

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 26, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

The City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas met in Special Session on September 26, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 555 Walnut St. Mayor Weldon Hurt was present and presiding, along with Mayor Pro-tem Shane Price, Deputy Mayor Pro-tem Lynn Beard, and Councilmembers Blaise Regan, Brian Yates, Kyle McAlister, and Travis Craver. Also present were City Manager Robert Hanna, City Attorney Stanley Smith, and City Secretary Shawna Atkinson.

Councilmember Kyle McAlister delivered the invocation.

Julian Alkire, 5th grader at Bonham Elementary, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and State of Texas Flag.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Discussion: Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion and Public Hearing, and Provide Direction on the Cypress Street Improvement Project

Robert Hanna, City Manager, gave an overview of this item. Council has already approved the design guide and plan, but Councilmember Regan wanted to review the project and discuss other opportunities, so we've set this discussion to do that.

Mr. Hanna introduced Will Dugger with Jacob & Martin, who went over the design guide and plan in detail. He reviewed the history of the project, the project goals, objectives and special considerations, and the interactions with community and staff stakeholder meetings. The proposed plan will convert Cypress Street from a two-lane one-way street, to a two-lane two-way street. Stop lights will be eliminated and stop signs will be added. Angled parking will be eliminated and changed to parallel parking on both sides. This will reduce the number of parking spaces by 30. There are parking opportunities at the old Abilene Reporter News building in the works, as well as projects that can yield additional parking spaces on the north side. There will be LED lights added above the street that can be changed with the seasons. The alleyway next to Cypress Street Station will be closed off to vehicles and will become a walkable green space. Mid-block cross walks will be added throughout and a trench drain will go along the parallel parking for storm drainage. Shade was discussed as well as trees. Landscaping, furniture and artwork were discussed, as well as a sound system with amplifiers and speakers. Mr. Hanna wrapped up the presentation stating that we need to create quality of life developments like this to attract people to the downtown area, both to work and live.

Council discussed the project at length. Councilmember Regan had concerns that he had been approached about, including shade, lighting and parking. He would like to see shade structures added to the plan. He is also concerned that during this construction, we would be pushing people to park on other side streets, where there is not adequate lighting to make people feel safe, so he would like to see if we can add a plan to increase lighting in the side streets. The timeline of the project was discussed at length. The catenary lighting system was discussed, including concerns that the lighting might be in the way of the Fire Department during emergencies, but they would be able to be turned off and detached. The trees, including sap and acorns, were discussed. A few Councilmembers would like to see a plan for lighting the side streets, and a few would like to focus on that later on, in a separate phase. Parking will be addressed before the project commences.

Mayor Hurt opened the public hearing. The following spoke on their concerns for the project:

- Glen & Carol Dromgoole
- Laura Moore (did not speak, but submitted a card)
- Allison Carrol
- William Wolfe
- David Castleman
- Josh Radar

With no other speakers coming forward, the public hearing was closed.

Council discussed all of the above mentioned parts of the plan at further length.

This item was for discussion only. No votes or action were taken.

Councilmember McAlister left the meeting at 9:26 a.m., and Councilmember Craver left the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.



Shawna Atkinson
City Secretary



Weldon Hurt
Mayor

Minutes approved on: October 12, 2023

