

Village of Salado
Salado Municipal Building
301 N. Stagecoach
Salado, Texas
Minutes of Special Meeting of Board of Aldermen
November 28, 2017

The Board of Aldermen meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Skip Blancett.

Board Members Present: Mayor Skip Blancett, Mayor Pro-tem Fred Brown, Aldermen Andy Jackson, Amber Dankert, Frank Coachman, and Michael McDougal.

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson and City Secretary Cara McPartland

Discussion and Possible Action

Discuss and consider possible action regarding an appeal of the Village of Salado's recent decision to require an automatic sprinkler system for fire suppression relating to the planned renovation of the Stagecoach Inn. *(Mayor Skip Blancett)*

Village Administrator Ferguson reviewed reasoning presented at the Board's last meeting leading to staff's recommendation to require an automatic sprinkler system due to life safety concerns prompted by factors such as lack of available fire hydrants, volunteer fire department firefighting capabilities, fire history, and lack of certain upgrades during renovation. He advised that current Fire Code gives the Village the authority to mandate the installation of an automatic sprinkler system, if conditions cause public safety concerns. He stated that Stagecoach Inn owner Clark Lyda is present tonight to speak to the Board on his appeal. Brief discussion addressed water supply/pressure to the property.

Stagecoach Inn owner Clark Lyda spoke on renovation project phase and extent of renovations, including electrical upgrades. He reviewed discussions with his fire consultant who felt a sprinkler system is not required based on the structure's fire loss history and layout and does not pose a human life safety issue. He spoke of his willingness to install a sprinkler system, if there were reason to believe life safety is at risk. He described the financial impact of adding a sprinkler system and stated that such a requirement would be a "deal killer" for the renovation project. He said that if renovations could not continue the existing restaurant operation would not be able to stand alone and would not be economically viable. Mr. Lyda stated that community water supply will serve the entire project, with the well to be used for irrigation only.

Brief discussion addressed the impact of adding a sprinkler system on insurance premiums. Mr. Lyda indicated the insurance company said there was not much economic impact and did not feel a sprinkler system was needed, as every room has an exit leading directly outside. Discussion also included additional taps to provide adequate water pressure; no line upsizing, existing fire hydrants; new wiring in all units; ingress/egress from rooms, and fire lanes around property.

Architect Nathan Quiring provided details on project site plans, including fire lanes/emergency services access; conversion of some existing parking area to a courtyard; new lobby; square footage/occupancy statistics; front/rear photos of building; scope of room renovations and finish/fixtures upgrades; addition of one-hour rated fire walls between each unit/floor; compliance with all new construction codes (except for the sprinkler system that is not required for renovation/remodeling projects); fire alarm/smoke detectors; renovation versus new construction code requirements; and latitude of local officials to impose additional restrictions, if deemed necessary.

Discussion among Board members, staff, and Stagecoach Inn representatives (project owner/developers, general contractor and architect) included: position of Stagecoach that additional restrictions should not be added; ability of Stagecoach to continue hotel operations without safety-enhancing renovations; addition of fire walls; approximately \$30,000 allocated for each room renovation and additional \$10,000 cost, if sprinkler was required; average maximum occupancy; exit points from each room and paths of travel beyond room exits; balcony height; room square footages; potential volume of traffic at stairs; Stagecoach position that the restaurant will have to close if renovation does not proceed due to added costs of sprinkler system; lack of feasibility to further reduce construction costs to help pay for the added sprinkler system; Stagecoach Inn fire history; and project contractor's cost estimate of \$500,000-\$700,000 to install sprinkler system.

Mayor Pro-tem Brown said that fire safety improvements are being made to the Stagecoach and felt that the additional requirement for a sprinkler system would have to be applied to other 2-story lodging facilities. He stated this is not a 5-story building with exits into a hallway. He noted numerous safety improvements, including replacement of wiring and installation of fire walls. He favored approving Stagecoach's appeal and cited its benefit to the local economy. He also noted every unit opens to the outside. He said under State law the Village is not exposed to liability, which is incurred by the developer.

In response to Mayor Blancett's inquiry, Mr. Lyda established that there will be a locked gate on the frontage road that can break away for emergency access and that all rooms will be non-smoking and only have a coffeemaker, with all ADA-accessible rooms located on the first floor.

Alderwoman Dankert spoke of her prior experience fighting a fire at the Stagecoach and pointed out there is a fire hydrant across the street that alternating fire trucks can use to fill their tanks. She stated that there will be multiple responders, if there was a fire at the Stagecoach Inn, and rural firefighters routinely fight fires in areas with no hydrants. Mr. Lyda said there will be a 10,000 gallon water storage tank on the property. Alderwoman Dankert did not feel there would be a water supply problem.

Mayor Blancett inquired about doors on both floors and it was established that doors will get replaced and the only egress on the bottom floor will be through the glass doors. Discussion confirmed there will be a professionally installed fire alarm system that is constantly on, backed up, and monitored.

Although the addition of fire walls was not part of the original plans, it was noted that those additions do not change staff's position on requiring an automatic sprinkler system. Alderwoman

Dankert felt that removal of the rear doors is a more aesthetically pleasing design and that it is safer to not have multiple exits when traveling with young children.

At Alderman McDougal's request regarding immunity from liability, Village Administrator Ferguson stated that immunity does not lessen the Village's commitment to safety. He said the development agreement obligates developers to comply with state and local regulations and noted that regulations allow local officials to require the addition of an automatic sprinkler system. In response to Alderman McDougal's question about immunity and possible lawsuits, Village Administrator Ferguson said the Village could always be subject to litigation, but there would be costs in defending such actions. Alderwoman Dankert questioned why the Village is requiring anything that is not part of the development agreement and Village Administrator Ferguson advised that the agreement does allow the Village to require compliance with state and local regulations, including the ability to impose additional requirements based on safety concerns. Mr. Lyda said that such an interpretation would make any development agreement meaningless. Village Administrator Ferguson stated that the Fire Code does give the Village the ability to make additional requirements, if there is a life safety issue.

Mayor Pro-tem Brown referenced plans for replacing wiring and installing fire walls that helped to address the Board's fears expressed at its last meeting. He felt that other bed and breakfasts could be made to put in a sprinkler system, if the Stagecoach Inn is required to have one. Alderman McDougal said the Board's decision is only about the Stagecoach Inn.

Mayor Pro-tem Brown moved to approve the appeal of the Village of Salado's recent decision to require an automatic sprinkler system for fire suppression relating to the planned renovation of the Stagecoach Inn. Alderwoman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 3-2, with Aldermen Jackson and McDougal voting against.

Adjournment

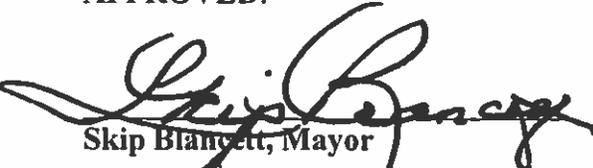
Hearing no further business, Mayor Blancett called the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Recorded by:

Cara McPartland

These minutes approved on the 7th of December, 2017.

APPROVED:


Skip Blancett, Mayor

ATTEST:


Cara McPartland, City Secretary

