

LETTER TO LEON VALLEY CITIZENS
From Mayor Chris Riley
November 10, 2023

TO ALL VETERANS ON THIS VETERANS DAY
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

CITY COUNCIL MEETING –November 7, 2023

The following are highlights of council actions from the November 7th council meeting which began at 6:00 p.m., due to an executive session:

We welcomed seven Boy Scouts from Troop 911 who led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance. They were working on a Citizenship in the Community badge.

PRESENTATIONS

Citizen Comment at Council Meetings: This was placed on the agenda after the council attended a seminar at the Texas Municipal League Convention in October entitled: *“Go Home Early – a Practical Guide to Streamlined Meetings”*. We learned that the majority of cities have only one Citizens to Be Heard and *do not* allow citizen comment during agenda items. After discussion and hearing from citizens in attendance, the council’s only change was to delete the second Citizens to Be Heard at the end of the meeting. Citizens retain the ability to speak on every agenda item, as well as at Citizens to Be Heard at the beginning of the meeting.

REGULAR AGENDA

Amended Chapter 11 – Taxation by Adding Short Term Rentals (STR) Occupancy Tax. This ordinance will require the collection of a 6% Hotel Motel Tax for all STR’s operating in Leon Valley. This is in addition to the state occupancy tax of 6%. This measure strives to “promote fair and responsible tax compliance, as well as ensure equitable revenue collection for the betterment of our community’s services”. The council is set to approve this policy at the November 21st meeting.

Short Term Rental Ordinance - After discussing short term rentals (STR) for several years, the council, by a unanimous vote, passed a basic ordinance. It includes registration of all STRs, paying a \$25 fee every two years, providing an informational brochure including safety features. Additionally, in order to preserve the essential character of a residential area, no STR shall operate within 200 feet of another STR on the same side of the block. All persons who register an STR must provide a local emergency contact who can live up to 200 miles from the property. A definition of per occurrence violation was added to mean if a STR owner has multiple violations in one day, all violations are grouped for the purpose of progressive enforcement beginning with a written warning (1st violation) to termination (5th violation). All violations will roll off the STR owners record every 24 months from the date of occurrence. Violation of the STR ordinance upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500 for each offense and each day such violation shall continue shall be deemed to constitute a separate offense. At last count, it was determined the City had less than 30 STR's, defined as a residential dwelling unit, apartment, condo or accessory dwelling unit, which is rented to overnight guests for a period of less than 30 days.

Considered an Appeal by owner of Poss Landing Subdivision (7213 Huebner Road) to allow non-fire sprinklered housing units - Last year the developer stated he was unable to provide a secondary fire apparatus access road (required by the International Fire Code), so the alternative was to add fire sprinklers to the 86 homes (on 10 acres of land) in order to get the development approved. The developer platted the property and then went out for bids to build the homes. Adding sprinklers added approximately \$10,000 cost to each unit. Due to this higher cost, the developer applied to change the previously approved plan to add a second entry on Huebner road for emergency use only. That plan did not meet code and Fire Chief Naughton denied his application. An appeal went to the City Council. By a unanimous vote, the City Council denied the proposed secondary fire apparatus access road because it did not meet code. The applicant knew the homes would need to be fire sprinklered from the onset of the planning for this development, because it lacked a second entry into the property. A possible alternate fire access road was discussed with the developer who said he will research other options to present to council at a future meeting.

Discussion on Granting a Fence Variance in Seneca Estates - At the October 17th council meeting, the applicant requested construction of a 6 ft. fence in his front yard, which the code does not allow. After looking at google maps, the fence would be constructed along his side yard and encroach into the front yard, in a cul-de-sac. The Council asked the homeowner to talk to his neighbors to gauge their support and bring back letters of support, which he did at this meeting. Council voted to approve the variance by a vote of 4 ayes and 1 nay.

Discussion of Topics for the January 27, 2024 14th Annual Town Hall Meeting: A draft agenda was discussed, including Emergency Preparedness and Amending the Home Rule Charter. Council's consensus was to replace these two topics with a discussion from the Police Department on law enforcement - crime in our community versus other cities (statistics) and what we are doing to combat crime locally in our community. Other topics which remained were a Bandera Road update, Solid Waste Survey, and updating the 2017 Strategic Plan, including the mission and vision statement. Council requested staff to research what other communities' strategic plans looked like. Hiring a facilitator was mentioned, but no decision made. Council suggested addressing Emergency Preparedness through handouts on a table and to change the start time of the annual meeting to 8:30 am from 9:00 am. This agenda will be finalized at the November 21st council meeting.

Executive Session

Council met in executive session at the end of the meeting, to discuss three proposals received to develop the vacant land the city owns in Seneca West along Aids and Samaritan. The flood control project jointly funded through Bexar County and the City of Leon Valley has been completed, greatly improving this property. The council directed the city manager to follow up with two of the developers and will bring back more specific information, in executive session at the November 21st council meeting.

Our next regular city council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 21st at 6:00 p.m.** at city hall, due to a continued executive session.

Thanks to everyone who voted in the November 7th constitutional amendment election. All propositions passed with the exception of

Proposition 10, which would have allowed Judges to continue serving after a certain age.

Enjoy your weekend and the much needed rain! Please do not hesitate to contact me or any councilmember if we can be of service.

Sincerely, Chris
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