and with these minor amendments presented and the EDC requests authority to proceed to the strip plan implementation.

Summary of presentation:

- Number of lanes, Bike lanes, Corner Radii, Midblock Crossings:
- Three lanes VS. Two lanes
  - Places incoming traffic into single lane
  - Potential for head on collisions
  - Dangerous condition exists north and south of roundabout
  - EDC approved two lane configurations as shown on the 50% plans North of Roundabout
  - EDC recommends a two lane configuration south of Roundabout
- Bike Lanes:
  - Part of City-wide plan
  - Bike lanes are planned on McCullough north of railroads
  - Bike lanes are installed south of Hildebrand
  - EDC approved incorporation of Bike Lanes into the McCullough Corridor Plan
- Corner Radii:
  - Consultant considered a 25 foot corner radius
  - EDC approved existing radii
  - Avoids special corner easements with businesses
  - EDC approved match of existing corner radii
  - Keeps shorter pedestrian crossing distance
  - Avoids private property acquisition
  - Approved by Fire Chief
- Midblock Crossing:
  - Block configurations makes it dangerous for pedestrian to cross McCullough
  - Incorporate midblock crossings to the stripe plan
  - Coordinate crossing from residential to commercial.
  - Consider VIA bus stops.
- Propose hiring code consultant to craft impacts to the McCullough Corridor:
  - Work with P&Z to finalize code recommendations to Council
  - Sidewalk/stripping
  - Fence/landscape for front parking
  - Options for parking - Side streets
  - Drives
  - Speed
  - Dedicated easements
  - Setbacks
  - Pavers at sidewalks and drives
- Council Approval:
  - EDC requests Council approval of 50% design of the McCullough Corridor Plan, with minor amendments
  - EDC requests authority to proceed to stipe plan implementation, after all Council and EDC required readings and other potential steps

Councilman Hornberger stated with 10 ½ foot traffic lanes that gives traffic and even the fire trucks more distance to maneuver corners without going to a 25 foot radius. You sent me some studies on the use of the narrower lanes and I agree all the studies seem to indicate if you shrink the lanes down to 10 ½ feet you're going to end up with vehicular traffic being slowed down and if we also reduce the speed limit down to 25 miles an hour then we have achieved a purpose. The idea would be to go from 11 ½ foot lanes to 10 ½ foot lanes which gives us an extra foot on bike lanes on either side. We can do everything we can to be a safe place for

bicyclers but there are a lot that are not going to pay attention so along with putting in bike lanes, I think we need to figure out a way that the bicyclist pay attention. I think we can do an ordinance that states where there are bike lanes; you need to be in that lane or get a ticket.

Frank Garza stated we would research whether the City has authority, I would think for the health and safety and general warfare of residents you could.

Councilman Fry asked so what you are recommending is the two lanes south of the roundabout, and then add 10.6 foot lanes to see how the citizens react to that?

Andres Andujar stated yes that is correct.

Councilwoman Prost stated in early conversations with VIA we called them to ask about the lanes because we were concerned about the width and after we met with them they agreed by via email to upgrade all the stops along the west side and to help with other things. The width of a VIA bus with mirrors is 10 feet 10 inches and further in their email it states they prefer to operate in 12 foot lanes so we went back to them when we had the 11 ½ foot lanes with the 5 foot bike lanes and they said they could work with an 11.6 feet so that is why plans were done on 11.6 lanes. We probably need to check back with VIA if we are trying to go for a lane that is smaller than what the bus is with the mirrors which would seem to pose a safety hazard.

Andres Andujar stated we would look into that.

Councilman Hornberger stated if we reduce the speed limit to 25 mph then that should accomplish what we are after in slowing the traffic down.

Sharon Plant stated I have not received any VIA bus information and it would be helpful if I could have everything that you have in your files regarding VIA or any other agency information that you have.

Councilman Fry asked what is the reality of the VIA bus with the narrower lanes, my understanding is when we have larger vehicles then they will maneuver into that bike lane and a shared line?

Andres Andujar stated we still have 16.6 feet of lanes even though we have a line that is painted that is maybe 5 or 6 feet from the curb, the total asphalt is still 16 ½ feet and when you dedicate a bike lane then you are protecting the biker. I have had several conversations with VIA in the past and they will ask you for everything that they can get.

Councilwoman Prost stated that VIA is very supportive to the project and they just want to help us not just do stops but they are willing to put in some additional funds. The modifications are a good plan but what is not addressed is the communication of how you are going to communicate this to the residents and businesses and what we are doing because the main thrust of the McCullough Project is sidewalks and landscaping yet what is being focused on with this project is not so much the sidewalks and landscaping but what is going to happen in between on the stripping. I understand that the stripping is a controversial item but if we are going to present the McCullough Project to our constituents that we should really focus on why we are doing the McCullough Project which is 1.) have safety for all modes of transportation and 2.) to enhance the economic viability to the Corridor and just by presenting the stripping plan it would seem that we are missing the big point of what the project is which is safety, beautification and economic viability. Since from the research that you mentioned nearly 8 out

of 10 businesses prefer a middle turn lane figuration and most of the residents at that time were against a bike lane. I think how you communicate is more important than what you do. Mayor Farrimond stated what we are talking about tonight is a test.

Sharon Plant stated City Council has to approve a concept first, you have four different scenarios of the design and the stripping is just a test.

Mayor Farrimond stated I have never been a fan of bike lanes, however we have spent 40 plus years with two lane streets and we are used to what a single strip is. The traffic engineer says that north of the roundabout a middle turn lane is dangerous so we might test the bike lanes at this point. During this test if something turns out not to work then we plan on modifying it. If we are going to put 10 ½ foot lanes and 6 foot bike lanes then I think there is no question not to slow the traffic down but I think we need to see what the outcome is and I would be more in favor of not changing the speed limit until we test it.

Sharon Plant stated in the meanwhile ordinances are getting done on sidewalks and landscaping as developments are coming in. We need to have some concept right now of what Council wants so at this period of time we don't waste additional years with nothing being done.

Councilman Fry asked on the 10 ½ foot versus the 11 ½ foot lanes that you mentioned it was a good way to have more of a bike lane?

Andres Andujar stated it is a combination of a better bike infrastructure but also contains the entire vehicular environment and for our commercial corridor the lower speed, and increasing revenue so if you are able to contain that speed by the lane shrinking then there should be a revenue increase. There are also life safety issues the lower the speed the less likely of an accident and there is data that shows what happens if you are hit as a resident and as we seek to improve pedestrian ground, sidewalks, landscaping and economic viability of the businesses of the corridor.

Councilman Fry stated my hope is that the bike lanes will make people think and be aware about navigating. I have not heard about any communication efforts and I agree that it's critical that we communicate with pictures showing the landscaping and the sidewalks from the end result and what we are taking away and then what they are getting in return.

Councilwoman Prost stated I am aware there is a certain amount of limited space and part of the information that came up from our Police Chief is our largest number of wrecks right now are rear-ends because we don't have a designated left turn lane and second, there is only 3 ½ blocks between south of the roundabout and we had the traffic consultant talking about a platooning effect because we don't have a way to safely turn left and have rear ends collisions and now we are going to make it even harder because many people won't go around into the bike lane or feel uncomfortable to do so for a while. If we are going to test drive everything then maybe we have the opportunity to test drive an 11 ½ foot lane or part of it, our problem is the configuration as we have fewer number of blocks between a heavily traveled road at Hildebrand and the roundabout both of which are blockages that slow traffic down which platooning occurs, then you get north of the roundabout that we need to address all the left turns that go onto Dora to go to Fresno to Interstate I-10 and the stack up that occurs there. Then there are the people that are heading east on Fresno to Dora getting onto McCullough, so how is only allowing two 10 ½ lanes going to affect that traffic so the traffic consultant brought all of that up and the traffic study was done and that was why partially those decisions were made so I think we need to resolve some of those issues and if we have a chance to test drive everything then why don't we make some different configurations. It is not just the communication it is also how are you

proposing to get relevant feedback once this is being test driven and I think this needs to be a part of resolution or motion that the communication and the statistically feedback should be part of the final approvals.

Councilman Hornberger stated north of the roundabout the width of the right-of-way is such that we have to choose between bike lanes and a single turn lane and if we were to choose a center turn lane then we are going to create some head on problems and more so from the roundabout to the railroad tracks than south of the roundabout and that means as much as we would like to have turn lanes on McCullough north of the roundabout then it is probably not a good idea from a traffic safety, pedestrian safety and from a bikers perspective.

Sharon Plant stated there is not a way to test out every aspect of this plan as we have several different scenarios and the communication part of the plan has been discussed so this will not occur until 2016 which we can do an email blast and have postcards mailed.

Mayor Farrimond stated I think the first step is to have actual traffic studies where you can take pictures, figure out how many cars are going through and at what speed and how often does the traffic stack up if somebody wants to turn left and how does it work at Dora and if it becomes a problem then we can adjust it during the test and re-stripe certain sections.

Andres Andujar stated from a communication standpoint I think as aggressive as we can become with mailers and other communication methods that we would be lucky to have any more than a 20% return. What we are proposing with the stripe plan is 100% of everybody in this community that goes down the corridor will have an opinion which is our feedback and maybe we need to set up an information app for any comments, complaints or feedback about the strip plan. Let's put this stripe plan in place and test drive it, then provide feedback and make any adjustments. I do not recommend that we strip three lanes which increases the danger of many accidents.

Councilman Fry moved to allow the OPEDC to extend the existing consultant scope of professional services to develop, design and execute the striping plan for the McCullough Business Corridor in the amount not to exceed \$110,220 with the approval of the 50% plans including the changes of a 11 ½ foot lane to a 10 ½ foot lane and two lanes to the south of the roundabout. Including bike lanes, a 10 foot radius and keep the speed limit at 30 mph pending that we consult with Police Chief Valenciano with a sort of testing that can be done prior to implementation of the stripping and after stripping has been concluded.

Councilman Hornberger seconded the motion.

The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

Councilwoman Prost asked is it necessary to spend \$110,000 to test this; can we do a part of the street instead of a full mile?

Sharon Plant stated we have spent over \$137,000 on four different concepts and have not gotten anywhere.

Mayor Farrimond stated in order to make it a reasonable test drive; we need to do it all.

Councilwoman Prost stated I would like to include in the motion that the EDC should come back in a reasonable amount of time with a communication plan and a feedback plan of how we are going to obtain the feedback whether it's operational feedback, constituent feedback and how are you going to measure the results?

Councilman Hornberger stated I would not make that part of this motion.

Councilman Fry stated he did not accept Councilwoman Prost amendment to the motion.

Receive and discuss an Olmos Park Economic Development Corporation ("OPEDC) code project. The OPEDC proposes to engage professional services to review and propose to P&Z code impacts to the existing OP MuniCode as it relates to the proposed McCullough Corridor improvements for an amount not to exceed \$10,000; take possible action (first reading)

Andres Andujar stated we realized that there may be impacts to the code and adjustments to our municdoe to be in compliance with these plans. The EDC approved that we hire a Code Consultant to craft impacts to the McCullough Corridor to correct the impacts through zoning and this would be done in coordination with P&Z. EDC does not believe that we have a responsibility for McCullough which belongs to the P&Z and we want to facilitate the code impacts by funding a consultant to analyze the proposed changes that were just approved and see what needs to be amended to the codes. That Code Consultant would report to P&Z and then if P&Z agrees then they would bring whatever amendments to clean up the code to comply with the changes to Council and then Council can decide to proceed with any changes to the Municode.

Councilman Hornberger stated the key is P&Z does not have a budget to hire a consultant and EDC does and will be facilitating the ability for P&Z to have that professional input.

Andres Andujar stated I know P&Z has been working to have private owners fund the construction on the sidewalks so this is the kind of concept that should be incorporated. We are looking for an agreement from Council that EDC sets aside funds for a Code Consultant to address the various issues that may come up.

Pat Meier stated I am asking for clarification in understanding the role in P&Z. One of the P&Z responsibilities is to write ordinances for projects and directives which the City Council approves giving us clear direction and the Commission adapts the existing code in order to achieve the implementation and at this time the City Council has not approved the McCullough Corridor Plan. P&Z did not agree on the proposed sidewalk and the ordinances we have written support traditional 6 foot sidewalks and a curb between the asphalt parking areas sidewalks. All the ordinances we have written City Council has approved traditional sidewalks, driveways and curb cuts that you will find in any City. It would have been helpful if someone from EDC or the Engineer would have come to explain. If there is not a contradiction in what we have written and what you are supporting in this plan then we are on the same page

Councilwoman Prost stated if you would have gone to the EDC meeting the discussion was we want to reduce as much of continuous driveways as possible.

Councilman Fry stated I think the Code Consultant is as critical as anything else that we are doing with regards to the McCullough Project.

Pat Meier stated I think it would be beneficial and productive if we took all of this information and had a strategic planning workshop to look at the pros and cons that everybody is a part of it.

Mayor Farrimond stated we have in process to have a strategic planning meeting one weekend in February and everybody will be invited to this meeting including all Boards.

Sharon Plant stated the EDC felt this would be a way to help P&Z expedite this process while we have people buying, selling and developing properties then we will have a code in place. Councilman Fry moved to allow the OPEDC to engage professional services to review and propose to P&Z code impacts to the existing OP MuniCode as it relates to the proposed McCullough Corridor improvements for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Councilwoman Prost seconded the motion. The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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Kenneth Farrimond  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Diane Gonzales  
City Secretary