

# DRAFT

## MINUTES THE MAIN STREET COMMITTEE REGULAR SESSION September 15, 2021

A Regular Meeting was held by the Main Street Committee of the City of Schertz, Texas, on September 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Hal Baldwin Municipal Complex Council Chambers Conference Room, 1400 Schertz Parkway, Building #4, Schertz, Texas. The following members present to-wit:

**Present:** Chair & Councilmember Mark Davis  
Mayor Ralph Gutierrez  
Councilmember Allison Heyward

**Absent:** Councilmember Tim Brown

**City Staff:** Brian James, Assistant City Manager; Sheila Edmondson, Deputy City Secretary

**Attendees:** Pam Wissmann, David Wissmann, Maggie Titterington, Judith Williams, Dean Weirtz, Jill Whittaker, Nick Marquez, Judy Goldick, Jeannine Graham

### **Call to order**

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

### **Hearing of Residents**

This time is set aside for any person who wishes to address the Committee. Each person should fill out the speaker's register prior to the meeting. Presentations should be limited to no more than 3 minutes.

Any person making personal, impertinent, or slanderous remarks while addressing the Committee may be requested to leave the meeting.

Discussion by the Committee of any item not on the agenda shall be limited to statements of specific factual information given in response to any inquiry, a recitation of existing policy in response to an inquiry, and/or a proposal to place the item on a future agenda. The presiding officer, during the Hearing of Residents portion of the agenda, will call on those persons who have signed up to speak in the order

they have registered.

No one to speak.

## Discussion and/or Action Items

1. **Minutes** - Consideration and/or action regarding the approval of the minutes of the June 16, 2021 meeting.

Moved by Councilmember Allison Heyward, seconded by Mayor Ralph Gutierrez

AYE: Chair & Councilmember Mark Davis

Mayor Ralph Gutierrez

Councilmember Allison Heyward

Passed

2. **Roadway Improvements** - Scope of Services - Discussion and update regarding Roadway Improvements.

Chair Davis recognized Assistant City Manager Brian James who stated that City Council on September 7, 2021, approved the task order of scope of services by Kimley Horn who is doing the design work for the city. The scope of services include: street improvements, bumpouts, any sidewalk connection, ADA ramps, landscaping, benches, entry-way monuments, lighting, underground utilities and the wayfinding entryways.

Kimley Horn would like to meet with the Main Street Committee group, so they understand their vision. Ideally, a meeting around October 20, 2021, so it does not interfere with our next regular meeting. The meeting would be more of a round-table discussion, so Kimley Horn could go over some design ideas and graphics to make sure that is what we want, before moving forward. Please check your schedules and see if that is a good date. Once a date is set, we will post it.

One of their suggestions is to not modify the parking lot and putting up signs before they get the survey, so they don't mess them up or the sculptures in for the same reason. They said we could do some fencing, but reminded us they would be surveying some of that area as well. Staff is doing some design work on the side streets that we talked about and that is continuing as a separate project.

Kimley Horn suggested that we have some early conversations on where our vision of Main Street is. They have been keeping track of the meetings, and we need to give them some direction on some of the physical improvements.

Chair Davis suggested that before the October 20, 2021 meeting, Staff and the Committee meet, so they can go back and review the sector plan which was where all these plans came from. Looking at the concepts that were presented there, he would like somewhat of a unified concept and agreements before we meet with Kimley Horn.

Mr. James agreed he would notify Kimley Horn and set up a meeting with the Main Street Committee members.

Mr. James stated what staff reviewed with the consultants is what we want to incorporate Schertz History and Heritage on Main Street. The design element needs to be built around that and not have anything too modern or abstract. We want to tie into that history with signage and information. We want to create that destination with local and independent businesses. As much as we would like a Cracker Barrel, we don't want it on Main St. We want unique businesses that you can go to and cannot go anywhere else for. It is intended to be a unique area, in part to have Main Street compete considering its location vs. a typical strip center. We want to encourage the use of the existing buildings as much as possible, they are part of our history, and it would be difficult to build new stuff moving forward. Create a unique and unified identity through gateways and street scape elements. Kimley Horn will talk about how to get people off of IH-35 and entryways off of FM 1518. That is the challenge.

We need the framework to activate civic spaces anchoring successful business and open spaces. We have parkland, but it is down past Curtiss Street farther down the road. Our layout is not a traditional town square type of layout, where it would be a typical place to activate these ideas. Kimely Horn just wanted to make sure we are all on the same page moving forward and emphasis on preserving Schertz's history and small town feel on Main Street.

Mr. James continued and stated the proposed idea of a Farmer's Market or Street Market before, is what we have now. We have evaluated the use standards that will make it easier to develop. The gateway plan mentioned a food truck, and last night at City Council, they approved a zoning for a Food Truck Court that is coming in to Main Street. The struggle we are having is, what is Main Street looking like? What are the businesses, what is the mix intended to be, and how does it progress? We are not going to get everything at once, businesses will come in overtime. What are some of the negatives that come with this vision? It is change, and sometime change is tough. With more people down there, more traffic will arise and more noise. These are the changes and vision that we have described to the consultant. This is not a program to bring back residential uses to Main Street.

Councilmember Heyward stated that we need to be aware that our Main Street will not look like New Braunfels or Boerne. It is going to be a different and unique Main Street.

Chair Davis asked for our Committee Meeting coming up, could they include some folks from the Schertz Historical Preservation Committee? This will ensure that we are in sync with the historical perspective the committee is thinking and then ultimately going forward to City Council.

Chair Davis opened the floor to the audience.

Dean Weirtz- 4301 Monument Pass - Vice Chair of The Historical Preservation Committee asked was the idea to assist in landscaping of the old historic hospital building, and if it is, what is that going to do to all the other residents, saying we are delving into private property enhancement. If the city steps in, would it adversely affect the rest of the residents?

Mr. James explained we are still pursuing that idea, because we do not have any active open civic space. The old hospital sits farther back from the street, and it wouldn't just be the city going in and improving the property, they would provide us a lease agreement for the front of the property to enact as an active public open space. In turn, the city cleans up this area, which is inactive at the moment and give the city access to an active public open space. If another property approached the city and inquired about this lease, the city would look at it and see if

there was some benefit to the city as a trade-off of open public space.

Chair Davis recognized the following residents:

- David Wissman, 707 Main St-Mr. Wissman liked the idea of what Mr. James explained, but said the old hospital is in foreclosure. It might be challenging to get things going there.
- Mr. Weirtz stated that this was the first time he had heard that the old hospital was in foreclosure. He believes that property would make a beautiful historic museum.
- Maggie Titterington, 1730 Schertz Parkway- Ms. Titterington asked does Schertz have a plan, like the road improvements plan, that if older historic buildings came up for sale, does the city have funds and the ability to purchase and preserve them?

Mr. James explained the plan talks about the city acquiring parcels of land, as example the current parking lot downtown, and we are working to acquire another parcel for parking as well. The city does understand their role in participating in redevelopment with very selective acquisitions.

- Nick Marquez, Main Street- Mr. Marquez wanted to discuss if the road improvements include new curves, bumpouts, paving and lights. He stated that he believes we are going in the right direction. Mr. Marquez said the biggest thing needed down there is to emphasize everything we have down there with the new lights, underground lighting and bumpouts. It is going to bring more people to Main Street. He appreciates the long term plan and suggested that the code compliance officers come down and assist in improving the overall look of this area. In addition, Mr. Marquez wanted to say for the record that the old hospital building is very dangerous, and it needs to be looked at.

Chair Davis stated they will put an issue of code compliance on the next agenda.

Mayor Gutierrez had a question about the civic spaces and if we do sign lease agreements do they transfer if the property owners change? Mr. James explained the lease agreements do transfer from owner to owner. He also stated like the purchases, lease agreements would have to go to City Council for approval.

### **3. Art Installation - Discussion and update regarding Art Installation.**

Mr. James stated the city is holding off of the bronze sculptures until they get the surveying back to make sure it would not interfere with the underground utilities and then move forward. We are moving forward with the first City-wide Art Program with the fiberglass Shirt Program. They will be mounted at different heights and have 20 pieces total and disperse in different areas. The project announcement will emphasize focusing on the History of Schertz. The highest scoring and judging in that category, would be located on the public spaces on Main Street.

The Schertz Historic Preservation Committee, Main Street Committee and the Parks Board would be the judges in selecting the artwork for the city design pieces. We will also go out and contact businesses and if they purchase a sculpture, they could have it designed as they wish or use one of the designs that was not chosen for the city and work with that artist directly. If this is a good plan, we will take it to City Council on September 28, 2021. This art project is not a permanent project, the goal is to get people down to Main Street.

Chair Davis asked Mr. James if he can bring an update and the design images of the bronze sculptures to bring to the next meeting.

Ms. Maggie Titterington inquired about the small placards that commemorate the historical parts of Main Street. Something very simple, possibly a marker and then a sign explaining the history of that area. It should be a minimal cost, but very eye-catching and permanent. She offered that the Chamber could put a map together of points of interest. It would be another way of preserving Main Street. Mr. James explained that the designer has similar ideas for a project like that.

Mayor Gutierrez had a question on the update of the static airplane display. Mr. James replied he would bring that information back to the next meeting.

#### **4. Grant Program Standards and Development Restrictions - Discussion and possible action regarding the Grant Program.**

Mr. James stated what we talked about on the Main Street Grant Program was to modify the amount. Instead of \$20,000 for one year, go to \$40,000 (maximum) in a 5-year period and keep the same categories. The other idea is a new construction grant that is up to \$50,000, over 5 years, but it's a 1:4 match. It is just for the building, not for fixtures or signage. There was a change on the submittal procedures as well. If anytime you are making changes to the exterior, elevations have to be submitted and a color palette if you are going to change the exterior color. This allows the city to approve the paint color before the grant is paid.

Mayor Gutierrez stated we need some additional clarification on when the 5-year period starts on the grants.

Chair Davis asked beyond writing into the grant program that included, if the owner wanted to change the facade or color of their building, does the city have any other viable option to address property changes on Main Street?

Mr. James explained what they could do is impose by separate ordinance, an overlay zoning district with additional restrictions on elevations and changes. We cannot regulate the materials that are used in part of a building code, however we have some ability to create it under the guise of a historic district. There are some cities that regulate color if that is something the committee wanted to explore.

Mayor Gutierrez expressed concerns of regulating exterior colors, if the owner of that property is not asking for any grant money. He could see imposing that restriction if they do ask for funds.

Councilmember Heyward agreed with the Mayor. Another concern is that we know the direction we want Main Street to go. Restricting paint colors could also mean we are not getting the people/businesses who we want to be the start of where want to be in the next 10 years. She would not have a problem with paint color unless we saw some really crazy colors going up. She asked is this the direction we want to go with Main Street? I don't think the city wants to get into the business of telling people what colors to use. Chair Davis agreed if the city is providing grants to business owners, we do have a vested interest. Mr. James explained that this is an area that staff can watch and if there is a problem, we can revisit this.

Mr. Nick Marquez mentioned that on the grant, he likes the idea of restricting paint when they are receiving grant money. However, not controlling the building color will actually turn people away. He put all his efforts in 4 historic properties, and overnight lime green and yellow pops up. This does not go with the vision he believes there should be some city oversight on this topic. If crazy colors are going to be allowed, then possibly have them be a certain percentage of the

building.

**5. Next meeting Date** - Discussion regarding the next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2021.

The next scheduled meeting is November 16, 2021. There will be a special meeting with Kimley Horn on October 20, 2021, to discuss the design vision for Main Street.

Next meeting:

- Update on the bronze art
- Static airplane design
- Code enforcement
- Presentation from the staff regarding options for the city to consider incentives for specific types of businesses for Main Street.

**Adjournment**

Councilmember Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

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Davis

ATTEST:

Chair, Mark

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Sheila Edmondson, Deputy City Secretary