

CITY OF CASTLE HILLS
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2008

The City Council of the City of Castle Hills convened at 5:00 p.m. on the 7th day of October, 2008, at the City of Castle Hills City Hall, 209 Lemonwood Drive, Castle Hills, Texas.

Mayor Harper called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

I. OPENING

QUORUM - Present and composing a quorum of the City Council were Mayor Marcy Harper, Douglas Gregory, Marcella Huff, Tom Davis, Bruce Smiley and Tim Howell.

Staff present was City Manager Mike Rietz, Assistant City Manager Rita Hoyl, City Secretary Linda Gill, and City Attorney Mike Brennan.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS – None

III. REPORTS – None

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 551.074 OF THE GOVERNMENT CODE, THE CITY COUNCIL WILL CONDUCT A CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES.

The council retired to Executive Session at 5:00 p.m.

The council reconvened into Open Session at 6:10 p.m. No action was taken.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION BY TREY BATCHELDER TO DISCUSS SEWER CONNECTION ALTERNATIVES.

Attorney Kathleen Hurren explained that the workshop was to provide information to the council concerning the septic systems on the property. She introduced her client Trey Batchelder, his family, and David Allen, who used to be the city engineer at the time that the sewer line on West Avenue was constructed. Ms. Hurren displayed an aerial map of the property that extends from West Avenue to Fox Hall Lane and pointed out the septic system locations on the property and the sewer main on West Avenue. She presented a survey and mentioned that there was also a video of the property. They would indicate the connections, the gradient, and the

septic systems that are on the property at present. Engineer David Allen said the size of the tract is about 4 1/2 acres, and the high side of the property is about 22 feet higher than Fox Hall Lane, which is on the back side of the parcel. He said there are six residences on the parcel.

Mr. Allen said there are different sanitary sewer systems. Most of the systems in the San Antonio area are gravity systems that flow from high to low. Contrary to that, he said there is a water system that is all under pressure. He explained that, in the case of a tract of land that lies 22 feet lower than the street, the only way to provide service by using the West Avenue main would be to put in lift stations or pumping stations. Mr. Allen handed out a schematic indicating what makes up a lift station. He explained how a lift station works and added that they are very expensive to install and to maintain.

Trey Batchelder showed the video of the property and the location of the septic systems in place. He pointed out the location of the septic tanks, some of which are very close to large oak trees (heritage trees). He said that putting in a sewer line on the property would disturb the root systems of the trees and destroy the mature landscaping.

Mr. Allen said that when West Avenue was redone in 1998 part of the city's responsibility was to replace the sewer mains. He said the deeper a sewer main is placed, the more residences it can handle. He said that the main was placed 6 or 7 feet deep and designed to serve the folks along West Avenue. It was never intended to serve a tract that spread all the way to Fox Hall Lane. If it had, the main would have had to be 30 feet deep, which is an uncommon depth for a public sewer main. Mr. Allen said that he met with the city at the time, and they looked at extending the sewer another 200 feet. He said that the ideal way to serve the Fox Hall Lane residences was to put a main closer to the railroad tracks or along Fox Hall Lane.

Mr. Allen said that in working with other cities over the last 25 years, he has found that their sewer ordinances are typically designed to avoid lift stations because the agencies who serve them consider lift stations temporary. They are not the ultimate solution, and cities or agencies like SAWS look for gravity solutions. He indicated that there were several ways to lay out a system like this; and to do it correctly, put in lift stations, and reroute the lines back to West Avenue, the cost would easily be in excess of \$400,000.00. He estimated that an individual resident with a half acre lot or a lot further down West Avenue, where sewage needs to be lifted, would spend close to \$20,000.00 for the lift stations, a forced main, the design, and the permits. Mr. Allen said figuring the cost is tricky. It depends if restoration of the street, the trees and landscaping, and walks and fences is planned. It is very expensive.

Ms. Hurren said SAWS did a recent study regarding installation of a sewer main on Fox Hall Lane. She showed the council a rendition of the properties affected. Mr. Batchelder said that 24 residences would be affected. If half

the residents agreed to hook up to the sewer, SAWS would put in the line. The cost would be about \$350,000.00. The homeowners would have to pay for lateral lines on their properties.

Mr. Allen said SAWS regulations do not require hooking up to the sewer as long as the septic system is working. If it breaks down, then SAWS has to make a judgment call. It probably would be decided by the health inspector as to the continued use of the septic system. Mr. Allen explained that he had studied other cities' ordinances and drafted an ordinance that he thought would be fair and protect both parties.

At the request of council members, Ms. Hurren said they would be provided with a copy of the SAWS study and maps indicating the elevations. The mayor asked about cut-off valves at the pump stations and the number of lift stations that would be needed. Mr. Allen said the lift stations do have cut-off valves, but there is no easy answer concerning the number needed for this project. He said that he would have to study it. The cost of maintenance was discussed, which could be as much as 10-12 thousand dollars a year after the first year. The first year would be under warranty. Discussion ended with council members retiring to Executive Session.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 551.071 OF THE GOVERNMENT CODE, THE CITY COUNCIL WILL CONDUCT A CLOSED MEETING TO CONSULT WITH THE CITY ATTORNEY CONCERNING PENDING LITIGATION – CASTLE HILLS v BATCHELDER.

City Council retired to closed session at 7:10 p.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

City Council reconvened in open session at 8:10 p.m., no action was taken, and the mayor adjourned the meeting.

These minutes were approved on the 14th day of October, 2008.

APPROVED:

Marcy Harper, Mayor

ATTEST:

Linda Gill, City Secretary