



**MAYOR'S ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021

The following represents the agenda items that were discussed during the regular meeting on May 27, 2021 at 9 a.m. in the Basement Conference Room at City Hall, Abilene, Texas.

Members present were Mandy Schuman, Cindy Frazier, Katherine Beeman, JR Cochran, Steve Davis, and Ian Nickerson, Chair. Absent was Jeff Ronquillo.

City Staff present were Mayor Anthony Williams, Mr. Michael Rice, Mr. Mike Warrix, Ms. Cheryl Sawyers, and Ms. Melissa Farr (Recording.)

Also in attendance were Mr. George Levesque and Mr. Tim Smith.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Nickerson called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

MINUTES

Mr. Cochran moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on May 13, 2021. Ms. Schuman seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

AYES: Schuman, Frazier, Beeman, Cochran, Davis, Nickerson

NAYS: None

AGENDA ITEMS

Study and Review Options to Create a Downtown Entertainment and Cultural District

This item was not specifically addressed. Two representatives were present to participate in a question and answer session, which encompassed this topic.

Address Land Development Regulations that Limit or Prohibit Private Developers' Efforts to Revitalize the District

This item was not specifically addressed. Two representatives were present to participate in a question and answer session, which encompassed this topic.

Discussion and Possible Action on Land Development Use and Regulations with Representatives from Local Businesses and Venues

Mr. Tim Smith was invited to share his experience as a business owner in the SoDA District. He is self-employed as the owner of the SoDA District Courtyard and commercial real estate developer.

Mr. Smith's goal is to link the north and south sides of Downtown Abilene to form one downtown district. When asked for his opinion and experience in serving alcohol, he expressed respect for "well-trained bartenders." He was receptive to the idea of possible time restrictions for open containers. He also agreed with the idea of designated tumblers for beer and wine in an effort to prevent an increase of solid waste. Mr. Smith stated his experience has proven that local restrictions have prevented our community from benefitting great economic impact and meeting criteria of specific restaurants.

Mr. George Levesque, Executive Director of the Paramount Theatre, was also invited to participate in the meeting. He expressed the need for additional restaurants has been acknowledged by business leaders since 1983. Currently, a more affluent crowd of business owners and their families are frequenting the downtown area. He now sees a constant flow of traffic and new possibilities.

Mr. Levesque also shared that the Paramount had applied for a license to sell beer and wine before the COVID pandemic began. It was put on hold due to the pandemic.

Overall, excitement of similarity with Fredericksburg, Texas became evident from both Mr. Levesque and Mr. Smith, as they encourage business growth and opportunities along with a playground and dog park in the downtown district.

Mr. Nickerson moved to **adopt** the concept of creating and establishing the boundaries of an Entertainment and Cultural District and pursue with details being later defined as the Task Force moves forward. Ms. Schuman seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

AYES: Schuman, Frazier, Beeman, Cochran, Davis, Nickerson

NAYS: None

Future Agenda Items

Members requested to hear from the Abilene Police Department, possibly the youth division, and a representative from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC.) Ms. Schuman is willing to share a presentation for new TABC regulations, which belongs to the TABC. Ms. Beeman will also share research in regards to creating a specialized district. They are also interested in hearing the challenges and success stories of other communities with these districts, as well as additional developers in the Downtown Abilene area.

Discuss Future Meeting Dates

Members would like to hold the next meeting on Thursday, June 10th at 4 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cochran moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Frazier seconded the motion. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.



Ian Nickerson (Chair)