



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

**THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2021**

The following represents the agenda items that were discussed during the first regular meeting on May 13, 2021 at 2 PM in the Basement Conference Room at City Hall, Abilene, Texas.

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

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

Councilmember Mr. Weldon Hurt was also in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his appreciation for volunteering time to serve. He stated the charge appointed to the task force. He asked members to keep an open mind and always listen to both sides as a means to promote the Downtown area. Everyone was encouraged to find ways to reinvest in Downtown Abilene and elevate the economy. Members were asked to consider the process and continue the legacy of advancing Downtown Abilene.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Discussion and Possible Action on Land Development Regulations**

Ms. Cheryl Sawyers provided a presentation to inform members of what an entertainment and cultural district is and its purpose. An entertainment and cultural district can be an ordinance or an overlay of an existing zoning district. The district is designed to protect and encourage the

creation and development of commercial recreation centered on arts, tourism, vacation, hospitality and entertainment.

Some examples provided to define terms of use are:

- Development standards (Setbacks, landscaping, parking)
- Lighting
- Walkability
- Green/Outdoor space
- Hours of operation
- Noise regulation
- Right-of-Way usage (Tables/chairs on sidewalks)
- Late hours permits
- Art requirement

Ms. Sawyers explained that the word "Cultural" was added to the District, as other communities have done the same thing because of cultural centers within the boundaries that include an art requirement. The title is better promoted in various venues' marketing efforts within the District.

Abilene currently has a cultural district, which is identified by landmarks. It is only within two blocks of Walnut Street and Hickory Street, and is not associated with land use. Ms. Sawyers also provided a map of the South Downtown Abilene (SoDA) District where there are food and beverages establishments, as well as beautiful murals.

Some pros and cons were provided for this specific land use purpose. Currently, special events require permits to modify the present land use criteria. Examples of pros and cons are:

#### Pros

Promoting small business  
Walkability  
Use of Downtown in off-setting hours  
Promotes tourism  
Creates identity and character

#### Cons

Perceived nuisances  
Increased solid waste  
Traffic/parking  
Potential for increase in public intoxication

A question and answer session followed for members to understand the future task. Members expressed interest in Staff obtaining information about the following topics:

- (1) How this might affect the homeless population
- (2) Would like to hear from business owners in Downtown/SoDA area on both sides of alcohol sales, as well as Abilene Downtown Association
- (3) Contact other cities that have these districts and inquire about how well it is working out for them

Members would like to hold the next meeting on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.



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Ian Nickerson (Chair)