

City Council  
February 7, 2011

A Work Session of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie, Texas was held in the City Council Conference Room at City Hall, 401 S. Rogers, Waxahachie, Texas on Monday, February 7, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

Council Members Present: N.B. "Buck" Jordan, Mayor  
John Wray, Mayor Pro Tem  
Chuck Beatty, Councilman  
Kevin Strength, Councilman  
Mark Singleton, Councilman

Others Present: Paul Stevens, City Manager  
Michael Scott, Assistant City Manager  
Lori Saunders, City Secretary

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Mayor N.B. "Buck" Jordan called the meeting to order.

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City Manager Paul Stevens reported the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce put together an Economic Development Committee. Mrs. Debra Wakeland, President and CEO of the Chamber contacted Mr. Mike Ramsey and asked him to chair the committee.

Mr. Mike Ramsey, Chairman of the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee, reviewed the Committee's Mission Statement being "The Mission of the Economic Development Committee is to cooperate, communicate and originate strategies that support the growth and quality of life of the citizens and businesses of Waxahachie". Mr. Ramsey noted the purpose of this work session is to find out what the economic development priorities are from City Council and Staff. Mr. Ramsey noted the Committee members are: Doug Barnes, Carol Bush, Steve Chapman, Tom Collins, Jay Fox, Jeff Frazier, Paul Hernandez, Carol Nolte, Jim Pitts, Michael Scott, Ali Sharaf, Mark Singleton, Paul Stevens, Debra Wakeland, and Kevin Strength.

Mr. Ramsey referenced the city's 2001 Waxahachie C3 Master Plan and asked if that still guides our process and if so, is there need to update and/or revise it or should a Strategic Plan be prepared to focus on economic development in light of current realities. He noted there are consultants, some locally, that can provide a Strategic Plan. He asked for feedback on current priorities and noted funds from the State for Economic Development are not completely shut off and reported Mr. Jim Pitts is in a position to support the Committee and get us some funding. Mr. Ramsey asked if our current incentives for attracting new business and industries are competitive enough. He asked would it benefit us to consider the services of a large multi-national real estate firm to help market opportunities for businesses to relocate to Waxahachie.

Mayor Pro Tem John Wray suggested getting with TxDot to see what the City can ask legislature for and address the City's requests every two years when legislative is in session. He noted there have been talks in past months to find money for economic development and noted a strategic plan can guide on how to spend the money. Mayor Pro Tem Wray suggested outside assistance.

Mayor Buck Jordan noted the City needs to work on an incentive to bring industry and tax abatement is needed to attract industry. He suggested identifying the incentives that are currently in place and build from there. Mayor Jordan noted the number one incentive is free land and noted Midlothian and Ennis gives away land to attract industry.

Councilman Kevin Strength noted his goal for Waxahachie is to bring in higher paying jobs and make the IH35 Corridor more attractive to bring business into Waxahachie. He noted the facelifts on bridges on IH35 will be paid from state funds. Councilman Strength noted our biggest advertising needs to be concentrated on the IH35 corridor. He noted we should not label our community as blue collar.

Councilman Chuck Beatty noted we can advertise the quality of life and amenities Waxahachie has to offer. He noted we have proximity to the DFW area and need to look at what is holding us up.

Councilman Mark Singleton noted he and Mayor Pro Tem John Wray have been in meetings with a group of stakeholders and one finding is Waxahachie needs to move out of the retail community that came in for the sake of housetops to an employment based community. He noted Waxahachie is a blue collar community and there is nothing wrong with a blue collar community and explained that is where Citizens National Bank makes their money. Councilman Singleton noted location is critical and explained if you stratify this county, you basically have Midlothian, Waxahachie, and Ennis. He noted Midlothian has more money than Waxahachie and can not get traction and noted people would rather live in Midlothian and Waxahachie versus Ennis because they don't want to live in a 43% Hispanic community. Councilman Singleton expressed concern with hiring outside assistance and recommended to execute the Thoroughfare Plan that was written in 2001 noting everything in that plan is still true today. He noted because he and Mr. Ali Sharaf support the Governor, the Governor's office should be contacting the City's Economic Development Director Doug Barnes, every time something goes on and explained this is going to be the stuff that goes on in the background and the only reason you get things done is because you have a relationship with people.

City Manager Paul Stevens noted there are not many cities our size that have a Director of Economic Development. He explained Mr. Barnes is the only person in his office and does an outstanding job keeping in contact with the Governor's office working every angle he can and does a tremendous job. Mr. Stevens noted the local industries that have expanded is due to Mr. Barnes going out and talking to them and making them aware of the Texas Capital Fund and the Tax Abatement Program. Mr. Stevens noted one thing that gets us to the table is being located at IH35 and U.S. Highway 287. He explained sometimes that is enough and in other cases it is not enough. Mr. Stevens noted it is free land that we have not had in the past and noted feedback from businesses is they would like to be in Waxahachie, but need free land.

Economic Development Director, Doug Barnes, reported in 2000 we were industrial based and didn't have any quality of life issues. Citizens had to leave town to shop and the feedback was they wanted to shop here in Waxahachie. Mr. Barnes noted over the past ten (10) years approximately 200,000 people come into our community from a four (4) county area to shop. He noted we need to move forward with education and explained Navarro College is bringing in approximately 3,600 students into this community and the college has grown because people want to come. A third area is healthcare and we have an opportunity here to create something that has not been done in this community. Mr. Barnes noted we just expanded the airport runway and that is going to give us opportunity to bring aviation industry here. When due diligence was done it wasn't the roof tops of Waxahachie, it was the roof tops of this four (4) county area because of our transportation corridor of people in and out and that is why it works and we can still do that today and magnify on that and be just as successful or more successful than we even thought ourselves could be.

After further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**No action taken.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Saunders  
City Secretary