

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 605 Spring St., Columbus, Texas, with the following present:

Mayor	-	Dwain Dungen (left at 7:19 p.m., returned at 8:32 p.m.)
Mayor Pro Tem	-	Curtiss Schonenberg
Councilman	-	Steve Woodall
Councilman	-	John Axel (absent)
Councilman	-	Bruce Tesch
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Linda Lakich

Other City Staff present included:

City Attorney	-	Pat Gillespie
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1. Call to Order.

Mayor Dwain Dungen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Mayor Dungen led the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Mayor Dungen explained that he would need to leave the meeting early and moved to Item 4.

4. Public Hearing Regarding Columbus Historic District.

Mayor Dungen opened the public hearing at 6:32 p.m. and invited any interested parties to speak.

First to speak was Chris Stein. He stated that he felt that the proposed ordinance was too intrusive and that while Council has the power to enact it, he asked if they wanted to do so? He then went through the proposed ordinance citing specific areas of concern and objections. These issues included the 50 year age for historical buildings, what incentives would be offered, procedures for designating a historic landmark, the lack of formal court proceedings, the appeal process, and what could be built on a property if a historic building was destroyed in a natural disaster. Councilman Rankin said that he has some of the same concerns, and that the historic district rules should be included in the planning and zoning ordinance. He said that the intent was to protect what is valuable in the city and that to do this, minimum standards would have to be enacted. He stated that the Planning and Zoning Ordinance should not encourage the continuation of grandfathered properties. The Mayor pointed out that the City is already addressing neglected properties. Councilman Tesch said that he is concerned about what a property owner in the district would do if their house was destroyed by a disaster. He was concerned that they would not be able to rebuild on their property because of the costs associated with construction requirements.

Mayor Dungen left at 7:19 p.m. after turning the meeting over to Mayor Pro Tem Curtiss Schonenberg.

Roger Wade addressed Council explaining that the 50 year age for historic properties is normally a sliding scale and that therefore new properties would be added as they reached the 50 year mark. He also stated that there are technical flaws in the proposed ordinance.

Laura Ann Rau said that they would need to change any ordinance to suit the community and that historical markers bring attention to historic properties and attract tourists.

Bill Durbin told Council that he lives next door to where the old Mayes Hotel was before it was torn down. He said that what happened there should be a warning to Council of what happens when there is a hands-off atmosphere.

Elizabeth Flint said that responsibilities come with owning property in a community.

Mike Trefney said that he sees a need for preservation but that 90% of what is in the proposed district does not have any historical significance. He said that Council is reaching too far and that they should limit the district to the area around the Courthouse. Councilman Rankin said that Council is working on keeping the ordinance reasonable.

There were no more comments from the public, and the public hearing was closed at 8:22 p.m.

5. Workshop Regarding Columbus Historic District.

Councilman Schonenberg asked each of the council members present to comment on whether they thought the proposed document was doable. Councilman Rankin said that he would like to see the ordinance become part of Planning and Zoning and that he would like something less draconian. City Attorney Pat Gillespie said that was her intention and that she was about ¾ of the way through drafting a revision and that she would give it to Council in about three weeks.

Councilman Tesch said that he did not like the proposed ordinance and that he wanted to protect property owners.

Councilman Woodall said that he agreed that changes need to be made. He said that he would like to see Pat give the revisions to the Historic District Committee, let them make changes and then send it to the State Historic Commission. He told Council that if the district does not conform to the state historic district requirements, he did not see why they would create it.

Councilman Schonenberg said that he thought that the currently proposed ordinance was cumbersome. He thanked all of those who shared their opinions.

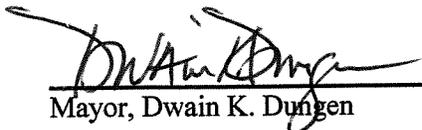
At that time Councilman Schonenberg moved to Item 3 on the Agenda.

3. Administer the Oath of Office to Newly Elected Officials.

The City Secretary administered the oaths of office to newly reelected Councilmen Curtiss Schonenberg, Bruce Tesch, and Chuck Rankin. Mayor Dungen returned at 8:32 p.m.

6. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.



Mayor, Dwain K. Dungen

ATTEST:



Linda Lakich, City Secretary

¹During this agenda item, citizens may comment for the record on items, which are not on the agenda. However, the Council may not participate in discussion or deliberation on any item that is not on the agenda. Citizens may request that a topic be added to a future agenda.

Citizens who wish to comment on a posted agenda item may do so when that item is addressed by the Mayor. Citizen's comments are limited to five minutes.

²Limited to statements. Issues raised by councilmembers under this item cannot be deliberated by Council. The Open Meetings Act does not allow Council to deliberate items that don't appear on the agenda.