



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 14, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Meritta Kennedy

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

Michael Shugart, Sr.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABSENT:

Brent Dearing

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Theresa Van Meter

Simmie Gibson

OTHERS PRESENT:

Gail Langton
Jim Wimberley
Richard Jones

Jane Branch
Omar Figueroa
Matthew Frederick

Mark Cook
Dan Brack

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation followed by the mayor leading the Pledges of Allegiance to both the United States and Texas flags.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the March 10, 2025 Council Meeting – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to accept the minutes as presented. Her motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Staff Reports

Police Department – Matthew Frederick

Lieutenant Frederick gave the following statistics for the month of March, 2025:

- Traffic contacts: 283
- Crashes reported: 5
- Arrests: 50
- Reports: 30
- Calls for service: 459
- Miles driven: 12,796

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 46
Violations filed w/Court: 1

WOVFD – Simmie Gibson

Asst. Chief Gibson reported the following activities for the month of March, 2025:

Alarm system calls - 1
Brush and/or Grass fires – 6
Rubbish fires - 1
Smoke removal - 1
Medical assists – 1
Natural gas leak – 2
Electrical problems – 1
Power Line down - 1
Auto accidents – 3

"Good intent" calls – 1
Service calls - 1

Regular Session

Discussion and Possible Action on a request submitted by Mr. Mark Cook for a variance to Ordinance No. 358-A as it pertains to the number of permitted RV parks allowed within the City – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to discuss Mr. Cook's request. Council Member Shugart seconded her motion. Mr. Brack informed Council that this particular piece of property was designated as a trailer park over twenty years ago. He added that the pads are still there. He stated that, as a partner in Danny's Food Center, he looks forward to the additional business that an RV park in this location would bring. He added that he would appreciate any consideration that Council would give to this variance request. A letter of support from Mr. Brack's brother, Darwin Brack, was then presented to the mayor, who read the letter aloud. Mr. Brack's letter expressed his support of the project, as well.

Council Member Brown asked Mr. Cook if he had brought any renderings or plans that Council could review. She also asked him if his plans were still to sell the property to someone else. He responded that they "are going to try to facilitate that through an LLC partnership."

Council Member Shugart asked Mr. Cook if he wanted to get the variance and then sell the land to someone else. Mr. Cook responded "yes sir."

Council Member Brown expressed her concern should Mr. Cook sell the property after receiving a variance. Council cannot transfer a permit. She added that she does not feel that she has enough information to make an informed decision on this matter.

Mr. Figueroa then addressed Council, stating that he did not yet have any renderings of his plans for the property. He wanted to "get this process going first." Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy asked Mr. Figueroa if he currently owned any property in West Orange. He responded that he did not, but that he does own a business in Bridge City. Mayor Branch then provided a copy of Ordinance No. 358-A to Mr. Figueroa.

Mr. Wimberley asked if Council would prefer to table this item until they can put together at least a footprint or layout of what they are planning. They all answered that they would.

Council Member Brown then amended her original motion to move that this item be tabled until the next meeting. Council Member Shugart then amended his second to the original motion to second the amended motion. Mayor Branch then called for a vote on the amended motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on the following residential tax exemptions for tax year 2025 - Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion to keep all property exemptions the same as those approved last year:

- Homestead – 20%
- 65 or older - \$17,000
- Disabled - \$17,000

Council Member Brown seconded her motion. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the January – March, 2025 Quarterly Investment Report – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to approve the January – March, 2025 Quarterly Investment Report. This motion received a second from Council Member Shugart. With the being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following dates:

- All non-emergency departments of the City closed on Friday, April 18 and Monday, April 21, 2025 in observance of Good Friday and Easter holidays
- Next Council meeting –Thursday, May 8, 2025 – 5:00 p.m. (*Special Session*)

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

RR Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

