

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 16, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.  
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Oscar D. Montoya Sr.	Mayor
	Dr. Ruben Saldana	Mayor Pro-Tem
	Armando Garcia	Commissioner
	Joe Martinez	Commissioner
	Dr. Jacob Howell	Commissioner
<b>STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Martie Garcia-Vela	City Attorney
	Joselynn Castillo	City Secretary
	Javier Ramirez	Asst. City Manager
	Nereida Perez	Finance Director
	Marisol Vidales	Library Director
	David Jimenez	I.T Manager
	Reynaldo Alegria	Public Works Director

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Montoya welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

Four members of the Commission were present which constitutes a quorum. Commissioner Howell arrived during the pledge of allegiance.

**3. INVOCATION**

Commissioner Martinez said the invocation.

**4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Garcia led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5. OPEN FORUM-** There were no comments during open forum.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. **Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held September 5, 2023 & January 4, 2024.**
- b. **Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2024-01 regarding elections and political signs (Electioneering)**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve item A and forgo the reading for item B.

Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**7. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

- a. **Update on 10<sup>th</sup> Street Repairs – Mr. Ramirez**

Mr. Ramirez stated they set a tentative date for April to begin work on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The City will need to relocate 2300 FT of 12” water line. The city will purchase the material and the County will provide the labor for the reconstruction of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The funding is from the Urban County Program. The waterline will need to be replaced with PVC pipe. The waterline relocate will be done in-house. The cost of material for paving is just over \$200K and the waterline portion for material is \$160K. At a question, Mr. Ramirez stated they could report in the near future on potholes. No further questions.

- b. **Presentation of MHM Grant Information**

Ms. Vidales informed the commission of the grant received from Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc in the amount of \$222,645 to be allocated over three years. The grant will pay for one full time employee. They will be doing outreach and create classes based on the survey done during the outreach. The classes are to assist people in learning how to use computers. Ms. Vidales stated they do bilingual classes and any age can sign up for the classes. Ms. Vidales recognized her staff that assisted with the grant application: Ms. Michelle Muniz, Mr. Anthony Cardenas, and Tristan Garza.

**8. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **First Reading of Ordinance 2024-02 repealing ordinance 2010-08 Mercedes Historic Preservation Landmark Ordinance & Mercedes Historic Preservation Commission**

Ms. Vidales stated that Historical Board Member Mr. Gabriel Ozuna wrote the new ordinance. The new ordinance has more clear definitions, increased the number of required meetings, provided a more detailed list of duties and powers, added a section for a preservation plan and survey, and criteria and procedure for removing a historic designation. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**9. MANAGEMENT ITEMS:**

a. **Approval of travel reimbursement for Mercedes Historic Preservation Commission member**

Ms. Vidales informed the Commission about Mr. Ozuna, the Historian for the MHPC, will be attending the Texas Historical Commission Real Places Conference in Austin from April 3 to 5. Texas Tropical Trails sponsored his registration but he would like to attend the preconference called Empowering Local Preservation. The total fee is \$79. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. **Reinstating members to the Mercedes Historic Preservation Commission**

Ms. Vidales stated that since Ordinance 2024-02 was approved, the Commission would need to reinstate the members. Gabriel Ozuna (Historian), Tracy White (Real-Estate Broker), Jodie Oliver Martinez (Historical Property Owner), Donna Otto (Archeologist) will serve 3 year terms set to expire December 31, 2027. Ms. Vidales recommended appointing Pedro Ayala (Architect), Lorri Marchant (Founding Member) both serving a 2 year term set to expire December 31, 2026. Only the Attorney seat will be vacant. Commissioner Martinez motioned to reinstate the members and appoint the members recommended. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**10. DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS:**

City Secretary/HR, Rec, Finance, Library, PW, Planning, Fire

Mr. Alegria informed the Commission about the purchase of a new vehicle, the Trenchbox, street sweeper, Pothole Patcher, the press box at the little league fields, the RC mower for Orange St. ditch, and stated the piles of milling at collier park have been removed. Mr. Bobby Gonzalez stated they have a 30 minute turn around time with any issues, stated they have not had any power outages and added that the lift stations are no longer in violation.

Commissioner Howell motioned to go into executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**11. 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 with City Manager regarding personnel matters – Section 551.074
- b. Consultation with Attorney regarding update on litigation – Section 551.071
- c. Consultation with Attorney regarding contracts – Section 551.071

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 8:59 p.m.

**12. OPEN SESSION:**

- a. **Item A from Executive Session**  
No action was taken on this item.
- b. **Item B from Executive Session**  
No action was taken on this item.
- c. **Item C from Executive Session**  
No action was taken on this item.

**13. Adjournment**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.