

A Work Session of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie was held in the Hatchet Conference Room at the Charles Beatty Municipal Services Building, 408 S. Rogers, Waxahachie, Texas, on Monday, December 9, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Billie Wallace, Mayor, Council Member Place 4
Chris Wright, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member Place 3
Patrick Souter, Council Member Place 2
Tres Atkins, Council Member Place 1
Travis Smith, Council Member Place 5

Others Present: Michael Scott, City Manager
Albert Lawrence, Deputy City Manager
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace called the meeting to order.

2. Discuss the mission and vision statement of the WCDC

The Waxahachie City Council discussed the mission and vision of the Waxahachie Community Development Corporation (WCDC).

Council Member Travis Smith proposed shifting the focus of the WCDC from the Sports Complex and Civic Center to initiatives that enhance the quality of life, boost sales tax revenue, and stimulate local economic growth. Council Members engaged in a discussion about supporting economic development efforts that would reinvest funds back into the WCDC.

Council Member Tres Atkins expressed his support for using funds to improve existing infrastructure, emphasizing the need for the Council to prioritize where to allocate these resources. He suggested directing funding toward infrastructure enhancements that would positively impact key community destinations.

Council Member Patrick Souter supported the idea of using funding to revitalize Downtown, even if through smaller-scale projects. He stressed the importance of maintaining flexibility for the WCDC, allowing them to make recommendations to the City Council based on their own evaluations. He expressed his trust in the WCDC's ability to make strategic decisions and underscored his commitment to supporting economic development initiatives. He also recommended considering long-term strategic planning to identify future opportunities across the city.

Council Member Smith further suggested shifting the WCDC's focus from prioritizing beautification to adopting a more business-minded approach, a sentiment that was supported by Council Members Souter, Atkins, and Mayor Wallace.

Mayor Pro Tem Chris Wright proposed a balanced approach, suggesting some funding be allocated toward beautification and arts initiatives, while still supporting economic development.

WCDC President Jim Phillips agreed with the idea of long-term strategic planning and highlighted that the WCDC's directive includes beautification and improving the community's quality of life.

The City Council reached a general consensus to support economic development initiatives that will reinvest funds into the WCDC, aiming to foster both growth and community improvement.

3. Discuss City purchasing policy

Council Member Smith raised concerns about awarding contracts to out-of-town businesses and suggested exploring ways to better inform local businesses about bidding opportunities.

Senior Finance Director Chad Tustison explained that any business can sign up on OpenGov to receive notifications about available bids.

Council Members discussed various methods to ensure new businesses are aware of the OpenGov registration process. Suggestions included informing businesses when they receive a Certificate of Occupancy, sign up for water service, or join the Chamber of Commerce.

Council Member Smith inquired if local vendors are given a 5% contingency during the bidding process. Mr. Tustison confirmed this is the case but clarified that it does not apply to "best value" proposals. Purchasing Manager Jewelie Ramos further explained that this contingency also does not apply to construction contracts exceeding \$100,000.

Deputy City Manager Albert Lawrence added that this factor can be incorporated when reviewing vendor criteria. City Manager Michael Scott noted staff currently utilizes local vendors, when possible.

The City Council reached a general consensus to prioritize the use of local businesses whenever possible, while ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

4. Discuss short-term rental ordinance

Senior Director of Planning Jennifer Pruitt presented a saturation map showing the locations of approved and registered short-term rentals.

Council Member Atkins emphasized the importance of proactively addressing issues related to density and oversaturation.

Mayor Wallace asked City Council and staff to review the current Ordinance and identify any areas that may require updates. Council Member Smith highlighted a concern raised by a property owner regarding the requirement to display their name and phone number near the entrance, noting that this could potentially expose the property to burglary or vandalism by signaling that the house is not occupied 24/7.

Council Members discussed the original intent of the emergency contact posting, which is to ensure that neighbors or the Police Department can reach the property's emergency contact if needed.

Mr. Scott mentioned that new state legislation could impact the City's current Ordinance and recommended waiting for further guidance from the State. He also noted that the City Council can address issues of density through the Specific Use Permit process.

The City Council reached a consensus to revisit the Ordinance after the passage of any new legislation in 2025.

5. Discuss Multi-Family density

Council Member Smith inquired whether the current zoning requires retail on the ground floor of multi-family developments.

Ms. Pruitt explained that when approached with multi-family projects, staff first shows developers the currently approved locations with the appropriate zoning. She clarified that while retail is not a requirement, they emphasize the importance of creating unique multi-family projects that enhance the quality of life for residents in those areas.

Council Member Smith discussed the height of multi-family buildings, stating he has no strong preference, except to restrict height in the Downtown area. He asked for the City Council's opinion on allowing staff to approve higher density in certain areas.

The City Council reached a consensus to grant staff the flexibility to approve higher density in specific areas.

6. Discuss Boards and Commissions vacancies

Council Members discussed the vacancies on the Animal Care Advisory Committee, Senior Center Advisory Committee, and Waxahachie Community Development Corporation and reviewed current applications.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary