



Mayor's Monthly Newsletter

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The Public Notification Process for Zoning Changes

In this newsletter, I would like to briefly describe our city's notification process for changes to our zoning ordinances. At the January meeting, council approved a Specific Use Permit for a company planning to build a car wash on a piece of commercial property located on Jones Road adjacent to residential property in The Lakes of Jersey Village. A number of residents had taken the time to make comments on the proposal, one of which had been a request for the city to arrange a meeting between the residents, and the business owners proposing to build the car wash - which the city did not do.

I acknowledge that depending on the proposed action, there may be a high degree of resident interest, and a desire for discussion with potential business owners or developers. However, the city is required by State law to follow a prescribed notification process that gives all interested parties - including residents, commercial property owners, developers, business owners - equal notification of public meetings concerning potential changes to our zoning ordinances. The city must follow these processes, and cannot make subjective decisions on who we notify, or set up special meetings between interested parties.

How do residents and other interested parties stay informed on these issues? All zoning ordinance changes are discussed as part of a series of regularly scheduled meetings described below, with meeting notices and agendas posted 72 hours in advance at city hall, and on the city's website (<http://www.jerseyvillage.info/>) in accordance with the law. All meetings are open to the public, and serve as forums for elected officials, committee members, city staff, and other interested parties to discuss proposed zoning ordinance changes. Additionally, the minutes from city council and P&Z meetings are posted on the city website and can be viewed by clicking on the link to the City Secretary's office. You can also contact council members or me via email or phone.

Initial discussions concerning changes to zoning ordinances generally begin in Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. In the case of the planned car wash, attendance at P&Z meetings would have allowed residents to see the plans, and contact the business owners for discussion at a later date if desired.

When Planning and Zoning is prepared to make a recommendation to city council, the issue will be placed on the next council meeting agenda, for discussion and for council to call a Joint Public hearing. The Joint Public Hearing Notice is then advertised in the Cy-Fair Section of the Houston Chronicle 16 days in advance of the meeting in addition to posting the agenda 72 hours in advance as described previously. The Joint Public Hearing is typically held during a regular council meeting. Once the Joint Public Hearing has been conducted and the Planning and Zoning Commission has made its final recommendation to council, there will be an agenda item for council to discuss and possibly take action on the proposed zoning ordinance change. The zoning change officially becomes part of the ordinance if council approves it at this meeting.

To sum up, staying informed requires regularly checking the city's website. A quick check of recent agendas for items related to the car wash facility on Jones Road shows that it was posted in five Planning and Zoning Commission agendas, three city council agendas, and two notices for Joint Public Hearings.

Until next month.

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