

CITY OF NATALIA

2078 State Hwy. 132 N. • P.O. Box 270 • Natalia, TX 78059-0270
(830) 663-2926 • Metro (830) 665-2206 • Fax (830) 663-3806

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2078 STATE HWY 132 NORTH, NATALIA, TEXAS 78059
21 FEBRUARY 2023 at 7.00 P.M.**

MINUTES

ROLL CALL: Mayor Samuel Bluemel – Present
Alderman Mike Fernandez – Present
Alderman Tommy Ortiz – Present

Mayor Pro-Tem Sam Smith – Present
Alderman Darin Frazier - Present
Alderman Selica Vera – Present

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Bluemel called the regular city council meeting to order at 7:00 pm; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance lead by Alderman Vera and Invocation by Mayor Bluemel.

2. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD: Laura Gallagher has concerns about item #10 on the agenda. Discuss/Consider placing playground equipment at the Ballpark grounds. Laura stated she had concerns about liability and insurance coverages with placing the equipment at the ballpark. Laura stated that the equipment was purchased for the park and when you give your word to people you need to stick to it, funds were spent and the community needs to be involved in a decision like this. Laura stated the park is a sore subject for a lot of people and she thinks it's wrong to place the equipment at the ballpark without the citizens of this town. Alicia Mora from South Texas Regional Health Services announced that the mobile unit will be parked on the NMDD property every third Tuesday of the month. The unit will offer medical testing, wellness exams, women's exams, breast exams, dental and more to low income community members.

3. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderman Vera reported there's been hotrod trucks in the carwash parking lot doing donuts on weekends between the hours of 6pm - midnight. Alderman Fernandez stated that he knows Medina County has been working to help the city with our dog issue but something major has to be done before something bad happens. He would also like to see the police schedule shifts adjusted. Alderman Fernandez reported the pot bellied pigs were loose over the weekend again and we need to do something about them running around town. He asked that Nikki send a copy of our city ordinance to Gilbert Rodriguez regarding animal control. Alderman Frazier agreed the loose dogs are a major issue and suggested we offer an incentive or hire an outside company to catch animals. He also stated that we need to order new traps. Alderman Smith stated that we need new traps and to post signs. Alderman Ortiz agreed with the previous comments about animal control. He stated we need to possibly increase fines because the dogs loose are a dangerous liability. Alderman Ortiz has concerns with school traffic and parked cars and other objects on road easements make it dangerous for kids walking to and from school. It also makes it hard for cars and buses to pass. He suggested in the future the council should consider making 7th Street to Highway 132 a no parking on right of way. He stated basketball goals also cause difficulties.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

All of the following items are considered to be routine by the City Council, there will be no separate discussion on these items and will be enacted with one motion; unless removed by any Council Member to discuss and consider separately by making such request prior to a motion and vote.

- a) Approval of the Minutes: 23 January 2023 Regular Meeting
- b) Approval of the Financial Activity Report: January 2023
- c) Approval of the Utility Department Activity Report: January 2023
- d) Approval of the Municipal Court Activity Report: January 2023
- e) Approval of the Police Department/Code Enforcement Activity Report: January 2023

Action: Alderman Fernandez made the motion approving the consent agenda, and Alderwoman Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- a) City Administrator/Secretary
 - i. Ruby Vera and Nikki have been working on the Community Funding Project request. Applications are expected to open early to mid-March.
 - ii. The El Paso Street survey was completed, and we are waiting for the final copy.
 - iii. A roll off container is available for residents to dump bulk/brush.
 - iv. Quarterly bulk/brush pick up will be March 13th-17th.
 - v. Bluebonnet Festival committee is asking for donations of soda and water. The parade and festival will be held on Saturday March 25th.
Amy gave an update on the festival. The entertainment is confirmed. There will be no carnival. Many carnivals went out of business during COVID, and the remaining ones are booked elsewhere. There will be a car show like last year. A large tent has been donated to offer shade on the grounds. Alderman Frazier asked what the average number of people that utilized the library per month are. Amy responded that currently it is about 40 people. Prior to COVID the number was higher, then the numbers dropped and are now rising again.
- b) Mayor
 - i. Mayor Bluemel attended the 2024 Eclipse meeting in Hondo and gave a brief report. He stated that an estimated two million people viewed the last total eclipse. Populations doubled in size. Our city needs to prepare for the eclipse. There will be an overflow of people. Mayor Bluemel suggested that we check if we will need additional insurance coverages for events. There is monies available through FEMA and USDA.
- c) NMDD – Ruby Vera reported a payment has been made on the property. The loan will now be eligible for early payoff if the NMDD board approves. The property would then revert to the city. Ruby would like to see the property paid off. At this point the principal had been paid off. The NMDD will be scheduling a meeting to decide whether to pay off the property. The NMDD will be hold an easter egg hunt in April. The planning process has been started for the second phase of landscaping.

DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF ACTION ITEMS:

- 6. Discuss/Consider acceptance of the Natalia Police Department 2022 Racial Profiling Report.
Action: Alderwoman Vera made a motion to approve the report, Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

- 7. Discuss/consider authorizing Interim City Administrator to approve repairs to the Natalia Little League Building. Nikki Bermea report that she completed a walk through as advised by the city council with Little League board president Jaime Gomez. Jamie submitted material costs to replace the window awnings, paint the building and replace the door jam and door in the upstairs exterior side entrance.

Alderman Smith made a motion to approve the authorize repairs, Alderwoman Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

8. Discuss/Consider purchasing and placing an electronic sign outside city hall. Mayor Bluemel stated that he contacted the City of Lytle for information about the sign that was purchased there and reported details and cost. Alderman Frazier reminded everyone that when the Multi-purpose Center is constructed a sign will likely be placed on the property. He suggested a smaller one-sided sign for city hall. Alderman Frazier stated that we need information on options and prices to consider before making a decision. Action: Alderman Frazier made a motion to table the item until we have further information and pricing; Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

9. Discuss/Consider an Ordinance Chapter 6 – Buildings and construction to establish definitions and regulations pertaining to industrialized buildings and housing; Repealing all ordinances to the extent they are in conflict; Providing for severability; and providing an effective date. Mayor Bluemel stated that this is the ordinance pertaining to portable buildings being placed in commercial zones. If a building is to be approved, it would have to be an industrialized building. Alderman Ortiz stated that this would correct the issue we had in the past with shed like portable buildings being placed in commercial areas. Alderman Fernandez stated that both Lytle and Devine have businesses selling sheds and portable buildings. Alderman Frazier stated that we have to be careful with strict regulations. Alderman Smith stated that the city attorney's office drafted this ordinance. Nikki explained that this was drafted after the need was discussed at a previous meeting to prevent shed like buildings being placed in commercial zones of the city. Alderwoman Vera stated that this issue came up when the MDD passed a portable building being placed on Highway 132. Nikki stated that once this ordinance is approved the Planning and Zoning ordinance will need to be revised to reflect changes. Ruby Vera stated that there is very limited commercial property in the city and if there are going to be any new businesses they need clear cut guidance on what is and isn't allowed within our city limits. Alderman Smith stated this is more strict than what we currently have. Alderman Frazier agreed and he feels we need more time to review the current ordinance and compare the changes before a decision is made. Alderman Vera and Alderman Fernandez agreed. Action: Alderman Fernandez made a motion to table the item, Alderman Frazier seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

10. Discuss/consider placing the playground equipment at the Ballpark grounds. Alderman Ortiz made a motion to place the playground equipment at the ballpark. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Alderman Fernandez stated the family gave the city the property for this park and in doing so it split the family up and he doesn't think it's right. He stated we all gave our word, and we need to stand by it. If we didn't put the equipment there it will appear to the public that we are abandoning the park. He also stated has concerns for liability issues and parents not watching their kids while on the equipment. Alderman Ortiz stated he understands however it's no different if the kids play on the equipment at the ballfields or at the park property the liability is the same. Alderman Frazier stated that the equipment needs to be put up. The equipment has been moved 3 or 4 times or lock it up at the park. Brenda Fernandez stated that the money was raised for the equipment to be placed at the park and it just needs to be installed at the park. Alderman Frazier asked how much money the park fund has. Nikki stated the fund has a little over \$12,000 and the park equipment was not installed because there was a discrepancy in the original survey and part of the basketball court was poured on the neighboring property. She we install the equipment now without proper fencing we risk the chance of someone going on the neighbors property and getting hurt causing a liability to the city. Alderman Fernandez stated a fence needs to be put up. Alderman Ortiz stated he does not see kids using the equipment at the park as much as they would use it if it was placed at the ballpark. He would rather see it used and right now there is a lot of problems and controversy about the park. He stated we better make sure the survey is correct because he feels it is not. Alderwoman Vera said a new survey needs to be done. Mayor Bluemel stated the money was raised for the equipment to be purchased for the park and by law it must go there. Alderman Ortiz stated again he feels the equipment will be used more at the ballpark. Alderman Smith what money was used to buy the equipment. Nikki reported it was bought

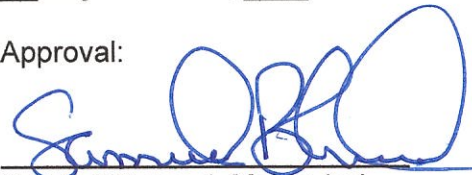
with the money raised from raffles, bake sales and sponsorships. Alderman Frazier asked what a survey costs is. Nikki reported approximately \$2,000 and she can order a new survey to be scheduled as soon as possible so a fence can be installed and the equipment can be installed. Alderman Smith stated he is still for installing it at the ballpark and has always felt that way for 10 or 15 years. Mayor Bluemel reminded the council he has a motion and a second, by a vote of 1-5; Motion failed.

11. Discuss/Consider the possibility of amending the No Parking on 3rd Street between FM 471 and Ross Mobile Home Park, making it for Handicap Parking only on the ballfield side of 3rd Street. Alderman Frazier stated there are no sidewalks or ramps currently there and that would need to be addressed before this could be considered. No action.

12. Adjournment. Alderwoman Vera motioned to adjourn at 8:47 pm, and Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

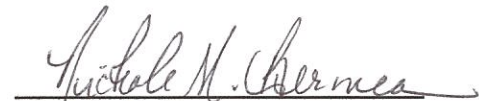
Passed and Approved this 20th day of March, 2023.

Approval:



Samuel Bluemel, Mayor /or/
Sam Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem

Attest:



Nichole M. Bermea
Interim City Administrator/Secretary

