



# **RICHMOND**

**EST. TEXAS 1837**

*Where History Meets Opportunity*

## **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes**

City Commission Room | 600 Morton Street, Richmond, Texas 77469

Tuesday, February 18, 2020, at 4:00 P.M.

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The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Richmond, Texas met for a special meeting workshop on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Pittman, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Larry Pittman (Chair)  
Katherine M. Graeber-Kubelka (Vice Chair)  
Ernest Hogue  
Noell Myska  
Libby King

Staff in attendance: Jose Abraham, Planning Director; Mason Garcia, Associate Planner; Jordan Adams, GIS Specialist; Cameron Goodman, Executive Director Development Corporation; Howard Christian, Assistant City Manager; Lori Bownds, Building Department Director; and Gary Smith, City Attorney.

Commissioner Pittman introduced agenda A2, public comments, and asked if there were any public comments.

Commissioner Pittman introduced agenda item B1., Understanding the legal basis and significance of the Planning and Zoning Commission in the Municipal Planning Process. Mr. Gary Smith, City Attorney, opened the discussion and explained that the goal of the Planning and Zoning Commission in land use decisions was to make reasoned decisions that would provide the best growth and development plans for the community, and to do so in accordance with all applicable laws and due process. Mr. Smith explained the difference between long range planning which includes Comprehensive Plan update, changes to regulations, and Future Land use plan amendments and current planning which includes plat approval, rezoning, and conditional use permits. The presentation also distinguished between aspects of development that cities are able to influence or control and those that cities cannot control. Balancing between what developers want and what the City wants was emphasized as part of the Planning and Zoning Commission's responsibilities. Tips for being an effective Planning and Zoning Commissioner were also discussed. Mr. Smith concluded his presentation by summarizing the significance of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which includes the board's necessity for participation in the development process, the ability to influence said process, ensuring that all issues are evaluated accurately, and ultimately protecting the best of the interest of the City of Richmond's citizens.

Commissioner Pittman called upon Mr. Andre Robinson, Richmond citizen and local business owner who signed up to speak on agenda item B2. Mr. Robinson, spoke regarding a potential development project discussed during the previous City Commission meeting, and cited his concerns to the Planning and

Zoning Commission. He spoke in support of the said project and suggested that the said project would help the City. Hearing no other public comment, the agenda item was closed.

Commissioner Pittman introduced agenda item B2., Review, discuss, and take appropriate action concerning the Comprehensive Master Plan Update, including the discussion of all relevant components and topics pertaining to the Comprehensive Master Plan Update as part of a visioning exercise. Mr. Jose Abraham, Planning Director, reintroduced the discussion of the Comprehensive Master Plan Update left off from the previous Planning and Zoning Commission regular meeting. The visioning exercise was open in nature, allowing for Commissioner Pittman, Commissioner Graeber-Kubelka, Commissioner Hogue, Commissioner Myska, Commissioner King, and Mr. Abraham all actively contributing to the discussion. Mr. Abraham guided the discussion and focused on four broad topics pertinent to the Comprehensive Master Plan. Key points and highlights from the discussion included:

- **Growth and Land Use:** In regards to the necessity for increased residential and commercial development, the Commission emphasized the need for a balance in terms of fostering growth and supporting the values and aspirations of Richmond's existing population. The Commission highlighted how new development if not done right can impact traffic and drainage patterns. The Commission acknowledged their significance to this process via their ability to effectively "align" development to the standards of the Comprehensive Master Plan and Unified Development Code (UDC) through the review of applications and documents, such as plats or site development plans. The big challenge of certain property owners not willing to maintain or develop their property within the historic downtown area was also seen as a challenge but the commission. The Commission also pointed out the need to support existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to provide for a variety of retail services for our residents.
- **Community Assets and Branding:** The Commission voiced concern over preserving aspects of historic Richmond and natural amenities that much of the City's older population valued. Additionally, the Commission noted that while residential growth and commercial development were key to Richmond's success, older neighborhoods of Richmond also required improved infrastructure and services, including utilities and street maintenance.
- **Mobility and Transportation:** In addition to a focus on residential and commercial interests in the City of Richmond, the Commission cited a growing need for effective and efficient transportation networks to reduce congestion and traffic.
- **Quality of Life:** The Commission advocated for increased economic, medical, and educational services or opportunities that would not only appeal to potential residents, but also sustain the needs of Richmond's current population. Key to this was attracting investment within Richmond that would encourage residents to seek services in the city itself, rather than within adjoining cities. Importance of community engagement and efforts to make newer residents feel welcomed was also discussed.

Staff also discussed ongoing projects and efforts made to implement the goals of the current Comprehensive Plan and explained some of the challenges and opportunities the community currently experiences in terms of growth and development.

In summary, Mr. Abraham emphasized the "balancing" act for the Planning and Zoning Commission to not only participate in and influence the development process, but also preserve the City of Richmond and its citizen's best interests. As a whole, the discussion, as well as the totality of the Comprehensive Master Plan Update process, allowed the Planning and Zoning Commission to have influence on the long-term planning and development of the City of Richmond.

There being no further business to be brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission,

Commissioner Pittman adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Approved:

  
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Larry Pittman, Planning and Zoning Commission Chair