

The Bedford Citizen

THE NEWS YOU NEED TO GUIDE YOUR CITY

Vol. 1 No. 16

July 13, 2007

CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This issue is devoted to an overview of the highlights of last Tuesday night's City Council meeting. A more in-depth article about each item marked ** will appear in a future issue of The Bedford Citizen.

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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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CORRECTION REGARDING MEETING DATE

The Beautification Commission will not meet
Monday, July 16.

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

JULY 10 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Councilman Cason was absent from this meeting.

UPDATE ON THE CITY OF BEDFORD 4th FEST

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Parks and Recreation Director James Hughes began his report saying, "We were really close this year to possibly not having the 4th Fest because of rain. Last year we were really close to not having the 4th Fest because of drought." Referring to the amount of personnel and volunteer hours that went into the event, he said, "This event touches virtually every department and division in the city, and we all worked together as a team to put this event on."

Mr. Hughes concluded his report with an overview of the financial results. "As far as what we took in that evening, Pennington Field in 2006 took in \$4,683. This year, we took in \$5,205. The Inflate-a-fun area was an area we were all wondering what would happen this year because we didn't have a carnival. Last year when we did have a carnival, we took in \$4,761. The Inflate-a-fun area took in \$6,863. It was quite popular with the kids and most people bought the wrist bands so the kids could bounce all afternoon. Merchandise sales did well. The previous year we took in \$3,235. This year we took in \$4,256. Our vendors doubled what they took in the previous year. Last year they took in

\$1,951. This year they took in \$3,913. The total deposit from the previous year was \$14,631. This year it was \$20,237. We had a great year."

When Councilman Whistler asked how they were doing with their budget, Mr. Hughes responded that they were, "close to breaking even".

Council members expressed appreciation for the impressive event and for all the effort involved in making it successful.

ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

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The Council approved the *Open Door/Grievance and Appeal Procedure* by consent.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE

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This item involved Zoning Ordinance Amendment Case A-013, which would amend 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. The proposed amendment was developed in response to property owners who petitioned the Council after receiving citations for failing to conform to the existing ordinance.

Those property owners are Mr. John Fitch at Cummings and Highway 121 and his sister, Martha Sanders, at 2709 Murphy Dr.

The concern of the Council and of the Planning and Zoning Board is the fact that many travel trailers and boats are parked on those properties, violating existing ordinances.

Following a presentation from Economic Development Director Bill Syblon, Councilman Whistler pointed out a continuity error in the changes as written up for the Council. Mr. Syblon noted the error and indicated that the correction would be made. Councilman Whistler said that he would like a change in the proposed limit of 10 vehicles per acre. He felt the limit should be 10 per quarter acre. Additional discussion followed regarding possible ways to assure that the ordinance offered the same option fairly to all Bedford residents.

No one spoke at the public hearing, and there was no more discussion before Councilman Orean made a motion to approve the Ordinance with the correction pointed out by Councilman Whistler and Mr. Syblon. Councilman Whistler seconded the motion, which did not include a change in the vehicles per acre limit.

During the discussion that followed, the Council was reminded that, because approval of the ordinance had been denied by the Planning and Zoning Commission, only a super majority vote by Council (six of a possible seven) would put the ordinance into effect. With Councilman Cason absent, this meant that all six members present would have to vote in favor of the amendment for it to pass.

The motion was put to a vote, and the result was 4-2-0. Mayor Story and Council Persons Nail, Savage and Turner voted in favor of the amendment; Councilmen Orean and Whistler voted against it. The amendment, then, was not approved.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS' PROCEDURES AND RULES

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Item requested by Councilwoman Nail

This item was again tabled until the next meeting.

MAYOR PRO TEM AND COUNCIL LIAISON POSITIONS

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Councilwoman Nail recommended Councilman Savage for the position of Mayor Pro Tem, pointing out that he is the longest-standing member, has not yet served as Mayor Pro Tem, and has served for years on Economic Development and promoted City growth in that area. Councilman Turner seconded the nomination. The vote to elect Councilman Savage as Mayor Pro Tem was unanimous.

Mayor Story then asked if anyone wanted to resign from a currently held position. After no one responded, Councilman Turner said that he'd like to serve as liaison to the Library Advisory Board, but Councilman Orean said that he was "not ready to give that one up."

It was decided to table further decisions about liaison positions until Councilman Cason could participate in the discussion. However, when it was pointed out that the Street Improvement and Economic Development Corporation will meet on the following Tuesday, the Council voted unanimously to appoint Councilman Turner to that board.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS ON CITY BUSINESS

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There was confusion regarding whether or not discussion is allowed during this segment of the meeting. It was explained that this is a time for reports, not discussion.

Councilman Orean referred to the comments of resident Raymond Champney during Open Forum at the June 26 meeting, regarding business activity that may not complement the Council's vision for the City. Councilman Orean said that he would like the Council to discuss this at the next meeting and that he would like to have Staff investigate ordinances that exist in other cities that have been found to be legal under State law to manage sexually oriented businesses. He asked, also, that Council members try to think of ordinances that might be enacted to restrict such businesses in Bedford.

On a recent stop at the State Visitor's Center at the Texas/Oklahoma border, Councilman Whistler discovered what he called "a fantastic brochure" promoting

Bedford among the items available to visitors. There were no brochures there for Bedford's sister cities, Hurst and Euless. He congratulated Economic Development and the Bedford Hotel Assn. for the brochure and for getting it into that Center.

Councilman Turner attended the Texas Municipal League legislative wrap-up session last month and learned a lot about things the legislature is doing and has done that will affect our city. He also appreciated the opportunity to meet with Council members and mayors from other local cities.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

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City Manager Beverly Queen announced that there will be a 4-B, Street Improvement and Economic Development Corporation meeting at the library on Tuesday, July 17 at 6 p.m.; a Budget Session will follow at the same location at about 6:30 p.m.

The Town Hall Meeting about Gas Drilling in Bedford is scheduled for the following Monday, July 23, at the Old Bedford School.

She thanked Council on behalf of all of the Staff for their kind comments regarding 4th Fest.

OPEN FORUM

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Curtis Sanders spoke on behalf of his mother, Martha Sanders, regarding the

proposed ordinance amendment discussed earlier in the meeting. He said that his family had gone through the same process in 1995 but with different results. Just before the family was to meet with the Zoning Board of Adjustment, then-Director of Planning and Community Development Scott Barnett called him and said that City Staff had reviewed aerial maps of the City from the early 70s and that, since trailers and RVs were being parked on their properties at that time, they were grandfathered. He presented to the Council a petition, signed by everyone living in the areas around his mother's property, indicating that they have no problem with having the trailers/RVs parked there. He pointed out that his mother has been very supportive of the City and even donated land for roads.

Ralph Good** spoke highly of 4th Fest and then expressed concern about Program Summary and Performance Measures, budget components that he feels have been neglected for years. He explained the concepts and gave examples of how they could be applied to the budgets of different City departments.

Ben Williams commended the Council on running efficient, effective sessions. He identified himself as a renter at Ms. Sanders's place and wanted to know the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment discussed earlier that evening. He read Section 2.3 C of the City's Zoning Ordinance, saying that it contained the wording that grandfathered the current use of the properties.

CITY ZONING ORDINANCE 2.3.C. NONCONFORMING USE OF LAND

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The following is the ordinance to which Ben Williams referred when he spoke during the Open Forum segment of Tuesday's City Council meeting.

"Where, at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this ordinance, lawful use of land exists that is made no longer permissible under the terms of this ordinance as enacted or amended, such use may be continued, so long as it remains otherwise lawful, subject to the following provisions:

- (1) No such nonconforming use shall be enlarged or increased, nor extended to occupy a greater area of land than was occupied at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this ordinance.
- (2) No such nonconforming use shall be moved in whole or in part to any other portion of the lot or parcel occupied by such use at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this ordinance.
- (3) If any such nonconforming use of land ceases for any reason for a period of more than thirty (30) days, any subsequent use of such land shall conform to the regulations specified by this ordinance for the district in which such land is located."

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

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- ◆ *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.