

**CITY OF EUHARLEE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 03, 2023**

Mayor Craig Guyton called the meeting to order. City Manager James Stephens led prayer, followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were present: Mayor Craig Guyton, Council Members Tim Abbott, Greg Free, David Duncan, Joe Turner, and City Manager James Stephens.

Public Hearing - 2nd Reading Historic District Boundary Amendment

A citizen asked about the amendment request. Mayor Craig Guyton explained the current thirty-three acres off Cliff Nelson Road is the area where a company is looking to put a subdivision, is currently within the historic boundary district for downtown. The Historic Preservation Commission voted 4-0 to lift the historic boundary for that area. The amendment is to lift the historic boundary in that area. With no other questions Mayor Guyton closed the hearing.

Approval of Minutes

Council Member David Duncan motioned to approve the minutes for the Called City Council Meeting, 12.13.22. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion passed with all voting in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2nd Reading Historic District Boundary Amendment - James Stephens

James Stephens, City Manager stated the council was provided a map that included the amendment. Mr. Stephens said there is a process that involves communicating with the Department of Community Affairs anytime you are going to amend your boundaries in the Historic District and that process has been filed to the letter of the law and to the tee. It was mentioned in the public hearing, the HPC voted on December 17th with a 4-0 vote and recommended to the city council that it be taken out of the Historic District. The thought process and the discussions were, the acreage was attached to a home place that has historic significance, but the acreage itself does not. The home would stay in the boundary but the thirty-three acres, in reality should have not been included in the first place. It is basically taking the thirty-three acres out that was potentially included in error. The recommendation from the HPC and staff that it be removed from the Historic Boundary.

Council Member David Duncan asked about the strip on the fence next to Misty Forest subdivision, is it in the district, and will it be coming out with this amendment or after it is sold. Mr. Stephens stated the amendment includes for that parcel to come out.

Council Member Tim Abbott motioned to accept the recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to move the Historic District Boundary on said property. Council Member David Duncan seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Pro Tem - Mayor Craig Guyton

Mayor Craig Guyton stated that they select a Mayor Pro Tem every year just in case the mayor is not available for a meeting or has to step away for any reason. The Mayor Pro Tem would conduct the meetings, and act as mayor temporarily. He opened the floor for nominations. Council Member David

Duncan nominated Council Member Joe Turner for Mayor Pro Tem. Council Member Tim Abbott said he didn't see any problem from last year voting Council Member Greg Free as Mayor Pro Tem.

Council Member Tim Abbott motioned to have Council Member Greg Free continue to serve as Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor Craig Guyton seconded the motion. The motioned carried with all voting in favor.

Public Comments

Ron Hartman, resident of Euharlee stated he was relatively new to attending meetings and started back in October and regrets doing so. Mr. Hartman stated he forwarded a list of questions to the city manager and wasn't sure if they had received them. He had five questions and wanted the council to respond to them. Mr. Hartman said he reviewed the last three years of council meeting minutes, budgets and everything that was available on the city's website. He is not interested in running for council, and not interested in being a member of the zoning committee. He is just an interested citizen that will increase the dialogue between the council and the community, for them to be more transparent, and for better communication with citizens to share what they want. The questions and responses are listed below:

Millage Rate - Mr. Hartman had concerns about in 2018 the city set a fund balance surplus to four months which was later modified to six months; dollar limit opposed to calendar/months; current policy, current balance surplus determined by multiple surplus, and the dollar amount when the two mills of tax was voted. Mr. Hartman's view; if maintaining the six months fund balance, there was no need for a mill tax.

Mayor Craig Guyton stated the policy is basically a top bottom policy. The bottom being six months to enact an automatic tax increase to maintain that balance. The top at two million automatically is going to be the rollback for millage rate. Anything in between basically, is a comfort level of the elected officials would set a millage rate based where they are. Mayor Guyton asked Mr. Stephens for the current fund balance.

City Manager, James Stephens stated from the audited figure from 2020, the balance was 1.8 million and equivalent to six months. Mr. Hartman said an automatic rollback is 2 million and it had nothing to do with the number of months. Mr. Stephens explained, if the city gets below four months it does call for an increase in the millage rate. Mr. Hartman asked, why impose a tax on the citizens if you really do not need it. He realizes they are fiscally conservative, and he liked the idea. It was just strange they went ahead anyway and voted a two-mill tax. Mayor Guyton shared that if Mr. Hartman had been there with heart of the discussion, none of them wanted it. Nobody likes taxes, but sometimes there is a necessary evil, and the things they need to do, but do not have the money to do. Mr. Hartman understood the city getting half of the funding from LOST and if they lost it, there is a severe problem; but they are working to increase revenue streams with the RV camp being one of the bigger revenue streams. The \$200,000 from that would cover what they would lose from LOST. So why a two-mill tax. Mayor Guyton said to be perfectly honest, to be proactive. The RV Park is not there, but the decrease in LOST is.

Council Member Tim Abbott concurred with Mayor Guyton increasing taxes without a great deal of thought. The comfort zone for him was, they had a cap not to have greed over surplus as a check and balance. Mayor Guyton said to Mr. Hartman if he thinks of any other questions, he was welcomed to email any of them.

Tilley Farms Residential Update - Mr. Hartman stated he had lost track. Since the meeting, he had not heard anything about Tilley Farms residential project. He quoted, "Mr. Baker said they could have a spade in the ground in a month if the rezone request was approved". Mayor Guyton said they did not have an update at that time.

Mr. Hartman stated, after hearing about the developer for the project, he went online and looked them up for a track record. He asked if the council looked into the developer. Mayor Guyton said they had not. Mr. Hartman asked why not, it seemed logical to him. How do you know if they will do a good job or have lawsuits. Mayor Guyton said they vetted the developer and the developer was first class.

Mr. Hartman wanted to know how they vetted the developer. Council Member Abbott said it seemed that Mr. Hartman wanted a dialogue, and asked him how he vetted the developer. Mr. Hartman shared his detailed online process when he reviewed the developer.

Council Member Greg Free asked if he was referring to the builder or the developer. It was determined it was the builder he was referring to. Mr. Hartman asked if they vetted the builder.

Council Member Abbott shared his thoughts about his current home, and he would not have his builder to build again. The house is still standing, but there are things he did not like. Mr. Hartman said that he would be concerned with the quality of the homes, repairs needed, and possible lawsuits and the same problems will occur. He said that was his description of vetting.

Council Member Free said from all the presentations that were made, one of the things that put him at ease, because he lives there too, was the fact the developer is a member of the community, and is accountable to the community. If something were to go wrong, he would be the one to bump into a citizen at the grocery store. In each neighborhood, you will find someone that does not like the builder. When his family moved there, Covered Bridge Springs was the only neighborhood. As a young man, he remembered people who were not happy with that builder in the early 90's. He said the individual has a good reputation as a developer, not just as a person, but in the business world locally, and a local citizen and that put his mind at ease. If the developer is willing to put this in his own backyard, the developer will have to stand behind it, and he is okay with that. Mr. Hartman said if he had a problem, he would not go after the developer but the builder, the one that would provide the homeowner's warranty.

Electronic Roadside Bulletin Board in the City – Mr. Hartman said the bulletin would be a communication improvement in his mind. Mayor Guyton said the signage would be discussed at the work session on January 17th. Generally, when there are ideas, they go before the council at a work session before voting at a city council meeting. Mr. Hartman stated that he and Council Member Free had a difference of opinion for the location. His view would be to put it where you are going to get the most eyeballs, but not too much distraction. It should not be at city hall because citizens do not drive by that location.

Council Member Abbott stated that he, Mr. Hartman, and Council Member Free are in agreement, the city needs better informational signage. He is not an expert but when you put signage on a roadway with 45 miles per hour with no stop signs, you do have to consider the safety concern higher than you would with a billboard and signage where there is a purpose to slow down. He said, Mr. Hartman as an engineer, smarter than he will ever be, but a 45-mph speed limit would have to be considered to determine the type of signage not to cause distraction and unintended consequences. Mr. Hartman agreed. Mr. Hartman said he only found out about the Tilley Farm subdivision, and he lives only a quarter mile from the property, when he drove up and down Hardin Bridge Road multiple times and only saw a couple of signs. The signs were parallel to the road not perpendicular. Unless he slowed down to read the signs, he did not know what they were saying. He found out about the subdivision when he looked at the website. It is a signage problem and people are not having the right communications.

Traffic Flow Study for Euharlee Road - Mr. Hartman is requesting a proposal for a traffic flow study for Euharlee Road because of the Stiles subdivision, Tilley Farms and possibly the mobile home park into apartments. It is not just an issue for the people that live in Euharlee, but for those that have to travel there. It will come a day when the road will not support all of the traffic. He is asking for a study to be

done. He shared many questions that would be included in a traffic study. He would like to know the assessment from DOT. He said the council agreed they needed a traffic study, but are they going to initiate a traffic study. Mayor Guyton stated DOT did a study on the other end of Euharlee Road at the Stiles Subdivision outside of the city of Euharlee. They are in discussion with DOT about how far along they are with the traffic study, and what can the city do to initiate one. They will have more information at another time on that topic. Mr. Hartman wanted to know if they planned to put it on the agenda to request a study, and when it would take place. Mayor Guyton said after they speak with Tom Sills, and it does not have to go on the agenda to request a study. Mr. Hartman said how would the public know a study is in progress. Mayor Guyton said he didn't mean to sound ugly, but he doesn't think the public would need to know a study was going on. Mr. Hartman stated as a citizen, he would like to know what the individuals that represent him are doing to improve his life, and didn't know why he felt the citizens do not need to know. They should share what is going on and why.

Council Member Abbott wanted to know what Mr. Hartman planned to do with the information from a traffic study. He had a hypothesis or theory that a traffic study would prove something not to move forward, and if that was his whole point to do the study. Mr. Hartman explained it is information to have in your back pocket that could be used for future plans. Council Member Abbott said there will be a study, and one page will have the information needed; to Mr. Hartman's point, studies are important. Mr. Hartman shared he requested from CXS about their schedule for informational purposes.

Mr. Stephens said the new equipment that has been recently installed incorporated lines on Euharlee Road, will provide him with information about the number of cars that are traveling the speed at the peak hours. They will have the ability to slice and dice it in many ways, and it is already being accumulated. Council Member Free asked if he was referring the tag readers and Mr. Stephens said yes.

Restripe Streets and Road Repair Maintenance – Mr. Hartman wanted to know the plan to restripe city roads and prioritize maintenance for street repairs. The striping had to be done, there is an opportunity to determine how many need to be repaired, and publish it to the public. Mayor Guyton said every street outside of Milam Bridge and Covered Bridge Road the city is responsible for, will be restriped and repaired this year. Council Member Joe Turner asked for clarification of all streets, and will it include roads in subdivisions. Mr. Stephens said in reference to the courtesy Mr. Hartman gave him by sending an email with these questions, he sent the council a copy of the email and he included an attachment that had the current status of the roads and the striping projects that will be helpful, and it does include the roads inside the subdivisions.

Mr. Hartman stated he was not there to harass them and reject everything they proposed. He wants to work with them, get other citizens to work with them, and be a community of collaborators. He stated he would share all questions with Mr. Stephens, and for him to forward to the council in advance to research and have answers.

Council Member Tim Abbott motioned to adjourn. Council Greg Free seconded the motion. The motioned carried with all voting in favor.

With no further discussions the meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.