

**SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Thursday, May 22, 2003**  
**5:30 P.M.**

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS**  
**Sears Recreation Center Senior Activity Room**  
**2250 Ambler Avenue**

The City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, met for a Special Called Council Meeting on May 22, 2003 at 5:30 p.m. in the Sears Recreation Center Senior Activity Room, 2250 Ambler Avenue. Mayor Grady Barr was present and presiding with Councilmen Norm Archibald, Kris Southward, Anthony Williams, John Hill, and Councilwoman Kay Alexander. Also present were City Manager Larry Gilley, City Attorney Sharon Hicks, Acting City Secretary Debbie Hurley, and various members of City staff. Councilman Jimmy McNeil was absent.

Councilman Kris Southward gave the invocation.

Mayor Barr welcomed those in attendance, stating the council is looking forward to the presentations, and to citizen participation through public comments following those presentations. Mayor Barr further stated in order to effectively and efficiently move through the agenda, the comment period has been set for three minutes per person and all comments need to be related to the topic presented. Mayor Barr noted all items on the agenda are for discussion only and no council action will be taken.

2.1 City Manager Larry Gilley gave a brief history on the Wadley-Donovan Group Study, stating the main focus of the study is geared toward the creation of jobs in the City of Abilene. Mr. Gilley then introduced Lisa Hughes, Interim Director of Economic Development, who gave a presentation on job creation issues addressed in the Wadley-Donovan economic development study. Ms. Hughes stated in March 2003 the Wadley-Donovan Group Study was completed and accepted by the Development Corporation of Abilene (DCOA). The study encompassed the following:

- ✓ Workforce assessment
- ✓ Curriculum needs (K-12 and higher education)
- ✓ Traditional & community infrastructure
- ✓ Technology infrastructure
- ✓ Targeted industries and marketing blueprint

Ms. Hughes stated from this, the DCOA will formulate a new plan for economic development that will include both short-term and long term goals. Ms. Hughes then reviewed the following:

- Current and Past Targeted Industry
- Recommended Additional Targeted Industry
- Expectations for New Economy Workforce
- Technology Industry Options

Ms. Hughes concluded by stating implementation of the Wadley-Donovan Study will be carried out through the DCOA appointment of three subcommittees to fully review the study and make recommendations to the DCOA to develop an overall plan including short, mid, and long-term goals focusing on; Program and Marketing, Technology and Infrastructure, and Workforce and Education; with an estimated time frame of eight months for completion of the review.

Comments, discussion, and questions among Council and staff included: 1) the need to have high-speed internet available to everyone; 2) workforce education and the need for local universities to expand beyond liberal arts to include more technology curriculum; 3) options for non-college bound students; and 4) ways to create a climate for technology businesses.

Mayor Barr opened the floor for public comment, and the following individuals spoke:

- Mike Armstrong, 1766 Briarwood, stated Southwestern Bell is laying off people and the City needs to find a way to keep them here. Mr. Armstrong expressed concerns with transportation, road conditions, costs to employees from companies eliminating jobs, higher wages to maintain Abilene's workforce, and the need for DCOA to bring in businesses that will pay their employees more than \$6.00 per hour.
- Marcus Mullins, 1401 Cedar Crest, asked if the water park was being discussed?

Mayor Barr informed Mr. Mullins that the water park had been discussed at the morning's Regular Council meeting, and that this item pertains to economic development.

2.2 Mr. Gilley introduced Richard Gertson, Director of Community Development, who gave a presentation on Neighborhood revitalization strategies and the "super neighborhood" concept as follows:

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) include:

- Concentrated effort in a Targeted area
- Economic empowerment of residents
- Substantial revitalization within time limits
- Incentives

Mr. Gertson stated the Sears Neighborhood leadership is already engaged in working with staff, with assistance from the National Development Council in preparing the application to send to the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to create the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area. Mr. Gertson then reviewed the Super-neighborhood concept.

Comments and discussion included: 1) congratulations to Sears leadership for undertaking the program; 2) Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) figures being based on a percentage of the community household median income from census information; and 3) the importance of this project being neighborhood-driven with assistance

from City staff.

Mayor Barr opened the floor for public comment, and the following individuals spoke:

- Ovelia Campos, 1834 University Blvd., stated she has the privilege of serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission, Neighborhoods In Progress Organization, Sears Revitalization Committee, and Habitat for Humanity board. Ms. Campos stated a Habitat home has recently been completed on Burger Street and one is nearing completion on Shelton, and that one of Habitat for Humanity's goals is to eliminate substandard housing. Ms. Campos further stated her vision is to invite the leadership of other neighborhoods and excite them about working together to form their own plan.
- Petty Hunter, 725 Mesquite, asked staff how neighborhood revitalization ties in to the super-neighborhood, and is there any plan in place to connect Sears with some of that strategy. Mr. Hunter stated it is essential as neighborhoods are developed to look at the wide spectrum from housing to employment to support the neighborhood, and encouraged emphasis on resources connecting the people.
- Marcus Mullins, 1401 Cedar Crest, stated he used to work for Parks & Recreation, and encouraged Council to stay with the program.
- Mary Strahan, 5302 N. 9<sup>th</sup>, stated she was born in Abilene, has been in Houston for the last 15 years, and is now back home and happy to see the movement Abilene has taken.
- Billy Enriquez, 2049 Park Street, welcomed the Council to Sears Park, and commended them for starting to rebuild the area, which started in 1996 with resident meetings. Mr. Enriquez noted how great the park is now as a result of cooperation between residents and city staff. Mr. Enriquez stated his concerns include the need for larger lot sizes, and that he wants the neighborhood conducive to bringing the neighborhood together for the next 50 years.

2.3 Mr. Gilley introduced Richard Gertson, Director of Community Development, who gave a presentation on Community projects funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership programs which includes additional housing through Habitat for Humanity, and neighborhood cleanup through the Public Works Department, specifically the Refuse Division.

Mr. Gertson introduced Billy Enriquez, who asked Council to consider the Sears neighborhood in the area of community and business development. Mr. Enriquez then gave a history of the Abilene Child Centered Educational Support Services (ACCESS) learning center, which began as a dream of Joel Loya and now has received CDBG funding for programs such as: an after school program, anger management, conflict resolution, problem solving, summer

programs, partnering with adult education, parenting classes, and job search.

Council thanked Mr. Enriquez for his work in the community, and noted these efforts are grassroots at its best.

Councilman Archibald left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Barr opened the floor for public comment, and the following individuals spoke:

- Fal Falcioni, 1449 Westview, commended the Council and staff for their work in the neighborhood.
- Betty Alvarez stated she would like a new Senior Center with a kitchen like Rose Park, wants development to the north, questioned how people qualify for Habitat for Humanity, and stated housing rehabilitation is poor quality.

Councilman Hill left the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

- Mike Armstrong, 1766 Briarwood, stated he appreciates the evening meetings, and mentioned the need for 24-hour daycare.
- Marcus Mullins, 1401 Cedar Crest, commended the Council for the work they are doing.

Mayor Barr stated citizen involvement is essential in city government, and thanked all in attendance for their involvement through the excellent presentations and public comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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Jo Moore  
City Secretary

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Grady Barr  
Mayor