



News from the Helotes Heritage Association

Dear Readers,

Following is a letter from Jon Allan, Past Mayor of Helotes, calling attention to this week's Helotes City Council meeting. Please read his assessment. This week's meeting agenda has a number of alarming issues, from dissolving the Parks and Open Spaces Committee to diverting funds to pet projects to the way in which an open city government should be run. Please attend this meeting and make your voices heard. This is your community and you should have a say in how it is governed.

Sincerely,
Ron Green, President
Helotes Heritage Association

Dear Friend;

Well, I wish I could tell you that things are going better in Helotes. That the new Mayor has learned some important lessons and has decided it is best for our community to work with the council instead of bullying them. But that would be a lie. Instead, the Mayor is apparently attempting undo all that we've accomplished over the last 2 years.

The council agenda for this Thursday is a doozy. Where to begin?

Item No. 19. A resolution to request that the CPS energy fund money (in excess of \$300K) be given to the EDC to use in Old Town Helotes.

This CPS fund is money given to cities, based on their energy usage, to bury overhead powerlines. Unfortunately, the money doesn't cover non-electric overhead lines including AT&T and Time Warner so the money is not useful for this purpose. CPS therefore allows cities to use these funds for energy related capital projects. The (Economic Development Corp) EDC has recently borrowed \$4 million to fund a water line in Old Town Helotes (\$1million), with the rest slated for improvements such as pedestrian ways, parking etc. I personally do NOT believe that the city should hand over money it could use to offset costs of the new police and fire stations to the EDC. All \$300K could be spent on energy costs related to the new facilities.

It's your money, not EDC's money. Let them know you want it spent on city projects, not more handouts to developers.....Tell the council, you want OUR money spent on the city, not giveaways to developers.

Item No. 22. Action to create a new position as an assistant to the city secretary and eliminating the city administrator position.

The Mayor doesn't want a city administrator because he thinks he can run the city himself. The city administrator the most critically important position of a city. The CA is a PROFESSIONAL who understands city business and runs the day to day operation. Another important function is that the CA carries out the mandates and policies of the city council. The Mayor doesn't like that. He wants the city to run according to his mandate and his perogatives. This is a clear recipe for disaster for the city. It would doom the city to poor government. Mr. Mayor is not educated in municipal government and doesn't have the experience necessary to fill the void. Furthermore, its not legal for the Mayor to hold 2 positions. The city has ground to a halt in moving forward with many of the things we all want to see here. That's fine with the new Mayor. And not having a city administrator will help him to put barriers to implementing council policies and actions and would allow him to carry out his agenda of pushing for rapid development in Helotes without approval from council.

Tell the Mayor and Council we need a city administrator. It's time we had a professional to move the city forward, not backward as the Mayor has done. This is a bad idea and a non-starter.

Item No. 24. Action to hire a city administrator.

Of the more than 50 applicants, Mr. Alan Ewaniszyk was the top pick of the advisory committee responsible for selecting a new city administrator (CA). He has years of experience and is an impartial, non-political, and qualified CA. Councilman Richeson has placed this item on the agenda. WE need a professional to run this city. Not a retired builder. We live in the 21st century and times have changed. It's unimaginable that our mayor doesn't think we need a CA. Frightening really.

Tell the Mayor you want someone who knows what he/she is doing to run the city. This is not a banana republic, and we don't need a despot.

Item No. 25. Action to remove Ron Green as Chair of Parks and Open Space Committee.

The Mayor doesn't like Ron Green. Ron has worked harder than any other chair of a committee in Helotes. He has a Ph.D. in hydrogeology and has worked hard to get the Parrigin Playground off the ground. Organizing Saturday morning work sessions to clean up the land and move forward. He is ready to submit a proposal to Texas Parks and Wildlife for a community grant to help fund the basics of a children's park. The Mayor wants to get rid of Ron. He can't control Ron so he wants him out. This is another example of a Mayor who wants total control. Ron is one of the most gracious, caring individuals I know. To be treated this way is reprehensible. The Mayor needs to be told to stop his rush to grab total control over this city and turn the city back to the stone age.

Tell the Mayor and Council that YOU support Ron Green and his efforts to make Helotes a better place to live. And that you support the committee's effort to build a place for kids and families to come together, recreate and play. After all, isn't the character of a city also defined by its commitment to parks and community?

Item No. 26. Action to disband the Parks and Open Space Committee.

The Mayor also wants to get rid of the entire committee. This committee was formed more than 2 years ago with a mission to develop a park system for Helotes. Ron and the committee members have worked very hard to implement a park system. From surveys, to work sessions, they have given their time and effort to the city so that we might have a real park in Helotes. The Mayor doesn't seem to think we need this committee. The Mayor doesn't seem to think we need parks. He illegally blocked action that would have finalized our efforts to buy the 33 acre park on Scenic Loop Road

Go tell the mayor you want parks in Helotes and you support having a Parks and Open Space Committee. And that you support the hard work of these committee members. Tell the council that you are appalled by the treatment by this Mayor. And tell the council that you value a park system in Helotes. WE don't have much time before the land in our area is developed. And we still have more than \$1 million donated by the State for a city park. Tell the council you want a REAL city park in Helotes.

Item No. 27. Action to terminate the contract with White and Smith to follow through with the Comprehensive Plan for Helotes.

The Mayor is trying to get rid of the city planner hired to plan for the future of our city. Yes, he's not cheap. But like every other city, we need to update our Master Plan. That means planning for our future including future land use, parks, traffic and all that goes into a Master Plan. But the Mayor doesn't think we need to do that. He would rather just open the door for his developer friends to race in and build out the city. I believe that a comprehensive plan is a wise choice to plan the city's future. Helotes doesn't have a city planner. And right now we don't even have a city administrator. I guess the Mayor just wants to bring the city to its knees, strip it of any responsibility and let the developers frolic. This is frightening.

Tell the council you want a future vision for your city and that takes forward thinking and planning. Not burying our heads in the sand.

Item No. 31. Action to amend the Old Town Special District and amend the zoning map.

The EDC (supported by the Mayor) is determined to grab the Bandera Corridor so that they can control develop outside of Old Town. Ardie Garner (President of EDC) is pushing to have a high density commercial village along Bandera Road (between Scenic Loop and Bobby J's). None of the property owners are pushing for this. The EDC, on their own, is pushing to zone this with high density--high impervious cover, hotels, bars and restaurants, and loud music. It's called an "urban" design. The EDC wants to control development in this area even though it's not their charge. They need to stick to Old Town. There is no mechanism in place to implement a plan for a

commercial village. Most of the residents that live in the hills overlooking this land do not want this. Most Helotes residents value our small town rural beauty. Dropping an urban asphalt jungle in Helotes is wrong. The EDC only wants to see more sales tax dollars to fill their coffers.

Please tell them that you don't want this kind of development in Helotes. It's your last opportunity.

These are just the highlights.

Please go to the city website and download the entire city council agenda on Monday.

We need everyone to come to the city council and speak against the power grab by Mayor Schoolcraft and the EDC. It's time the citizens were heard loud and clear.

The city's future is at stake.

PLEASE ATTEND THIS WEEK'S CITY COUNCIL AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Thank you

Jon Allan