

The Bedford Citizen

THE NEWS YOU NEED TO GUIDE YOUR CITY

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CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This issue is devoted to an overview of the highlights of last Tuesday'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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FEATURES

DEADLINE WEDNESDAY FOR SPEAKING AT COUNCIL NEXT WEEK

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Anyone wishing to speak as a "Person to Be Heard" at the Jan. 22 City Council Meeting must submit a written request no later than noon Wednesday Jan 16. The request must include the speaker's name, address and phone number as well as the topic of discussion. It may be emailed to the City Secretary at:

sjennings@ci.bedford.tx.us

or mailed to:

Bedford City Hall
ATTN: City Secretary Shanae Jennings
2000 Forest Ridge Drive
Bedford, TX 76021

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETINGS

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The Charter Review Commission began meeting in mid-November to determine what changes, if any, should be made to the City Charter in order to keep it current and in line with any State laws which have changed since the Charter was last reviewed. Any changes the 15-member commission proposes will appear on the May 2008 ballot for Bedford voters to accept or reject.

The group began by providing individual input regarding potential changes to the document. Eventually, all suggested changes were compiled into a single

document which was presented to the commissioners along with a document reflecting changes suggested by City Attorney Stan Lowrey.

Since its third meeting, the Commission has been working its way through the Charter, discussing each suggested change, determining whether or not to accept whatever wording ultimately gets put into motion form, and then deciding whether to put the proposed new wording on the ballot or to table that decision until the entire Charter has been reviewed.

The group has been meeting at 5:30 p.m. on City Council meeting nights but, because the task of developing propositions for the May ballot must be completed soon in order to allow time to prepare the material for the election, there will be a 7 p.m. meeting at the library this coming Tuesday night, Jan. 15, to discuss the suggested changes for sections 7, 9, 10, 11 and 14. If any of those sections aren't covered at that meeting, they'll be discussed at the Jan. 22 meeting, along with Subsection 2.07 and Section 3. All other sections have been covered at meetings between mid-November and last Tuesday.

Although several of the meetings have included public hearings and several meetings have been attended by members of the public, no one has participated in those hearings.

Jeff Corbet is Chair of the commission. The members are Terry Backs, Tom Bresnahan, Chris Brown, Bob Cochrane, David Franklin, Ralph Good, Jim Griffin, Hank Henning, Dorothy McWhorter, Mary

Peters, Helen Staffs, Hank Swanson, Joe Turner and Bianca Zayas. City Attorney Stan Lowery serves as ex-officio member. City Manager Beverly Queen and City Secretary Shanae Jennings attend all of the meetings.

The City Charter lists the duties of the commission as

- (1) Inquire into the operation of the city government under the charter provisions and determine whether any such provisions require revision.*
- (2) Propose any recommendations it may deem desirable to help insure compliance with the provisions of the charter.*
- (3) Propose, if it deems desirable, amendments to the charter to improve the effective application of the charter to current conditions.*
- (4) Report its findings and present its proposed amendments, if any, to the city council.*

Additionally, the Charter mandates that "The city council shall receive and have published, in the designated official public newspaper of the city, a final report of the charter review commission. The city council shall consider any recommendation made and if any amendments be presented as a part of such report, may order such amendment or amendments to be submitted to the voters of the city in the manner provided by state law."

CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

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Bob Cochrane spoke for "more than two and a half minutes" on drilling in Bedford. He reported that he had taken Councilman Turner's challenge and driven through the same area of extensive drilling which Councilman Turner had driven and reported on in an earlier Council meeting. Councilman Turner had reported that he felt the drilling operations and equipment were "intrusive." Mr. Cochrane reported that the area included "many, many wells." He said the equipment was all nicely painted and cared for. His impression was that it was not any more intrusive than the power transmission lines that ran nearby.

Mr. Cochrane then went on to make some other observations. He suggested running the transmission pipeline along the Bedford Trails Park.

Next, Mr. Cochrane referred to a recent newspaper article that reported high signing bonuses in Arlington and attributed them to stiff competition. He seemed to be saying that the residents of Bedford should not expect such signing bonuses since their land would not see such stiff competition, but he went on to say that the City should expect to be able to command higher signing bonuses for the City's mineral rights since they can negotiate for them.

Mr. Cochrane then complimented staff for information available on the City's web site.

With regard to the ordinance, he said it should provide for exceptions to the setback from residences in the cases where some percentage of the nearby residents request an exception.

He also recommended that the ordinance require each permit application to specify the exact route for heavy equipment to travel through town to each drilling site.

ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

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A resolution authorizing the purchase of a Digital Camera Meeting Acquisition System for the Council Chambers from Rushworks in the amount of \$26,060.00.

RESULTS OF EMPLOYEE CLIMATE SURVEY

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Employee turnover has decreased over the past 3 years from 16.33% at the end of fiscal year 2004-2005, to 13.37% at the end of fiscal year 2005-2006 and 7.42% at the end of fiscal year 2006 -2007.

Major changes:

70% of the employees responding agree that they have job security. Up from 12%.

80-90% agreed that:

- ◆ Providing quality service is a top priority
- ◆ There is good cooperation between departments.
- ◆ Very little sense of discrimination.

Employee attitudes appear to be strong, positive and regard job security as

improving:

- ◆ "I am paid fairly for the work that I do" is up from 20% to 56%.
- ◆ Satisfaction with holidays and sick days has increased gradually over the past three years.
- ◆ "Compensation is adequately adjusted to reflect the increase in cost of living" is up from 6% to 29%.

The work environment appears strong:

- ◆ "Information is communicated in a timely and accurate manner" is up from 63% to 75%.
- ◆ Ratings for safety and job clarity remained steady.
- ◆ "My department is adequately staffed" is up from 21% to 45%.
- ◆ "Promotions are handled fairly" is improved at 54%.

The employees feel very good about their supervision. My supervisor:

- ◆ "Gives clear direction" is up from 77% to 95%.
- ◆ "Works as part of the team" steady at nearly 90%.
- ◆ "Is easy to talk to" steady at nearly 90%.

More than 80% feel that their department heads are providing adequate leadership.

City Management:

- ◆ "tells employees when they do a good job" is up from 43% to 55%.

- ◆ "encourages teamwork and participation" has gone up steadily from 55% to 62% to 73%.
- ◆ "Is open to new ideas and suggestions from employees" improved from 48% to 55%.

The employee opinion survey generally supported the written survey.

A comparison of the survey results against the goals set last year indicates that many were achieved, but there are still concerns in the area of benefits and compensation.

There was considerable discussion by the Council regarding raising the participation from about 60% to more like 90%. There was also an extended discussion of how the City can improve its scores in the benefits area.

OPEN FORUM

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Keith Quigley expressed his concern that, if the City were to abandon the north end of Woodpark Lane and remove the barricade, some of the walkers on the trail might be injured by speeding drivers on Woodpark Lane.

He also said that, contrary to Mr. Cochrane's position, the quality of in Bedford is not based solely on economics. He said, "I think having a 12 to 14 story lighted gas rig running 24 hours a day, fed by those gravel roads with the huge increase in 18-wheeler trucks transporting equipment back and forth would have a very negative effect on the quality of life in Bedford."

Joyce Johnson rose to request that she be added to the list as a speaker and asked that, since 5 pro-drilling and pro-leasing speakers were already scheduled to speak, she be given 25 minutes to present the other side of the issue.