CITY OF BELLAIRE
CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting
Monday, February 4, 2008

REGULAR SESSION (TOWN MEETING) – 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF A QUORUM – Mayor Cindy Siegel.

Mayor Cindy Siegel called the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, to order at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, February 4, 2008. The Bellaire City Council met at that time and on that date in Regular Session (Town Meeting) in the Civic Center, First Floor of City Hall, 7008 South Rice Avenue, Bellaire, Texas 77401. Mayor Siegel announced that a quorum was present consisting of herself and the following members of City Council:

- Councilman Will Hickman, Position No. 1;
- Councilman James P. Avioli, Sr., Position No. 2;
- Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Faulk, Position No. 3;
- Councilman Phil Nauert, Position No. 4;
- Councilman Pat McLaughlan, Position No. 5; and
- Councilman John Jeffery, Position No. 6.

Other officials present were City Manager Bernard M. Satterwhite, Jr., City Attorney Alan P. Petrov, and City Clerk Tracy L. Dutton.

B. INSPIRATIONAL READING AND/OR INVOCATION – Councilman John Jeffery.

Councilman John Jeffery gave the inspirational reading and began by noting that tomorrow, February 5th, would be Mardi Gras, which was a time of celebration, a time to give thanks, and a time for recollection. Mardi Gras would be followed by Ash Wednesday on February 6th, a time for sacrifice. The Lunar New Year (Year of the Rat) was Thursday, February 7th, which signified a time for hard work, activity, renewal, and accomplishments.

Tonight, the State of the City would be presented. It was appropriate during this week of celebrations, expectations, and new beginnings because it shared with us where we had been and how we hoped to begin the next 100 years in Bellaire. It was also an appropriate time to give thanks and recognition to City Staff, City boards, commissions, and committees, and citizens for their hard work, dedication, and sacrifices in the past and present, and for their continued efforts in striving to make Bellaire a great place to live.

He closed by thanking the new City Council with its challenges to develop and plan for many years to come.
C. PLEDGES TO THE FLAGS – Councilman John Jeffery.

1. U.S. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

2. PLEDGE TO THE TEXAS FLAG.

Councilman John Jeffery led the audience and City Council in the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance and the Pledge to the Texas Flag.

D. APPROVAL OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

APPROVAL of minutes of the Regular Session of the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, held Monday, January 21, 2008 – Action by Members of City Council to Adopt Minutes (Item submitted by City Clerk Tracy L. Dutton).

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Faulk and seconded by Councilman James P. Avioli, Sr., to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, held Monday, January 21, 2008.

VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES:

Motion carried unanimously on a 7-0 vote as follows:

FOR: Siegel, Cindy
     Hickman, Will
     Avioli, James P., Sr.
     Faulk, Peggy
     Nauert, Phil
     McLaughlan, Pat
     Jeffery, John

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: None

E. PERSONAL/AUDIENCE COMMENTS.

Lynn McBee, 5314 Evergreen Street, Bellaire, Texas:

Ms. McBee addressed City Council regarding an item on City Council’s agenda this evening related to the adoption of Rules of Procedure for the City Council. Ms. McBee referred to what she believed was an inadvertent error, which had been in place for years. She just discovered that error earlier in the day when reviewing Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.
Ms. McBee referred to page 20 of the draft *Rules of Procedure for the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period 2008-2010*, Section G., which read “Motion to Table or Lay a Pending Motion on the Table.” In reading the index of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, Ms. McBee discovered common misuses of the motion to lay on the table. She asked City Council to amend the rules to remove the first four words “Motion to table or” in order to ensure that Section G. conformed to *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*. The section would then read “Motion to Lay a Pending Motion on the Table.”

Ms. McBee advised that there were distinct differences and the first four words of the paragraph after the title should also be deleted. She noted that she did not have an opportunity to run her suggestion by the City Attorney prior to the start of the meeting this evening.

She advised further that City Council could postpone an item to a date certain or until a certain condition was met, but did they would likely not want to just “postpone” or just “table” because such an action would kill the item.

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**Mayor Cindy Siegel** advised that one written comment had been received this evening, which she read into the record as follows:

**Robert Riquelmy, 506 Winslow Lane, Bellaire, Texas:**

*Our local neighborhood newspapers do not usually cover Council Workshops, even though important matters are discussed there. So, I am taking it upon myself to report two items of interest from the January Workshop.*

*First, there is a multi-million dollar parcel of real property for sale in downtown Bellaire. The City is interested in buying it.*

*Second, the Mayor reported that Bill Borden has prevailed upon her to offer his amendment to City Council Rules. The amendment would expand the range of matters that Council can pass without discussion.*

*Why would Bill Borden propose this?*

*And why would the Mayor do it?*

**Mayor Siegel** stated that she had not done so, and the *Rules of Procedure* would be discussed by the City Council this evening.
F. NEW BUSINESS:

1. ITEM FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

CONSIDERATION of and possible action on the adoption of *Rules of Procedure for the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period 2008-2010 – Action by Members of City Council to Adopt Rules of Procedure (Item submitted by Mayor Cindy Siegel).*

SUMMARY:

Mayor Cindy Siegel stated that the City Council had held a Workshop Session on January 26, 2008. The City Council went through various items during that Workshop Session. The item referenced earlier by resident Robert Riquelmy was a General Consent item, which was comparable to City Council’s Consent Agenda. City Council felt at this time that there was no reason to consider a General Consent item, as City Council was able to move fairly quickly through their agendas. Other suggested changes were minor. The *Rules of Procedure* were amended to include the results of the discussions held during the Workshop Session, and the amended version was included in the Agenda Packet for City Council.

MOTION TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE:

A motion was made by Councilman Pat McLaughlan and seconded by Councilman John Jeffery to adopt the *Rules of Procedure for the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period 2008-2010.*

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM CITY COUNCIL:

{Legend: A – Answer; C – Comment; Q – Question; R – Response}

Q: Councilman John Jeffery asked City Attorney Alan Petrov if he could comment on the issue raised by Ms. McBee related to tabling a motion.

A: City Attorney Alan P. Petrov advised that Ms. McBee was correct. The motion was a “motion to lay on the table.” He did not believe that there was any substantive problem with the wording that City Council currently used in their *Rules of Procedure*, but stated that the suggestion by Ms. McBee was probably a better technical match to *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.*
AMENDMENT (NO. 1) TO MOTION TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE:

An amended motion was made by Councilman John Jeffery and seconded by Councilman Pat McLaughlan to amend Section G. of the Rules of Procedure of the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period 2008-2010, by deleting the words "Motion to Table or" so that the title and paragraph began "Motion to Lay a Pending Motion on the Table."

VOTE ON AMENDMENT (NO. 1) TO MOTION TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Amendment (No. 1) carried unanimously on a 7-0 vote as follows:

FOR: Siegel, Cindy
      Hickman, Will
      Avioli, James P., Sr.
      Faulk, Peggy
      Nauert, Phil
      McLaughlan, Pat
      Jeffery, John

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: None

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION, AS AMENDED, TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Original motion, as amended, carried unanimously on a 7-0 vote as follows:

FOR: Siegel, Cindy
      Hickman, Will
      Avioli, James P., Sr.
      Faulk, Peggy
      Nauert, Phil
      McLaughlan, Pat
      Jeffery, John

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: None
2. **STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS – Mayor Cindy Siegel.**

**Mayor Cindy Siegel** presented the **State of the City Address** to the audience and City Council. She began the address with a slideshow of Bellaire’s history compiled by Assistant City Manager Diane K. White and other members of City Staff.

Mayor Siegel continued and noted that every year in February the City took the time to reflect on what had been accomplished in the past year, as well as the status of existing projects and new initiatives and the goals and challenges of the upcoming year.

This year was especially important because it was Bellaire’s Centennial year. In 1908 William Baldwin and the South End Land Company purchased the land and founded the town of Bellaire. As one could see from the slideshow just presented, Bellaire had come a long way in the last 100 years. Mayor Siegel was especially proud of the accomplishments made over the last ten years and in 2007.

She advised that 2007 was another good year in Bellaire as the City continued to thrive and prosper. The tax base grew by $306,369,489, which was an 11.7% increase over 2006. Bellaire continued to see strong residential development with 164 new home permits issued. The average value of a home in Bellaire was noted to be over $480,000. Commercial redevelopment of $8,319,122 was also added to Bellaire’s tax base in 2007. As a result, the City Council was able to reduce the tax rate by four cents. Ten years ago, the tax rate was 51 cents. Today, the tax rate was 40 cents. The decrease was due to the continuing strength of Bellaire’s tax base and the commitment by the City to spend tax dollars in a fiscally responsible manner, while ensuring the expectations of the citizens for top quality city services, facilities, and infrastructure were met. Bellaire’s bond rating was one of the best in the country for a city of its size. However, in light of the problems with the world economy today, the City would continue to scrutinize closely the downturn in the market and what a possible recession would do to Bellaire redevelopment and bond financing in the upcoming year. City Council would respond accordingly with any steps needed to minimize a potential negative impact to Bellaire’s finances.

Mayor Siegel continued and advised that the top financial priority of City Council and City Management was to ensure that the City’s debt obligations were met without a tax rate increase; that operating expenditures were kept in line; and that every “extra” dollar was either invested back into capital improvements with long-term benefits for Bellaire residents and/or the tax rate was reduced.
Mayor Siegel next took an opportunity to show how the citizens’ tax dollars and other City revenues were spent during 2007. She began by reviewing the sources of City revenues. Property taxes made up 45% of City revenues. The next largest sources of revenue were water sales and sales tax. On the expenditure side, public safety was still the largest expenditure at 46% of the budget. The next largest expenditure was noted to be Administration (Finance, City Manager’s Office, Information Technology, etc.), which represented 23% of the budget.

With respect to the highlights of improvements and accomplishments made in 2007, Mayor Siegel advised that although she could not say that Bellaire was a “crime-free” city, it should be noted that crime in Bellaire had decreased by 18% over 2006 and by nearly 30% since 2005.

The Bellaire Fire Department responded to 1,034 emergency medical service calls and 48 fire calls during 2007. This represented an increase in responses of 7% from 2006.

The Bellaire Millennium Renewal Bond Program that was passed in 2000 was completed a year ahead of what was originally projected. The objectives of the Program, as set forth below, were met:

- Replacement of the sanitary sewer system;
- Upgrade of critical water distribution lines for the improvement of fire hydrant flow;
- Completion of Loop 610 drainage improvements in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT);
- Improvement of the rideability of every street in Bellaire through either reconstruction, rehabilitation, or resurfacing (with the exception of a few blocks that were scheduled for total reconstruction under the new bond program—Rebuild Bellaire); and
- Payment of bonds through an increase in the tax base and not through a tax rate increase.

As of today, over seven miles of City streets had been completely replaced with new concrete and an improved drainage system. As passed by the voters under a bond referendum in 2005 (i.e., Rebuild Bellaire Program), the City was building new sidewalks when a street was reconstructed. To date, the City had expended $811,000 for new sidewalks and $600,000 to repair or replace existing sidewalks. Although Bellaire continued to budget annually for the repair and
replacement of existing sidewalks, the City had found that the cost of building a new sidewalk when the street was replaced versus as a stand-alone project cut the cost of repair and replacement in half.

Through both bond programs (i.e., Bellaire Millennium Renewal Program and Rebuild Bellaire Program), there had been a 40% improvement in drainage capacity citywide. Bellaire’s engineers had estimated that a single street being lowered and reconstructed with increased drainage capacity under the street had improved drainage as much as 400% for some blocks that had little or no drainage before. Reconstructed streets had gone from only being able to handle 20-30% of a two-year storm event to 100% of a two-year storm event. This was true even when the concrete from a new sidewalk was added.

The City now had access to a geographical information system (GIS) with the ability for public access via the Internet. The Parks & Recreation Department went “live” over the holidays with online registration and credit card payment ability through the City’s webpage. The Bellaire City Library now offered residents Internet access, Wi-Fi, digital audio books, eBooks, and videos that could be downloaded at home or on the go, as well as over 50 databases that could be accessed from home or businesses 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Additionally, repairs and renovation of the City Hall foundation, the Civic Center Auditorium, the Meeting Rooms, the Council Chamber, and the Council Conference Room were completed during 2007.

Other facility repair work that occurred during 2007 included painting, new duct work, wall coverings, and a new front desk area for the Recreation Center; repair of public restrooms and locker rooms in the Police and Municipal Court Building; new fence installation at Evergreen and Mulberry Parks; and renovation of the pool pump house at Evergreen Park. Design work was currently underway for substantial renovation to the Police and Municipal Court Building. The City had also enhanced custodial services in all buildings.

The new Family Aquatics Center was built and was currently in the final inspection period. The heated fitness pool and diving well should be open to the public shortly, with the grand opening for the entire facility to be held on May 3, 2008.

The City received grants and gifts of $1,118,941 during 2007. Of that amount, $1,000,000 was from the Patrons for Bellaire Parks, Inc., for the Family Aquatics Center. The remainder of the gifts and grants were for items such as defibrillators and library books.
Three art benches were installed in City Parks during 2007, with a fourth one under construction by the Bellaire City Library. Funds had been donated to the City for three additional art benches, which would be constructed and installed during 2008.

The trolley car shed roof was replaced and the shed and trolley car were repainted during 2007. After an investigation to determine why the Trolley Pavilion had deteriorated so rapidly, the City hired an engineering firm to prepare construction plans to renovate it and bids would be sought from construction companies to repair it.

A market analysis was also completed during 2007 regarding Bellaire’s downtown area as the first phase of a revitalization plan for the area. A facility land use study was completed that addressed possible replacement of a new fire station and municipal court, while looking long-term for areas where other City buildings could be placed in the future. The City wanted to ensure that it had looked at all possibilities for placement of new buildings, like the fire station. The City was building not only for its current needs, but planning for its long-term needs as well.

Mayor Siegel noted that it continued to be an exciting time in Bellaire! The City was ending 100 years of its history and looking toward the next 100 years. The complexion of the City was changing dramatically. New residents were moving in and new homes and businesses were replacing existing ones. The City continued to change in a manner probably not seen since World War II. The decisions and steps that the City took in the next two years would influence what Bellaire would look like and its quality of life for not only the next ten years, but also possibly 50 years into the future.

It was noted further that the City Council had met a few weeks ago to update their goals and objectives for the next two years. On February 16, 2008, the City Council would hold a Joint Workshop Session with boards, commissions, and committees to develop a strategy for implementation and a timeline for meeting the City’s goals and objectives.

During 2008 and over the next two years, Bellaire would need to:

- **Continue to remodel and build facilities in a way that would best serve Bellaire citizens now and in the future.** The facility land use study laid out three possibilities with respect to facilities as follows: 1) to rebuild facilities in the same place facilities currently existed; 2) to combine certain facilities in future buildings in a way that would improve services offered and create additional green space; or 3) to seek to move some City facilities to the downtown area of Bellaire. Mayor Siegel
indicated that no decision had been made at this time regarding which path to take other than to proceed with the design of the new fire station and the remodeling of the library and police and municipal court building. However, decisions made regarding the placement of the fire station and municipal court facility would influence decisions made regarding the placement of other City buildings in the future.

- **Develop a comprehensive vision and implement a plan of action as it related to the revitalization of Bellaire’s commercial areas and other underdeveloped land.** Bellaire’s commercial areas were currently under redevelopment. The Research, Development, and Distribution District (RDD District) was at a pivotal point where it could develop in a way that protected the residential neighborhood that abutted it without hurting the current property owners’ investment in the RDD District. The City had a small window of opportunity to influence the direction the redevelopment of Bellaire’s commercial areas and the RDD District took or the City could simply take a “hands off” approach and let things happen. In Mayor Siegel’s opinion, Bellaire should care because the way in which the commercial areas and the RDD District redeveloped could either hurt or enhance Bellaire’s residents’ investment in their homes. Additionally, the ways in which the areas redeveloped could either hurt or enhance the residents’ quality of life in the near future and for decades to come. The Bellaire Planning and Zoning Commission had started a review and would be updating the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The citizens of Bellaire would play an important role in crafting the City’s vision for the future and in how the Comprehensive Plan was updated for future land use in Bellaire.

- **Continue infrastructure improvements under the Rebuild Bellaire Program with an eye to what the next infrastructure program would include.** Such improvements would include more reconstructed streets, improved drainage, new sidewalks and pedestrian and bike trails, and new City buildings and facilities. The path that Bellaire was on was the one where as the tax base grew and the City and citizens could afford it, the City would replace critical infrastructure and facilities. For those who were new to Bellaire, Mayor Siegel advised that in 2000, the voters in Bellaire chose not to replace all infrastructure at one time due to the tremendous cost of such a program. If the entire infrastructure had been replaced at one time, the tax rate would have increased to $2.00 for approximately 20 years. In addition to the tremendous tax burden on Bellaire’s property owners, such a program would have had a detrimental impact on the City’s bond rating and
the residential and commercial development in Bellaire. The voters, instead, chose a more conservative and prudent approach. They reaffirmed their position with an overwhelming vote to pass the Rebuild Bellaire Bond Referendum Program in 2005. The stability of Bellaire’s tax base and the needs of the community would continue to influence the direction of any future capital improvement program.

- **Look for ways to improve and add to Bellaire’s parks, green space, and playing fields.** Many Bellaire parents knew that there were currently not enough playing fields to meet the demand for the youth sport programs in Bellaire. This need would be further compounded in the near future when Horn Elementary School was rebuilt and Horn Field was temporarily eliminated. Parks, green space, and playing fields added intrinsic value to everyone’s lives, as well as to citizens’ investment in their homes. If the population in the region grew as predicted, parks, green space, and playing fields would also play an increasing role in the health and welfare of Bellaire.

- **As the City placed additional demands on its employees for an even higher level of service, the City needed to ensure that it maintained the stability of its workforce and that the City employed the highest quality of employees.** The City’s employees needed to be fairly compensated and have adequate health coverage and other employee benefits and training so that Bellaire remained competitive within the marketplace. Given that salaries and benefits were 75% of the City’s operational budget, the challenge continued to be how to do so in a fiscally prudent way.

- **Work to keep Bellaire’s taxes as low as possible and still meet the needs and desires of the community for exceptional service and a high quality of life standard.** Bellaire was in a great location, and had wonderful schools, the best police and fire departments, a great library, and many parks, recreational, and senior programs. All added up to a high standard when looking at quality of life. Working to keep Bellaire’s taxes low in comparison to its neighbors and looking for ways to improve the quality of life, services, and infrastructure provided by the City, would maintain the residents’ quality of life and protect their investment Bellaire.

Mayor Siegel questioned what Bellaire’s vision would be for the future as the pages in a new chapter were turned in its history. Would the vision include a dynamic commercial area where Bellaire residents wanted to shop? Would there be housing alternatives for the Bellaire residents who no longer had children at home and wanted to
downsize? Would the negative impact of Loop 610, Highway 59, the Westpark Tollway, and the increasing numbers of cars driving through and by Bellaire residential neighborhoods become minimized by an accessible area mass transit system? Would the City’s tree canopy and landscaping be increased to buffer Bellaire residents from the noise and pollution of Houston and the freeway system, as well as continuing Bellaire’s reputation as an aesthetically pleasing place to live? Would Bellaire still be one of the safest small enclave cities in Texas or would the City of Houston’s problems of crime encroach on Bellaire to a point that the Bellaire Police Department would not be able to adequately protect the citizens? Would Bellaire still be attractive to families, singles, empty nesters, and seniors by providing premier parks, playing fields, and library and recreational facilities? Most importantly, would Bellaire still be known as the “City of Homes” with its own unique character and strong sense of community?

Today, the City had an exciting opportunity to improve on what had made Bellaire great in the past. Mayor Siegel knew that the easiest route was the path of least resistance. It was a path of accepting the status quo and keeping things the way they had always been. Positive change was time consuming and did not usually come without tension and effort. However, historically Bellaire had shown over the last 100 years that a city that thrived and prospered was a city that was dreaming about what it could become and looking for ways to make future opportunities a reality. It was a city that did not rest its laurels on its history, but looked to making a future that was even better. It sought ways of improving city facilities and infrastructure, encouraging a more prosperous commercial district, pushing the quality of life to an even higher standard, and creating a safe community for its residents to live, work, and play in. During this year of Bellaire’s Centennial, Mayor Siegel asked everyone to work with the City Council and Boards, Commissions, and Committees to create a vision for Bellaire’s future and to help make it a reality. Together, everyone could leave a legacy of an even better Bellaire for future generations to celebrate.

Mayor Siegel concluded by thanking everyone for their attendance and asking God to bless Bellaire for many generations to come.

2. BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2007, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2007:

a. BELLAIRE ARTS COMMISSION – Presented by Chair Kathy Biddle.

Chair Kathy Biddle presented the annual report for the Bellaire Arts Commission for the period beginning January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007. She began her
presentation with a summary of projects completed during 2007 as follows:

- Installation of four art benches;
- Completion of design specifications for two gateway markers. It was noted that the artist responsible for the design was Bellaire Arts Commission Member Cindy Cozewith;
- Design of ten potential logos for the City of Bellaire’s Centennial;
- Research of a “History Walk” design for Bellaire’s Centennial;
- Organization of a community art project for the Parks and Recreation Department’s Paseo Summer Camp; and
- Finalization of the Bellaire Arts Commission Master Plan.

Chair Biddle showed a slide of the four art benches that were installed in 2007. One bench, identified as MEDSU, was installed in Paseo Park. A second bench, identified as the Polka Dot bench, was installed at Evergreen Park. A third bench, identified as the Magic Carpet bench, was installed at Feld Park. The fourth bench was almost completed and was located in front of the Bellaire City Library.

A slide of the gateway markers was shown next. It was noted that the gateway markers would be installed at the east and west ends of Bellaire Boulevard.

The ten potential logos designed by the Bellaire Arts Commission were also shown on a slide. It was noted that the logo selected for the Centennial (i.e., yellow and red trolley car) was designed by former Bellaire Arts Commission Member Don Goodell.

The proposed History Walk marker design was shown next. It was noted that the design was recently presented to the Centennial Planning Committee at their last meeting.

The artwork prepared by students attending Camp Paseo would be displayed on May 3, 2008, during the grand opening of the Family Aquatic Center.
The final project of 2007 was the Bellaire Arts Commission Master Plan, which was accepted by City Council. A great deal of credit for this Master Plan was attributed to Bellaire Arts Commission Vice Chair Jamie Allen.

Chair Biddle summarized projects for 2008 as follows:

- Fabrication and installation of four new art benches;
- Fabrication and installation of two gateway markers;
- Fabrication of Centennial History Walk;
- Hosting of October Art Exhibit for Bellaire Artists, which would include a children's exhibit in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Department; and
- Proposed design elements for Bellaire Zindler Park, Fire Station, Patrons’ Donor Program, and Bellaire City Library.

Chair Biddle closed and thanked City Staff for making the Bellaire Arts Commission projects possible.

{Members serving on the Bellaire Arts Commission during 2007: Chair Kathy Biddle, Vice Chair Jamie Allen, Wendy Bantle, Cindy Cozewith, Kathryn M. Hardin, Kay Hieronymus, and Charlene O’Shea}

b. BELLAIRE L.I.F.E. ADVISORY BOARD – Presented by Chair Pat Westwood.


Seniors took a number of day trips during the year to such cities as Liberty, Columbus, Victoria, Sealy, Richmond, Rosenberg, Bastrop, Port Arthur, and Nederland. Tours were taken of various museums, such as the Science Museum, Telephone Museum, and Funeral Museum. Also toured was the Federal Reserve. Other sources of entertainment included
classes (such as defensive driving), swing dances, bridge groups, and crafts.

Chair Westwood noted that the total number of volunteer hours to the Bellaire L.I.F.E. Center during 2007 was 248. She closed by advising that on February 15, 2008, there would be a Centennial Valentine’s Dance in the Civic Center. She invited everyone to come out and participate.

{Members serving on the Bellaire L.I.F.E. Advisory Board during 2007: Chair Pat Westwood, Vice Chair Pauline McRae, Betty Byrd, Frances Freeman, Patricia J. Layton, Patricia B. McGinty, Jeanne Taylor, Faye Warley, and Gladys McGowan}

c. **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – Presented by Chair Michael J. Darlow.**

Due to the absence of Chair Michael Darlow, **Member Todd L. Blitzer** presented the annual report for the Board of Adjustment of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period ended January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007. He noted that the Board of Adjustment consisted of seven members, and that the purpose of the Board was to review variance requests for building code issues and building ordinance issues, such as setbacks.

The decisions made by the Board of Adjustment were final and contestable through court proceedings. During 2007, the Board of Adjustment met three times and considered two applications for variances. The Board denied both requests. One of the requests was subsequently contested in court.

{Members serving on the Board of Adjustment during 2007: Chair Michael J. Darlow, Vice Chair Amanda Nathan, James P. Avioli, Sr., Todd L. Blitzer, Bill Borden, David Middleman, and Hal Sharp}

d. **BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION – Presented by Chair Dirk Stiggins.**

**Chair Dirk Stiggins** presented the annual report for the Building and Standards Commission of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period ended January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007. It was noted that during 2007 the Building and Standards Commission (“Commission”) held eight regular meetings, two special meetings, and two workshop sessions. In addition, there was a joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss an issue related to
lot coverage definitions, a gray area that overlapped into the areas of responsibility for both Commissions.

At the end of the year, the Commission consisted of the following members: Chair Dirk Stiggins, Vice Chair Tom Ligh, Wayne Alderman, Gayle Davies, John P. Keating, and John A. Tang. One vacancy existed at the end of the year, and the Commission hoped that City Council could fill that vacancy earlier in 2008.

The Commission considered and acted on the following issues during the year:

- In 2006, the Commission set up a Demolition Committee for the purpose of investigating the possibility of writing a provision in the demolition ordinance for salvaging and/or reclaiming materials from houses that were demolished to make room for new residential construction. The drafting of the ordinance carried over into 2007 and was passed by City Council on May 21, 2007;

- The Commission revised their Rules of Procedure to clarify public hearing procedures and to clarify guidelines for variance criteria for floodplain management;

- One variance request was submitted to the Commission during 2007. A homeowner filed the request to install a crushed granite driveway in lieu of a full asphalt or concrete driveway as required by the Code of Ordinances of the City of Bellaire, Texas. After discussion by the Commission, the request was denied.

At present, the Commission was considering updates to the Building Code with City Staff. The updates or proposed changes, the drafting of which was nearing completion and would be presented to City Council in 2008, consisted of the following:

- Temporary fencing around swimming pools during construction;

- Requirement of a minimum of two drains inside pier and beam foundations to provide positive drainage;

- No wood products allowed within 18 inches of grade for crawl spaces;
• Requirement that spoils produced during foundation construction be removed promptly;

• Requirement that all walls in garages be covered with 5/8-inch type X gypsum wallboard;

• Requirement of handrails for two or more risers;

• Prohibition of horizontal ladder-type guardrails; and

• Requirement for landings at the top and bottom of each stairway.

Chair Stiggins closed by wishing City Council, City Staff, and the boards all the best during the Centennial year.

e. PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD – Presented by Chair Sharon Veldman.

Chair Sharon Veldman presented the annual report for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period ended January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007. She stated that in 2007 the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (“Board”) accomplished new goals, as well as ongoing ones from the previous year. The Board felt that 2007 was a productive, active, and exciting year.

The completion of the Family Aquatic Center and the CenterPoint Energy Community Center in Bellaire Town Square was the most notable continuing goal that was attended to this past year. Addressing a comprehensive “stylistization” of all parks was a second continuing goal for the Board. Although much of the Board’s time was encompassed by Bellaire Town Square, the Board also initiated and explored new ventures that brought them direct interaction with the community. The Board was, of course, resolute to address all parks as prescribed in the Park Master Plan.

Stylizing of Park Amenities

The Board continued the work begun in 2006 to bring forth continuity throughout the park system in its aesthetic representation through a unified “styling.” The Board finalized selections for park functional amenities, including fencing, trash receptacles, picnic tables, benches, and park identification signage.
Officer Lucy Dog Park

With respect to Officer Lucy Dog Park, the Board appointed a citizen subcommittee to continue dialog with residents and frequent users of the park.

The Board supported the efforts of young resident, Rachael Veldman, to develop and organize the First Annual Howl-O-Ween Dog Parade and Costume Contest to raise funds for the park. The event was well attended and received favorable press coverage.

Bellaire Town Square

With respect to Bellaire Town Square, the Board made color scheme selections for the Family Aquatic Center, which included shade structures and canopies, tile, railings, tumble bucket, post, water spray structures, slides, and bottom plaster. The Grand Opening Celebration of the Family Aquatic Center was planned for May 3, 2008. The Board also outlined rules and policies for usage of the CenterPoint Energy Community Center.

Other City Boards and Commissions

The Board continued to work with other City boards, commissions, and committees. The Board most closely worked with the Bellaire Arts Commission and Recycling Committee during 2007.

Fundraising and Community Outreach

The Board worked with the Patrons for Bellaire Parks, Inc., on fundraising efforts to raise awareness of The Wortham Challenge Grant. The Board also sponsored and staffed the Bellaire Home Showcase Tour in April and May.

The Board elevated their representation at City events, such as "Holiday in the Park," and shared a booth with the City Parks & Recreation Department and Patrons for Bellaire Parks, Inc. Some Board members, along with the Barracuda Swim Team, participated in a combined effort as an active participant in the Fourth of July Parade with a float (which won an award).

Additionally, Board members participated on City committees, such as the Centennial Planning Committee and were planning a spring or summer Centennial event to promote exercise and health to residents.
Recreation Center Survey

The Board drafted a Recreation Center Survey in order to elicit feedback from residents on Recreation Center programs. Public comment on the availability and satisfaction of existing programs was desired, as well as any interests that might not be addressed by current programs.

The Board felt that City Staff was successfully attempting to keep programs current with the interests and demographics of the citizens. It was hoped that the survey could further assist in those efforts.

In closing, Chair Veldman thanked Council Liaison John F. Monday, Director of Parks & Recreation Jane L. Dembski, and the Parks & Recreation Department Staff for their tremendous support and assistance. Special thanks were expressed to outgoing Board members Randi Rubenstein and Teri Prats for their service to the community. Following their departure, the Board welcomed new members Sarah Bauer and William Stone. Continuing members were noted as follows: Steven Grubbs (Vice Chair), Leslie Little, Casey Johnson, Richard Sanders, David Schlosberg, and Chris Sizemore.

f. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – Presented by Chair Bill Thorogood.

Chair Bill Thorogood presented the annual report for the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period ended January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007. Chair Thorogood thanked the Planning and Zoning Commission (“Commission”) members for all of their hard and extensive work as a proactive agent in assuring that Bellaire was a great place to live.

The current members of the Commission were noted as follows: Donna L. Rickenbacker, Deborah Sharp, James P. Avioli, Jr., Peter Boecher, Andrew Friedberg, and Michael Doyle (Vice Chair).

Chair Thorogood thanked the Mayor and City Council for supporting the efforts of the Commission during 2007. Also thanked were City Staff, especially Director of Community Development Derhyl Hebert, Assistant Director of Community Development Chris Magisano, and Administrative Secretary Rebecca Eppler.
Chair Thorogood continued and noted that the Commission held 17 regular or special meetings, amended 13 plats, held six public hearings, held one workshop, and held 15 committee meetings, to review and take action on those activities that affected Bellaire’s community planning and zoning activities. Additionally, following Commission recommendations, City Council took action on the following initiatives:

- Establishment of an aerial easement ordinance;
- Update of Bellaire’s Sign Ordinance;
- Approval for an update of Bellaire’s Comprehensive Plan;
- Modification of residential lot regulations for certain residential districts, such as prohibiting through lots, an increase in side setbacks for certain lots, and changes in definitions related to surface and lot coverage.

City Council approved the Commission’s “Plan of Action” to consider the need to update Bellaire’s Comprehensive Plan. This Plan of Action concluded that an update of the Comprehensive Plan was needed with special emphasis on Bellaire’s commercial and retail areas. Using a commercial focus, the Commission developed a Request for Proposal, with a sample budget and project timetable. In December of 2007, the Request for Proposal was released, with a closing date for receipt of responses set for January 31, 2008.

As a foundation for the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission identified 17 specific community-planning initiatives, which were carved into two categories. The first category included time-critical initiatives, which could be worked in parallel, coordinated with, and integrated into, the Comprehensive Plan. The second category included alternative housing choices, commercial design standards, and streetscapes.

Other Commission activities were noted as follows:

- Residential Housing Committee whose work included owner-occupied housing options for residents seeking alternatives to the current residence housing types in Bellaire; gaining an understanding of why certain residential and mixed-use areas of the City had not redeveloped; and review of the planned development process;
• Zoning Variances Standards Committee whose work included a review of the criteria currently used by the Board of Adjustment for decisions; and

• Research, Development and Distribution (RDD) Committee whose work included a review of the potential redevelopment of the north area of Bellaire bordered by Glenmont Drive on the south, Westpark Drive on the north, and Interstate Highway 610 to the west.

The Commission also held seats on, and was actively involved with, City Council’s Facility Committee and Strategic Planning and Development Committee.

Chair Thorogood thanked Peggy Faulk, Council Liaison, for all of her help as well during 2007.

Finally, it was noted that the Commission monitored the redevelopment of residential properties in Bellaire. The “City of Homes” continued its redevelopment through the replacement of original residences with new construction. Since the early 1990s, nearly 55% of Bellaire’s approximately 5,800 single-family detached residences had been replaced. On average, approximately 185 new residences were annually permitted for construction over the last ten years. This was an important indicator demonstrating the economic strength of one of the largest activities in Bellaire—residential development.

g. RECYCLING COMMITTEE – Presented by Chair Craig Bello.

Chair Craig Bello presented the annual report for the Recycling Committee of the City of Bellaire, Texas, for the period ended January 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007.

Through the first half of 2007, the Recycling Committee (“Committee”) was beset by some serious staffing issues as the Committee lost half of its manpower to life’s various challenges. With the shortage, the Committee was able to maintain a baseline of accomplishments, but was unable to support the goals of the Houston-Galveston Area Council Curbside Recycling Education Grant proposed by a much different looking Committee.

In July 2007, the Committee was blessed with four great new members and as they have come up to speed, the Committee really started to gain momentum. As Chair Bello’s final term
expired in June of 2008, he noted that one of the new appointees was likely to be the next Chair—Michael Haysley.

In 2008, the Committee planned to continue the basics. The basics included three newsletters (April, August, and December publications) that would be full of valuable recycling and other green information, four public appearances at the Spring Fling, Fourth of July Festival, Pumpkin Patch, and Holiday in the Park, and the annual Citywide Garage Sale slated this year for April 26, 2008.

In the early part of 2008, the Committee had chosen to look at bringing a dedicated recycling pilot program to the new pool and surrounding park area (i.e., Bellaire Town Square). Such a program had numerous obstacles, but with the participation and guidance of the Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, the Committee would likely overcome those obstacles.

The Committee had also chosen to bring its recycling message to area elementary and middle schools through a presentation aimed at tweens.

Recently, the Committee had spurred some investigations into possibly bringing back two missing pieces of the City’s recycling program—yard waste and colored glass. Recent leads had surfaced and with proper due diligence, the Public Works Department might be able to turn the leads into solutions.

In the second half of the year, the Recycling Committee would be under new management, but would not slow down as it began to make plans to bring a hazardous waste collection event to Bellaire in 2009. Depending on the success of the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments’ recycling pilot, as well as the leads with yard waste and glass, the Committee could be very busy helping those programs develop further.

A long-range goal for the Committee was to investigate the next step in curbside recycling, which was variable garbage collection fees, often called pay-as-you-throw programs. If practical for implementation, such a program could fairly apportion garbage collection costs based on usage rather than every household paying the same rate, as it currently existed. The result would be lower garbage collection fees to those households that throw less away because they chose to recycle.
Chair Bello closed by making a plea to the audience and those watching at home to consider joining the Recycling Committee. He urged everyone to get involved in some of the projects that would make Bellaire a better and greener place to live. If recycling was not of interest to some, then he urged that they consider serving on one of the other boards, commissions, or committees since serving the community had rewards beyond the hours given.

G. **ADJOURNMENT.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

A motion was made by Councilman Phil Nauert and seconded by Councilman Pat McLaughlan to *adjourn the Regular Session* of the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, at *8:10 p.m.* on *Monday, February 4, 2008*.

**VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

Motion *carried* unanimously on a *7-0* vote as follows:

**FOR:** Siegel, Cindy  
Hickman, Will  
Avioli, James P., Sr.  
Faulk, Peggy  
Nauert, Phil  
McLaughlan, Pat  
Jeffery, John

**OPPOSED:** None

**ABSENT:** None

Respectfully submitted,

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Tracy L. Dutton, TRMC  
City Clerk  
City of Bellaire, Texas
Approved:

__________________________________
Cynthia Siegel, Mayor
City of Bellaire, Texas