

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 21, 2022 – 6:30 P.M.
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Oscar D. Montoya Sr.	Mayor
	Joe Martinez	Mayor Pro-Tem
	Armando Garcia	Commissioner
	Jacob Howell	Commissioner
	Ruben Saldana	Commissioner
STAFF PRESENT:	Alberto Perez	City Manager
	Martie Garcia-Vela	City Attorney
	Joselynn Castillo	City Secretary
	Javier Ramirez	Asst. City Manager
	Kristine Longoria	Human Resources
	Ervin Vilchis	IT Assistant
	Blanca Sanchez	Interim Chief of Police
	Nereida Perez	Finance Director
	Joaquin Hernandez	Public Works Director
	Javier Campos	Fire Chief
	Marisol Vidales	Library Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Axel Vallejo, Brianna Casares, Isaias Rodriguez, Isaac Huacuja, Joe Cano, Leonel Benavidez, Ramon Mejia, Melissa Serrano

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Montoya called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Four members of the Commission were present which constitutes a quorum. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez arrived after the Pledge.

3. INVOCATION

Commissioner Saldana said the invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Howell lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. OPEN FORUM-

- Mr. Joe Cano addressed the commission about the Grosshauser item. He stated for the commission to consider 1 or 2 exits on the west frontage road. He stated that FM 491 is a heavy traffic road and gets congested. There are many accidents that happen between Frontage road and the police Station and that subdivision will bring more families. Mr. Cano recommends widening FM 491.
- Mr. Leonel Benavidez addressed the Commission regarding the item for Marco A. Arredondo energy representative services. Mr. Benavidez informed the commission about the energy and its pricing. Mr. Benavidez stated this item is not transparent, item 10A states that the city will not pay but he stated that is false and the taxpayers will have to pay.
- Mr. Mejia addressed the Commission regarding open forum. Mr. Mejia stated he did not say to hire a company to clean the street, he actually stated that he told the city manger for someone to clean the street. The street on Vermont and 10th was getting done and then the street was taken apart. He asked how much money has the city spent on that street. Mr. Mejia added that the swimming pool is not available to the people and should be open. He stated that if its not open then he will break the lock.
- Ms. Melissa Serrano stated she was contacted by some of the families from Uvalde for a bench memorial. She is requesting assistance from the City of Mercedes for the family.

6. CONSENT AGENDA: *(All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Governing Body and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items; however, if discussion is desired, that item(s) will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.)*

- a. **Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held June 7, 2022.**
- b. **Second and final reading of Ordinance No 2022-09 to update the Planning Permit Fees**

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

a. Recognition of Mercedes Police Department Personnel

Interim Chief Blanca Sanchez recognized several PD personnel for their hard work during the threats to the school after the Uvalde Shooting. Sgt. Sanchez, Inv. Rocha, Montelongo, Villarreal, Estrada, Lopez, Hernandez, Ramirez, J. Rodriguez CPL. Diaz, Soto, Torres, Officer L. Hernandez, Bocanegra, J. Lopez, O. Lopez, J. Trevino, Flores and Campos.

8. ORDINANCE/RESOLUTIONS: *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. Ordinance # 2022-10 To rezone Grosshauser's Subdivision Lot 5 and 6, and the Est 3 Acres of Lot 4 from Class "N" Newly Annexed to Class "C-1" Apartment District; Applicant: Tiki Land Company (ACM)

Mr. Ramirez addressed the Commission regarding the multi-family development and requesting a change in zone to apartment district. Commissioner Saldana motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded. At a question, Mr. Ramirez stated that more developments are to come and the street belongs to TxDOT. Mayor Montoya stated to meet with TxDOT. Mr. Ramirez stated that the developer does have to create the space for growth. Mayor Montoya stated the City needs to be prepared for growth and the city is looking into those aspects. Commissioner Howell asked if the City can make a recommendation for the exits on the subdivision. Mr. Ramirez stated they can meet with the agencies that make those decisions and provide them the cities recommendations. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. MANAGEMENT ITEM(S): *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. The National Fitness Campaign (ACM)

Mr. Ramirez stated the national fitness campaign promotes exercise in the community. BCBS is offering \$50K grant to assist and with the grant there is \$117K to \$137 still pending funding and EDC offered to pay for half of that. The workout area will be free equipment for the public. Commissioner Howell made a motion to postpone it for further research. Commissioner Howell amended his motion to approve. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Commissioner Howell stated that the parks currently have fitness equipment and feels that the funds could go to small businesses or schools and expressed the option of the City starting their own fitness campaign. Commissioner Saldana asked about the location of the equipment, if there are any funding partners, and the performance expectations. Mr. Ramirez stated they can look at other options and the location was either at the HEB park or the FEMA Dome. The National Fitness Campaign would like a response by mid-July. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez stated to possibly put it in a neighborhood park and expressed his concerns with the campaign. Upon a called vote, the motion died.

b. Approving the Paramedic Certification Program. (Fire Chief/State Rep)

State Rep. Armando Martinez addressed the Commission about providing training for a paramedic certification. There are several entities that are going to a fire based EMS which Mercedes is already doing. There are about 20 students willing to participate. Half of the cost is being paid by County of Hidalgo. Knapp medical has purchased all of the books for the students. The City of Mercedes will be the training facility for these classes. Classes start August 2 and end January 26. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Directing the City Manager to develop an Inflation/Recession Emergency Financial Plan (Comm Howell & Martinez)

Commissioner Howell stated this is an update from the last meeting. This is a financial plan in place to help our citizens to avoid cutting services as much as possible. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. At a question, Mr. Perez stated the city will follow the auditors guidelines and will continue to look at budget, revenues and expenditures. Mr. Perez stated to look at the budget and not make unnecessary expenditures. At a question, Mr. Perez stated all the operating costs

would go up. He provided an example about not necessarily driving around when its not needed. Mayor Montoya stated that with inflation the community will stop making purchases, City needs to meet guidelines and the city cannot save when inflation occurs. Commissioner Saldana stated that in his experience, small business is the first hit, then larger business and then government and then the same for recovery. Mayor Montoya stated that the fund balance is important for the City and required. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Directing City Manager to develop an RFP for Broadband Service (Comm Howell & Martinez)

Mr. Perez stated that some citizens expressed their concern with having broadband service. Mr. Perez stated this would be to have access. The city will not provide services but will have the infrastructure available to have access to the services. Mr. Perez stated to identify the areas without service and those that need better services. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. BIDS/CONTRACTS: *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. Directing City Manager and Legal to engage with Marco A. Arredondo, Inc for Energy Representative Services.(City Manager)

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to accepted item 10A. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mayor Montoya asked a question. Mr. Arredondo stated there is a broker fee and as an engineering firm they provide in writing what they will do with that brokerage fee. He stated that they oversee project the city is working on and provide recommendations on lighting and energy saving. They review every bill to identify where energy is used and the potential savings and they also go out on the field to assess the areas that are costing the city monies. Mr. Arredondo stated they would do a monthly report on the cities electric bill. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of additional LaserLux Printer for the Police Department. (Int. Police Chief)

Chief Sanchez stated that a second copier/printer is needed for CID use. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Addendum between the Children’s Advocacy Center of Hidalgo and Starr Counties and the Mercedes Police Department. (Int. Police Chief)

Chief Sanchez stated the contract needs an updated name on the contract. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

11. Monthly Departmental Reports:

a. Police Department, Fire Department, Library, Finance, City Secretary/HR, Planning, Municipal Court

Commissioner Saldana asked about the bee calls. Chief Campos stated that the Fire Department does respond to bee calls but if they are inside a structure they recommend an exterminator. Mr. Ramirez stated the count for the weedy lots are the calls that come in. Ms. Perez stated that the City is currently on budget. Mr. Hernandez stated animal control has picked up about 100 dogs. Loose dogs need to be reported. Mayor Montoya stated sales tax is doing well.

Mayor Montoya called the meeting to executive session at 8:00 P.M.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberation regarding Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.087 (Economic Development)*

a. Discussion regarding Project V – Section 551.087 Texas Gov’t Code Annotated – Economic Development.

b. Consultation with Attorney regarding Police Department Building – Section 551.071

c. Consultation with Attorney regarding contract renewals – Section 551.071

d. Discussion regarding city business development projects – Section 551.087

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 10:05 P.M.

13. OPEN SESSION: *Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding*

a. Item A listed in executive session

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to proceed as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Item B listed in executive session

Commissioner Howell motion to approve the updated amount as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Item C listed in executive session

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to proceed as discussed in executive. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Item D listed in executive session

No action was taken.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Saldana motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:07 P.M.