

Village of Salado, Texas
Planning & Zoning Commission
Minutes
Special Meeting
4:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 4, 2019
Municipal Building, 301 N. Stagecoach Road
Salado, Texas

Present: Chair K.D. Hill; Commissioners Paul Cox, Donald Krause, and Jim Hodgins

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Tom McMahan

Others Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hill called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discuss and consider possible action relating to the Planning and Zoning Commission chairwoman's recent communications with certain members of the Board of Aldermen.

Chair Hill asked those who were unable to make the original meeting date of August 27th to raise their hands. She said that Village Administrator Ferguson informed her that fellow Planning and Zoning commissioners expressed that they were upset with her and asked to meet in executive session to address their concerns to avoid causing her embarrassment. Chair Hill spoke of her personal research efforts and stated that the Texas Attorney General's Office said an executive session to speak to a member of the commission is not required and may not be legal. She said it is her right to request that discussion on this item be in public. She stated it was her choice to have this meeting in public and she was not embarrassed to do so. Chair Hill said that what the Commission does "is subject to accountability to you, to each other, and I believe Salado's government should be as transparent as possible, have open communication, and accountability." She asked her fellow commissioners to personally address her about their concerns, how they learned about this matter, and if they called this meeting themselves.

Commissioner Hodgins spoke of the Planning and Zoning's last meeting when commissioners voted unanimously in favor of a replat request as the precipitating event for today's meeting. He said that a couple of aldermen stated that Chair Hill had called them the day following the meeting to say she felt coerced into a vote and recommended that the Board of Aldermen not approve the replat. He said the phrasing he conveyed may not be the exact wording. He noted that all that Planning and Zoning can do is make

recommendations and felt that Chair Hill's comments to aldermen essentially undermined the Commission's recommendation and broke trust among members. He felt that the Commission needed to address this to make sure that commissioners understand each other.

Commissioner Cox said "that's the way I remember things as well." He did not think Chair Hill's actions were illegal, but was shocked that this happened, as there were no serious comments of concern made in the meeting about the vote. He spoke of an informational meeting with the Village's attorney last week on zoning and land use and said the vote was simply approving the replat, not any variances. He stated that according to county and state law, the Commission could not deny the replat request unless there was a very strong legal reason that it did not comply with our ordinances. He pointed out that those members not wanting to vote had the option to abstain. He stated that one reason for requesting an executive session was to work on better communications among members during meetings. He said "we may not all agree, but we have got to get along and stand behind the vote the Commission sends to the aldermen."

Chair Hill asked Commissioner Cox who the person was raising this concern. Commissioner Cox said he had called Village Administrator Ferguson, who mentioned that certain aldermen were concerned about the way they were approached by Chair Hill. He did not know the feelings of the Board of Aldermen overall, but he said the way commissioners found out about the communication bothered them more than anything else.

Commissioner Krause stated he heard about this from Paul Cox by telephone. He said he was asked to be here at tonight's meeting. He stated his understanding that the laws of Texas obligate the Village to vote for the replat, if all Code requirements are met. He said whether there was a breach of trust is a matter of personal opinion. He felt that lessons have been learned and "there really isn't any controversy to be had."

Chair Hill thanked commissioners for their candor and honesty. She said that two municipal lawyers from Williamson and Travis Counties were incredulous that this meeting was called and "actually confirmed I was doing my job." She stated that she never said anything about coercion and said there was a grave miscommunication somewhere. Chair Hill felt that all of this could have been avoided if the courtesy had been extended to speak with her directly. She agreed that the Commission needs education and training, and needs to receive agendas more than a week ahead of meetings. She noted that commissioners have unselfish motives for being here and are working for the prosperity and welfare of Salado. She apologized to those who felt trust was breached, and stressed that was not her intention. She felt that commissioners were appointed not to be "yes men," but because "the aldermen trust us to communicate to them." She stated that was what she was doing and expected all Commission members to do.

Chair Hill said that sometimes the Commission has no choice but to approve certain items if they meet Salado's legal requirements, which she felt is indicative that perhaps our ordinances are "broken and need to be addressed." She stated that should be the focus

and was honored to serve with her fellow commissioners to make this city better. Chair Hill closed by entertaining a motion to adjourn.

~~Commissioner [redacted] moved to adjourn. Commissioner [redacted] seconded. CL~~

ADJOURN

Chair Hill adjourned the meeting at 4.15 p.m.

These minutes approved on sep 24, 2019.

K.D. Hill
K.D. Hill, Chair

Chrissy Lee
Chrissy Lee, Planning & Development

