



STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF FORT BEND  
CITY OF RICHMOND

The City Commission for the City of Richmond, Texas met in Regular Scheduled City Commission Workshop on September 18, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. The meeting was broadcast via video conference call. All members of the public may participate in the meeting and via video conference call.

A quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Becky Haas, Mayor  
Terry Gaul, Commissioner P1  
Barry Beard, Commissioner P2  
Carl Drozd, Commissioner P3  
Alex BeMent, Commissioner P4  
Terri Vela, City Manager  
Howard Christian, Assistant City Manager "ACM"  
Gary Smith, City Attorney  
Lasha Gillespie, City Secretary

**Agenda item A1.** Call to Order, Quorum Determined and Meeting Declared Open.

- Mayor Haas declared the meeting open at 4:30 p.m.

**Agenda Item A2.** Recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag and the Texas Flag.

**Agenda item A3.** Employee Recognition for Service with the City of Richmond

Philip Salazar – 10 Years – Water Department. - Present to receive

Proclamations:

Celebrating Constitution Week, September 17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>.

Myra Lowrie and members of the FB Regent Chapter were present to receive the proclamation.

**Agenda Item A4.** Mayor, City Commissioners and City Staff Announcements per Sec. 551.0415 of the Texas Government Code.

- Commissioner Beard pointed out that Richmond was established 49 years after the signing of the Constitution and had been settled 13 years prior to that. He also expressed his gratitude to the Richmond Fire Department for accommodating the Richmond bike riders and acknowledged Commissioner McCoy for his sponsorship. Mayor Haas stated that she represented the City of Richmond at 19 events in her capacity as Mayor. Among these events were Richmond's hosting of the Mayor and Council Association dinner at Rudy's, and her attendance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Shaquille O'Neal's new Big Chicken restaurant.

**Agenda item A5.** Public comments (Public comment is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes per item. No Deliberations with the Commission. Time may not be given to another speaker.)

- Mittie Cobbin- (220 Fleming St) spoke to the city commission about the North Richmond waterline project, highlighting the issue of brown water. She inquired if there was a plan in place to replace the water line to resolve this problem.

**Agenda item A6.** Review and discuss 10th Street Project with Fort Bend County.

- Commissioner Dexter McCoy discussed the 10th Street project with the city commission, stating that phase one improvements of the roadways are underway. He noted that the county has acquired 30 out of the 42 properties required for widening 10th Street. Additionally, he mentioned an upcoming mobility bond election in November, where voters will decide on authorizing the county to issue bonds for major mobility projects, including the 10th Street project and to fund some deficits in the projects.
- Mahmoud Salehi, PE, from Cobb Fendley, shared a feasibility study report with the City Commission, evaluating three alternative alignments for a bridge structure overpass: Alternative one (Second Street), Alternative two (FM 762/10th Street Extension), and Alternative three (FM 3155/Collins Road). Salehi then responded to questions from the Commission regarding the current schematic and traffic impact analysis. Commissioner McCoy added they will not be approaching the City about contributing funding. The majority of the project's funding would come from mobility and grant funds, emphasizing that no actions would be taken outside of what the feasibility study outlines.

**Agenda item A7.** Public Hearing to receive comments for or against vacating and abandoning a 35 foot by 210-foot portion of First (Front) Street right of way south of Highway 90A.

- This item was included in the agenda packet in error.

**Agenda item A8.** Update on the city's water needs, both ground and surface water, with a focus on existing customers' security and the capacity to accommodate potential future expansion.

- Assistant City Manager Howard Christian gave an updated presentation on water-related matters. He discussed water production capacities, drought indicators, as well as available connections, capacity limitations, and contingencies. He further recommended budgeting for drilling three new wells and abandoning three old ones in the next 2 to 5 years to maintain capacity. Additionally, he mentioned that the next year's budget would include an expansion to the surface water plant with added modules, increasing the supply by an additional 200,000 gallons per day. After his presentation, he took questions from the City Commission, which touched on topics such as the cost of abandoning a well, concerns about the long-term aquifer, and the plan and timeline for replacing waterlines on the north side.

**Agenda item A9.** Update on the Del-Webb Reuse Agreement and sidewalk.

- City Attorney Smith updated the commission on the Del Webb reuse agreement concerning the sidewalk. He mentioned that they initiated discussions last year with MUD 187, aiming to finalize an agreement where the city would supply them with reuse water. In return, they would compensate the city based on terms previously provided by the City Commission. Additionally, the agreement would address the construction of a sidewalk along 762. Members of the City Commission reserved their questions for Executive Session.

**Agenda item A10.** Update on railroad blockages and an additional report that includes cameras discussion.

- Chief Craig provided an updated monthly report on railroad blockages, covering the period from August 14th, 2023, to September 15th, 2023. He mentioned the city has access to cameras overlooking Fourth Street, Sixth Street, and part of Eighth Street, though these are not actively monitored. Chief Craig also reiterated the challenges involved in addressing the issue of railroad

blockages. Chief Craig added that while some cities in Texas have passed ordinances setting time limits on railroad blockages, these ordinances have subsequently been repealed.

**Agenda item A11. Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate for the year 2023.**

- None

**Agenda item A12. Consent Agenda**

- Commissioner Beard moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of item 4 (Municipal Court). This item will be discussed in Executive Session. Commissioner Gaul seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

**Regular Agenda**

**Agenda item A13. Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2023-23, Adopting Proposed FY 2023-24 Budget for the City of Richmond.**

- Finance Director Preza addressed the City Commission stating staff will be requesting three actions from the City Commission.
  1. Have a record vote on the adoption of the budget.
  2. Pass a motion and vote on the adoption of the property tax.
  3. Have a record vote to ratify the property tax rate.
- Commissioner BeMent moved to approve Ordinance No. 2023-23, Adopting Proposed FY 2023-24 Budget for the City of Richmond. Commissioner Beard seconded.

**Record Vote:**

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Drozd  | AYE |
| Commissioner Beard  | AYE |
| Commissioner Gaul   | AYE |
| Commissioner BeMent | AYE |
| Mayor Haas          | AYE |

Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A14. Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2023-24, levying a property tax rate for the year 2023.**

- Finance Director Preza requested that the following motion be made, "I move that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.650000, which is effectively a 12.03 percent increase in the tax rate".
- Staff recommends the Commission adopt the tax rate in accordance with Chapter 26.05 of the Texas Tax Code. Tax rate vote must be a record vote & pass by 60% Tax rate must be adopted in 2 parts

M&O: \$0.429017

Debt Service: \$0.220983

- The language we must use to accept the budget and the tax rate, according to Commissioner BeMent, is materially misleading but is required by the State of Texas. Essentially, the city is lowering its tax rate, but due to rising property values and an increase in taxable property, the amount of revenue the city will receive is up 12.03 percent. Commissioner BeMent continued, "Even though the city is technically lowering the tax rate, we are required by law to say that we are raising it." Following this, Commissioner BeMent made the following motion: "I move that

the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.650000, which is effectively a 12.03 percent increase in the tax rate.” Commissioner Beard seconded.

**Record Vote:**

Commissioner Beard     AYE  
Commissioner Drozd     AYE  
Commissioner Gaul     AYE  
Commissioner BeMent    AYE  
Mayor Haas             AYE

Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A15.** Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2023-25, ratifying the tax rate reflected in the 2023-24 fiscal year budget.

- Section 102.007(c) of the Texas Local Government Code requires the City Commission to take a separate vote to ratify the property tax increase reflected in the fiscal year 2024 budget because it raises more revenue from property taxes than the preceding year. Staff recommends the Commission take a record vote to ratify the property tax reflected in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget.
- Commissioner Beard moved to approve Ordinance No. 2023-25, ratifying the tax rate reflected in the 2023-24 fiscal year budget. Commissioner Drozd seconded.

**Record Vote:**

Commissioner Gaul     AYE  
Commissioner Beard    AYE  
Commissioner Drozd    AYE  
Commissioner BeMent   AYE  
Mayor Haas             AYE

Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A16.** Review and consider taking action on Resolution No. 452-2023, interlocal agreement with Texas Department of Transportation for multiple use agreement for the placement of cameras in state right of way.

- Assistant Police Chief Dixie Brzozowski addressed the City Commission for approval on an interlocal agreement with Texas Department of Transportation for the placement of license plate recognition cameras in state right of way. This will assist in solving crimes, which occur within the city, receive instant alerts on stolen vehicles entering the city, and crime analysis. This will create efficiency without creating additional FTE’s. The discussion continued, addressing indemnification elements and the city’s provision of insurance.
- Commissioner Beard moved to approve Resolution No. 452-2023, interlocal agreement with Texas Department of Transportation for multiple use agreement for the placement of cameras in state right of way. Commissioner Gaul seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A17.** Review and consider taking action on a Preliminary Plat – Veranda Commercial – 1.300 acres of land – 1 Block – 0 Lots – 1 Reserve. The subject site is a section within Veranda Master Planned Community.

- A report has been submitted by the Planning Department for review by the Mayor and City Commission. Staff recommends approval of this plat conditioned upon addressing the comments listed below:

1. Revise subdivision title block to reflect City of Richmond ETJ.
  - Commissioner Beard moved to approve a Preliminary Plat – Veranda Commercial – 1.300 acres of land – 1 Block – 0 Lots – 1 Reserve. The subject site is a section within Veranda Master Planned Community conditioned upon staff’s recommendations. Commissioner BeMent seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A18. Review and Discussion on Sign Regulations within the Unified Development Code.**

- Planning Director Garcia is requesting feedback on certain amendments to the sign regulation to ensure that the regulations are in line with the purpose of the UDC. He went on to state that staff is reviewing certain portions of the signage requirements that may require amendment and based on previous experiences with sign contractors and applicants, certain portions of the sign code may also need to be modified to comply with the sign policies. Based on comments in this morning’s workshop, Mr. Garcia indicated that staff would include language relating to freestanding signs that would require both the primary business and secondary business to follow sign requirements.

**Agenda item A19. Review and consider taking action on Resolution No. 453-2023, interlocal agreement for improvements to the Traffic Signal Boxes.**

- APW Director Jim Whitehead stated this beautification project would allow for decorative wraps on traffic control boxes. A wrap will add a colorful alternative. Members of the Commission reiterated comments from this morning’s meeting. In planning and selecting designs, it will be important to strike a balance between celebrating local heritage and maintaining road safety. Comments included having design input from Richmond Historical Commission would be beneficial.
- Commissioner Beard moved to approve Resolution No. 453-2023, interlocal agreement for improvements to the Traffic Signal Boxes. Commissioner Drozd seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

**Agenda item A20. Excuse from Attendance at Regular City Commission Meeting.**

- None

**Agenda item A21. Consider taking action on requests for future agenda items.**

- None

**Agenda item A22. Adjourn to Executive Session, as authorized by Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 Consultation with Attorney; 551.074, Personnel Matters; and 551.087, Economic Development Negotiations.**

- Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 6:24 p.m.

**OPEN MEETING**

**C1. Reconvene into Open Meeting, and take action on items, if necessary.**

- Reconvened into open meeting at 7:15 p.m.
- Commissioner BeMent moved to approve consent agenda item 4 (Municipal Report) Commissioner Beard seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

**C2. Adjournment.**

- With no further business to discuss Mayor Haas adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

APPROVED:

Rebecca K. Haas

Becky K. Haas, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lasha Gillespie, City Secretary