

The Bedford Citizen

THE NEWS YOU NEED TO GUIDE YOUR CITY

Vol. 1 No. 14

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ABOUT THIS E-NEWS

The mission of this electronic newspaper (e-news) is to increase citizen awareness of current events and thereby increase their involvement in our government's decision-making process.

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TOMORROW NIGHT'S CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPICS AT A GLANCE

Work Session 6:30 p.m.

- ◆ Update on the City of Bedford 4thFest

Regular Session 7 p.m.

- ◆ **PUBLIC HEARING** and first reading: proposed ordinance amending the City's Zoning Ordinance regarding the parking of recreational vehicles on residential property
- ◆ Resolution on the City's of Bedford's Open Door/Grievance and Appeal Procedure
- ◆ City Council members' procedures and rules (*Item requested by Councilwoman Nail*)
- ◆ Nomination and appointment of Mayor Pro Tem and Council liaisons to boards, commissions, and committees (*Item requested by Mayor Story*)
- ◆ Open Forum
The public is invited to address the Council on any topic at this time in accordance with published guidelines available at the Council meeting.

If you find this e-news helpful and informative, please help us grow by passing it along to others.

TOMORROW NIGHT'S PUBLIC HEARING

By dona weisman

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A public hearing and first reading of a proposed ordinance is listed on tomorrow night's City Council agenda as the first item under New Business. Ironically, while action on that ordinance is new business, the topic has been discussed at several Council meetings this year.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment Case A-013 (amending the City of Bedford Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3. Permitted Uses, Section 3.1 Schedule of Permitted Uses, and Section 3.2 Explanation of Uses and Specific Use Permit Requirements) has been developed in response to property owners who petitioned the Council after receiving citations for failing to conform to the existing ordinance.

The underlined text indicates the source of the quotes below it.

January 23, 2007 Council meeting minutes

"12. Request that the Tarrant County Appraisal District (TAD) review properties with agricultural exemptions. ****Item requested by Councilmember Chambers*

"Councilman Chambers requested that this item be placed on the agenda. He requested that staff look into how many properties are in Bedford that would be qualified as agriculturally exempt, and wanted to know the value of those properties. Staff indicated that the land value total is around 2.5 million and there are a total of five agriculturally exempt

properties that are currently in the City.

"Moteded by Councilman Chambers, seconded by Councilman Orian to have the TAD evaluate the five properties in the City of Bedford that currently receive agricultural exemptions and provide explanation to the City for their designations as agriculturally exempt.

"Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Story declared the motion carried."

Councilman Chambers passed away in February, 2007.

February 27, 2007 Council meeting minutes

"5. Jeff Fitch [address] – Requested to speak to the Council regarding the use of land owned by John Fitch and Martha Sanders.

"Mr. Fitch indicated that he is here to discuss the Fitch property, which is his father's property, and the code compliance violations that currently exist on this property. He requested that the Council provide some consideration to the existing circumstances, which entail trailers being parked on the property, and explore some options for both the recreational vehicles being parked on the property, as well as for whether or not Mr. Fitch should continue to receive citations while these decisions are being made.

"As a result of the discussion about this item, Council has requested that staff place an item for discussion and action on the March 27, 2007 Council agenda. Additionally, Council has requested that all citations being issued to Mr. Fitch be suspended until further notice."

February 27, 2007 Council meeting minutes also

"8. Martha Sanders [address] – Requested that her and her son be provided the opportunity to speak to the Council regarding trailers on her property at 2709 Murphy Drive.

"Curtis Sanders [address] – His mother is Martha Sanders [...] and he provides maintenance to the property at 2709 Murphy Drive. He requested that Council consider allowing consideration to his mother's property and allow trailers to continue to be parked on the property as grandfathered.

"As a result of the discussion about this item, Council has requested that staff place an item for discussion and action on the March 27, 2007 Council agenda and establish a maximum number of trailers to sit on the Sander's property. Additionally, Council has requested that all citations being issued to Mr. Sanders be suspended until further notice."

A March 9, 2007, Star-Telegram editorial stated that the ventures of these two families "don't sit well City Councilman Charles Orea, who points out that city zoning laws forbid business operations on residential property. Those laws are there to protect residents, he says – and besides that, these people are depriving legitimate parking businesses of potential revenue."

March 13, 2007 Council meeting minutes

"11. Council discussion of a possible revision to the Bedford parking ordinance as it relates to the parking of recreational vehicles in all use districts. ***Item

requested by Councilmember Orea

"Councilman Orea requested that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion. He wanted to indicate that he felt our parking ordinance is generous and he does not have any concerns regarding the ordinance.

"It was announced that Councilwoman Nail wished to discuss this item; however, she was absent at tonight's meeting due to illness and requested that this item be discussed at the next Council meeting on March 27, 2007, which Council supported.

"Council also suggested that discussion regarding this item could be tied into the discussion of item 12 as well.

"12. Staff report regarding parking on unpaved residential surfaces. ***Item requested by Councilmember Orea

"This item was discussed in conjunction with Item 11 and will be brought back for discussion at the March 27, 2007 Council meeting."

March 27, 2007 Council meeting minutes

"10. Staff report regarding parking on unpaved residential surfaces. ***Item requested by Council, originally discussed at the March 13, 2007 meeting

"This item was originally discussed at the March 13, 2007 council meeting. Council generally discussed this item pertaining to the parking of vehicles in residential areas and determined that the ordinance was fairly liberal regarding this matter. There was no action taken or recommendations made regarding this item.

"11. Discussion and possible action regarding recreational vehicle storage on the Fitch and Sanders properties located at 3737 Cummings Drive and 2709 Murphy Drive. ****Item requested by Council, originally discussed at the February 27, 2007 meeting.*

"This item was originally discussed at the February 27, 2007 council meeting and has been brought back before council at the request of the council for discussion and possible action.

"Moteded by Councilman Whistler to rescind the ordinances relative to this issue, more specifically Ordinance 114-154. Motion failed for the lack of a second.

"Moteded by Councilman Cason, seconded by Councilwoman Nail to table this item indefinitely and to discontinue citations to the property owners indefinitely.

"Motion approved 5-1-0.

"Councilman Orean opposed the motion."

May 8, 2007 Council work session minutes

"Council discussion on the proposed SUP to allow expanded vehicle parking on residentially zoned property in the City of Bedford. Staff report on the status of this proposed zoning case. ****Item requested by Councilman Orean*

"Councilman Orean requested that this item be placed on the work session for discussion.

"Mr. Orean spoke and cautioned Council to consider the precedent that could be set by a new SUP process, and wanted to ensure that appropriate development standards are tied to any SUP process that is

initiated. Based on how the proposed SUP is framed, the community could potentially be severely impacted."

May 24, 2007, Planning Memorandum from Dan Boutwell, Consulting City Planner, Municipal Planning Resources Group (MPRG) to the Planning and Zoning Commission, c/o Bill Syblon, Planning & Community Development Director

"In an effort to alleviate the situation for the property owners and to protect the interest of surrounding properties, as well as properties located throughout the City of Bedford, the City Council has requested a Specific Use Permit be drafted to meet the needs of all parties.

"The following recommended amendment to the City's zoning ordinance will allow the specific properties to exist in their current condition for a period of time to be determined by the City Council, at the end of which the applicant may request and receive an extension to the permit. In addition, it makes the storage of recreations vehicles, as practiced on those specific properties, a legal use. The recommendations have been narrowly drafted to apply to these specific properties and to prevent similar uses of recreational vehicle storage to be located elsewhere throughout the City."

June 14, 2007 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting minutes

"Public Hearing

"2. Zoning Ordinance Amendment Case A-013, the Planning and Zoning Commission to consider amending the City of Bedford Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3. Permitted

Uses, Section 3.1 Schedule of Permitted Uses, and Section 3.2 Explanation of Uses and Specific Use Permit Requirements. (to address recreational vehicle storage.)”

During the discussion of the amendment presented in Mr. Boutwell’s 5/24/07 Planning Memorandum, Mr. Boutwell said “the intent is that [commercial use of residential property] be transparent to the neighborhood.

“The proposed amendment would allow for an exception to this transparency. It would allow for the storage of vehicles on site if there were enough area to allow that type of storage to occur. It also provides a limit on the number of vehicles a person can have as well as other limitations. It is in a residentially zoned district and can only have one resident per lot. It cannot be used to house more people on the lot like a mobile home park.”

Ralph Good, Bob Whistler and Dorothy McWhorter were the three people who spoke during the Public Hearing. All three indicated concern regarding the ethics of creating ordinances which would allow special treatment for some but not all of the residents.

June 26, 2007 Council Meeting Agenda

“16. Discussion and action on Zoning Ordinance Amendment Case A-013.

****Item requested by Councilman Whistler”*

Councilman Whistler requested that this item be postponed until the July 10 Council meeting.

Council Agenda Background Provided for the July 10 City Council packet by Bill Syblon, Development Director

“The Planning and Zoning Commission identified several issues related to this ordinance amendment during the June 14, 2007 meeting. Many of the concerns stressed by the Commission pertained to the following items:

- ◆ “If approved, this amendment would allow RV storage on residential property throughout the City.
- ◆ “Possible preferential treatment could be granted for a particular property owner. There was a concern regarding equal treatment for the citizens of the community.
- ◆ “This type of use is a commercial enterprise.

“Several residents also spoke at the public hearing and expressed concern that this amendment was not ethical. They felt it gave preferential treatment to two property owners. It would be difficult for the City to enforce this type of Specific Use Permit.

“The Planning and Zoning Commission denied this item at their meeting of June 14, 2007 by a vote of 4-3-0.

“Due to a denied recommendation, a super majority vote by Council (6 of 7) is necessary to approve this application.

“The Commission recommends denial with the following motion:

“Denial of a proposed ordinance (Zoning Ordinance Amendment Case A-013) amending the City of Bedford Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3. Permitted Uses,

Section 3.1 Schedule of Permitted Uses, and Section 3.2 Explanation of Uses and Specific Use Permit Requirements.”

dona weisman has been a Bedford resident since 2000 and a member of the Bedford Library Advisory Board since 2003. She has been a degreed librarian for 25 years and served as a public library consultant with the Texas State Library System for over a third of that time.

Murder Mystery Dinner & Show at Old Bedford School

Tickets are on sale now for Old Bedford School's latest Murder Mystery Dinner & Show, *Family Reunion*, scheduled for 7 p.m. Jul. 21.

The Mann family's getting together for the holiday. Melody's providing the music, Sugar's bringing the treats, and all the Mann Clan's gonna have fun, fun, fun! But, wait! Someone's spiked the punch, and Bid Bad Mann's surprise package may unravel the family fortune! Looks like there's gonna be a murder for the holiday!

For more information, like how to purchase tickets, call 817/952-2290 or go to www.oldbedfordschool.com.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISONS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

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At tomorrow night's meeting, the Council will consider nomination and appointment of Mayor Pro Tem and Council liaisons to

Boards, Commissions and Committees. Councilman Whistler currently serves as Mayor Pro Tem.

The following is a list of current assignments, according to information included in the Council packet for tomorrow night's meeting.

Mayor James Story

- ◆ Audit Committee
- ◆ Industrial Development Authority

Councilman Jeff Cason

- ◆ Community Affairs Commission
- ◆ North Central Texas Council of Governments/Regional Training Advisory Committee
- ◆ Trinity River Authority

Councilwoman Lori Nail

- ◆ Industrial Development Authority
- ◆ Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation

Councilman Charles Orea

- ◆ Audit Committee
- ◆ Hotel/Motel Association
- ◆ Library Advisory Board
- ◆ Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation

Councilman Roy Savage

- ◆ Audit Committee
- ◆ Economic Development Foundation
- ◆ Investment Committee
- ◆ Senior Citizen Advisory Board

- ◆ Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation

Councilman Bob Whistler

- ◆ Animal Control Board
- ◆ Animal Shelter Advisory Board
- ◆ Teen Court Advisory Board
- ◆ Lone Star Transportation Authority

Currently, there are vacancies on the Beautification Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, and Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation (1 vacancy).

There is no Council liaison position on the Building and Standards Commission, the Ethics Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Adjustments.

The Audit Committee is required to include the Mayor and two Council members. Also, the Industrial Development Authority is required to include two Council members.

Newly elected Councilman Roy Turner will begin serving as a liaison after tomorrow night's meeting.

OPEN DOOR/GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

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The following information is part of the background provided in the Council packets for tomorrow night's meeting.

"In July 2004, the previous City Manager requested a revision to the Open Door/Grievance and Appeal Procedure policy stating that the Deputy City Manager be the final authority on all employee

grievances except in cases of employment termination. In those instances, the City Manager would hear an appeal. This revision was approved by the [04-05] City Council under Resolution 04-39.

"The current City Manager has requested that the policy be changed back to having the City Manager be the final decision maker in the appeal process for all employee grievances. Under a true Open Door policy, the highest-ranking official in the organization typically has the final authority in an appeal process."



FIRST ANNUAL SHORT STORY WRITING CONTEST

1st Place Prize - \$200 cash, \$200 Borders gift card, gift membership for DFW Writer's Workshop 2008

2nd Place Prize - \$100 cash, \$100 Borders gift card

3rd Place Prize - \$50 cash, \$50 Borders gift card

Names of all winners will be added to a Short Story Writing Contest Winners plaque on permanent display in the library.

Stories will be accepted through 5 p.m. Sun., July 15.

For more information, go to <http://www.eventkeeper.com/code/events.cfm?curOrg=BEDFORD>

ABOUT THIS E-NEWS

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The mission of this electronic newspaper (e-news) is to increase citizen awareness of current events and thereby increase their involvement in our government's decision-making process. As a result, *The Bedford Citizen* will focus on providing Bedford's residents with the information they need in order to cast an informed vote. We also will include occasionally some helpful and entertaining information.

The Bedford Citizen is currently a volunteer effort which we expect to be circulated from friend to friend via email in its PDF format. If you find it helpful and informative, please feel free to pass it along to others.

During this introductory period, the subscriptions are free. This will allow us to gauge the demand and work out the bugs. Eventually, we plan to charge a fee for subscriptions. This will allow us to avoid the conflicts of interest that can arise from accepting paid advertising.

Initially, we plan to publish an issue every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, subject to volunteer availability and the amount of news to report.

To subscribe, please send us an email at Be.A.Citizen@earthlink.net Please include your name, address and email address.

The Bedford Citizen welcomes free of charge:

- ◆ News articles from any volunteer writers, provided we judge the articles are relevant to our readers and the facts can be substantiated

- ◆ Position papers from political incumbents and candidates provided these position papers clearly state that person's position and they do not attack any other party

Our policies are as follows:

- ◆ *The Bedford Citizen* does not share or sell its mailing list information.
- ◆ Paid advertising is not accepted.
- ◆ Except when identified as editorials, letters to the editor or opinion pieces, stories will contain only facts that can be verified. Writers should expect to be asked to provide documentation before articles are published.
- ◆ All submitted articles must deal with issues relevant to Bedford's residents and not exceed two pages, as published in this format.
- ◆ Only one letter to the editor or opinion piece will be accepted from a single household during any 30-day period.
- ◆ Public service announcements will be included as space allows.
- ◆ The staff of the Bedford Citizen will be the final judge.
- ◆ Submissions must be received at least 72 hours prior to publication.
- ◆ Submissions should be sent to Be.A.Citizen@earthlink.net and must include the author's name, address, email address and phone number.