

The Winds of Change

...a breath of fresh air...

by Kat Rowoldt



Sitting in City Council on Tuesday was not an encouraging experience. Not only was it a marathon that lasted until 3:00 p.m., but it was also a lot of the usual issues being kicked around one more time.

Here's a quick debrief of items from the agenda:

Steve Hampton, who has filed for Charlotte Farmer's seat, SMD 6, asked to have item "e" pulled from the consent agenda so the citizens could hear more details on this item concerning Martifer-Hirschfeld Energy Systems, LLC. The residents of San Angelo paid \$142,000 in attorney fees to lose over \$1.3 million. The settlement attained behind closed doors was \$1.4 million, out of \$2.7 million in damages. The city has a growing track record of coming up short in financial negotiations. The agenda item was focused on where to direct the recovered funds, but the discussion was on the loss of taxpayer's money.

This was followed by another item pulled from the consent agenda. Councilman Bill Richardson pulled item "l" having to do with Bed and Breakfast Establishments and Short Term Rentals. **CITY COUNCIL REMOVES CITIZENS RIGHTS IN ONE QUICK VOTE:** Kudos to Bill Richardson, Lane Carter, and Charlotte Farmer for voting against this agenda item which stripped 99% of the citizens of San Angelo of full and equal property rights as compared to those who have their property designated as an STR. If you happen to live within five hundred (500) feet of an STR, you do NOT have the same rights as the property owner of the STR. You may not rent out your home as a short-term rental. You are now blocked from having that equal property right.

A group of citizens will be putting together a referendum to bring this back to Council and place on the ballot, costing citizens \$30,000.00 to settle this dispute via an election. The really disturbing factor is that one of the voters for this agenda item DID NOT understand that they were blocking the majority of citizens from having the same and equal rights. The facial expression when this reality hit home, said it all. This is when you wish you could call for a re-vote because the Council meeting was still actively in session. That could have flipped the vote from 4-3 for it, to 3-4 against.

This was the fun we had just getting out of the consent agenda. It was going to be a long day. Now on to the scheduled fun.

Trash Talking Again! Yes, again! Operations Director Shane Kelton brought before the Council the proposed amendment to the trash contract. We will continue to have once a week trash pickup with an alternating secondary service. One week re-cycle, the following week bulk pick up. Councilman Lane Carter wanted to wait on giving the final vote until he could discuss this option with his constituents, which I appreciate as a member of his district. Carter and one other (missed the hand) voted against the proposed change for this reason. It passed 5-2.

The next highly debated topic was dogs - the dog pound that is! The proposed agenda item was to contract with Concho Valley PAWS to manage animal shelter adoptions for \$60,000.00 a year. Neighborhood Services Assistant Director, James Flores, stated that this would allow him to focus his manpower on animal control by doing this. There were a variety of discussions around this topic. It ended with a 5-2 vote, with Morrison and Richardson voting against it.

Boat Races! The Lucas Oil Drag Boat Racing Series asked to negotiate directly with the city for the use of Lake Nasworthy - one or two times a year. This will cut the Chamber of Commerce out of this event, impacting their budget. The short discussion ended with a unanimous vote of approval.

Interstate 27! A unanimous vote in support of a resolution supporting the extension of Interstate 27 through San Angelo. The drug lords in Mexico are thrilled that our tax dollars are being spent to expedite the transport of their drugs, sex slaves, and illegals.

The regular agenda wrapped with the report that we are \$311,000.00 short in Sales Tax revenue, but we have high hopes of that turning around soon. Gee...

Tired, sore back from sitting so long, and discouraged at the way several of the votes went at City Council, I left still hoping to find a Donald/Donna Trump to turn our City around. We have been headed in the wrong direction for a long time.

The following day, Brenda Gunter, candidate for Mayor of San Angelo, attended the San Angelo Pachyderm Club luncheon. Fred Contreras, President of the Club, introduced Ms. Gunter to the group. Her very brief comments piqued my interest in finding out more about her. It was announced later during the meeting that she was scheduled to be the guest speaker on Thursday at the John Birch Society (JBS) meeting. I decided to attend the event.

JBS graciously granted me permission to video their guest speaker. The recording will be ready in a few days and posted to the Christian Reporter News.com website for your viewing.

Ms. Gunter is very well spoken conservative. It was a small gathering that evening, so after her presentation on a variety of city topics, the audience participated in quizzing her on lots of other issues. I won't try to present her stance on things, I'll let you listen to her presentation when it's posted next week.

I left there believing that possibly San Angelo may have a Donna Trump on the horizon for us. I plan to visit with Ms. Gunter more in-depth when I return from the Capitol. It was truly refreshing to hear a non-politician talking straight about issues from the perspective of a citizen and not from the perspective/benefit of a city staffer.

The following day, Friday, was a wonderful day watching our new President take the oath of office, the peaceful transfer of power, and the former President flying away into the history books. There is much work to be done to reset the course for this country, this state, and this city. It's going to take prayer, perseverance, and persistent effort by everyone to make the changes which are so sorely needed.

The winds of change have reset our sails in a new direction. Now we must adjust and do our part to hold to that new course, following the Lord's leading.

I am headed to the Capitol/Austin this week and next. I will be on a very special assignment and look forward to bringing back to you a firsthand report. I ask for your prayers. They are needed. I will have security with me a good bit of the time. FYI: January 31st is Muslim Day at the Capitol. Pray for our Senators/Representatives and their staffers.

Until next time....

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