



MAYOR'S ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURAL DISTRICT TASK FORCE July 8, 2021
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The following represents the agenda items that were discussed during the regular meeting on Thursday, July 8th at 2 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room at City Hall, Abilene, Texas.

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

City Staff present were Mr. Michael Rice, Mr. Tim Littlejohn, Ms. Kelley Messer, and Ms. Cheryl Sawyers.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Nickerson called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. Schuman moved to **approve** the minutes from the previous meeting held on June 10, 2021. Ms. Beeman seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

AYES: Schuman, Frazier, Beeman, Davis, Nickerson

NAYS: None

AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Study and Review Options to Create a Downtown Entertainment District
 1. Parks Discussion: Richard Rogers, Assistant Director of Community Services
Mr. Rogers used Evermann Park as an example of a kid-friendly park, although it does not have a playground. It would be presented to Council to remove Evermann and

Minter Parks from the current ordinance. Presently, no one may enter these parks with alcoholic beverages. Additionally, City of Abilene parks are "Smoke Free" areas.

Park hours are 5:30 a.m. to Midnight. Enforcement may become an issue. There are many photographic opportunities and events that take place at Evermann Park, although they do not take reservations.

Mr. Rice reminded that Storybook Gardens is not a park. There will be a greenspace available for outside dining, etc. when the hotel develops.

Mr. Rogers said there is a Parks and Recreation Board, with seven members who strive to provide for and improve park facilities, open spaces, etc.

When asked about the status of trash in parks, he said trash receptacles are normally checked three times a week. He does not foresee alcohol consumption as a great increase in trash for the Downtown area.

Ms. Schuman shared her concern of creating different ordinances for different parks would make it confusing to the public. Discussion took place in response to this topic with members acknowledging the importance of educating the public with signage and other means.

Mr. Rice reminded Chairman Nickerson that it is within the group's purview to recommend not allowing glass as container. He stated the possibility of a Public Improvement District managed by the City and paid by the public improvement tax. They would maintain park benches, pedestrian lighting, etc.

b. Address Land Development Regulations That Limit or Prohibit Private Developer's Efforts to Revitalize the District

1. Update on Homeless Population and TABC Clarification

Ms. Cheryl Sawyers updated everyone to inform about the homeless population. She serves on the West Texas Homeless Network Board. WTHN is recognized by the state and nation for good management and cohabitation, and work with approximately thirty partners. Abilene Hope Haven is one of the partners, and are currently working with ten individuals in the Downtown area.

She explained the difference between those who are homeless in the area and those known as opportunistic panhandlers. The panhandlers are not homeless. We do not currently have an ordinance that addresses panhandling, but we do have one that addresses traffic concerns in regards to safety at intersections.

Ms. Sawyers closed by saying we know of no criminal records for our currently homeless populations, other than sleeping where they are not supposed to be staying overnight.

She moved on to TABC clarification. They were apologetic, and said the Wine and Beer Retailer's Permit (BG) is an option. The permit authorizes a seller to sell beer, malt liquor, ale and wine on or off the premises. Alcohol beverages to go cannot be transported in clear, plastic cups. The cup must be clearly marked in some way.

- c. Discussion and Possible Recommendation on Land Development Use and Regulations
Uses within different zoning districts were discussed when the word "Entertainment" was defined. Ms. Sawyers offered to share a PowerPoint, which will show the different uses permitted by right in Central Business (CB), General Commercial (GC), Heavy Commercial (HC), Light Industrial (LI), and Heavy Industrial (HI).

Mr. Rice asked the members what they would like to see in the Entertainment District. Which types of businesses would support their ideas?

Some responses were live outdoor venues/concert areas, small businesses, special events for families and adults (not specific to a targeted age or group), areas for multipurpose uses. The desire for people to shop, eat, and stay in the area was evident.

Future Agenda Items

Chairman Nickerson asked if the group wanted to further discuss art requirements. Ms. Sawyers shared that Ms. Lynn Barnett, Executive Director of the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council, has agreed to attend a meeting and answer any questions.

A discussion and possible motion for geographical boundaries for the Entertainment and Cultural District.

Central Business uses will be discussed. HI, LI, HC are also prominent zoning districts in the Downtown area. Members should identify which zoning districts they want and do not want within the Entertainment and Cultural District.

Discuss Future Meeting Dates

Members would like to hold the next meeting on Thursday, July 29, 2021 at 10 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Frazier moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schuman seconded the motion. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.



Ian Nickerson (Chair)