

**City of Woodcreek Special City Council Meeting**  
**September 6, 2017; 5:00 p.m.**  
**Woodcreek, Texas**

**Minutes**

1. **Call to Order:** Mayor Eskelund called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
  
2. **Roll Call. Present:** Mayor Eric C. Eskelund, Mayor Pro Tem Britner, Councilmember Bill Scheel, Councilmember Jerry Moore, Councilmember Judy Brizendine, Councilmember Aurora LeBrun, City Attorney Roger Gordon, City Manager Brenton B. Lewis, Assistant Administrator Linda L. Land, and City Clerk Barbara J. Grant.
  
3. **Public Hearing: Discussion and Action on a Submittal of Both a Concept Plan Application and a Site Development Permit Application from Camp Young Judaea, 5410 Bellaire Blvd., Suite 207, Bellaire, Texas 77401 to Build Housing at Camp Young Judaea in Woodcreek, Texas. Recommendation from Planning and Zoning.**
  - a. **Staff Briefing:** Staff Briefing: CYJ has been working on this since Summer '16. Original application was considered incomplete and returned and resubmitted almost-complete site development and concept plan (lacking only joining of property in the survey). P&Z recommended approval of the proposal contingent upon re-platting of the property prior to receiving a C.O. for the new structures. **Mike Abkowitz:** Volunteer, member of board, and facilities coordinator. Retired finance officer from the City of Austin. Our request is for approval of the site development plan and concept plan for the Retreat Village. Our facility has been here for 65+ years, pre-dating the neighborhood. "We've been here for a long time." The primary purpose for this is to allow us to expand our service to the children we serve. By the adding housing we will be able to move our camp staff to move to the new facility; allow us to expand our program for teenage campers. The secondary use for this, when we are not in summer session, is for our year-round activities, which consist of primarily religious retreats, educational activities that are used by a number of different organizations. For example, I will be here at camp this weekend for a men's retreat for 80 to 90 gentlemen from around the state. We anticipate, with the addition of the new facility, many would be relocated from the bunk housing into the new units. Frankly, the bunk housing is great for 7 and 8 year old's, but for grownups like me, sleeping on a camp cot, with 10 other guys in the room snoring, is not the most attractive. We understand that many of our neighbors have concerns, and we want to address their concerns, such as non-taxable use. The 95% of the retreat users are tax-exempt. Gave discussion about tax-exempt use, tax-exempt status, and financial contributions to the City of Woodcreek. Addressed existing zoned uses (21 single-family homes). Addressed traffic and road concerns. Addressed noise concerns. Addressed architectural/design concerns. Addressed landscaping concerns.
  - b. **Public Hearing: Public Hearing Opened at 5:25 p.m.**  
**Tony Antista (11 Doolittle Dr.):**  
Supports the use for the children; opposes the use of the camp as a retreat center.  
**Julia Paeglis:**  
Director of year-round programs for CYJ for 10 years. Offered perspective from the staff-side of the Camp. Described drop-off in recruiting for counselors when the campers don't

come back during their high-school years. Described all the different types of retreats (both adult & children retreats) hosted at the Camp.

**Sybil Patterson (Brookhollow Dr.):**

Described some of the materials that were on the CYJ website before it was scrubbed this past weekend. Also raised complaints about alcohol, naked fraternity golfers, and traffic. **Terry**

**Eldridge (Brookhollow Dr.):**

“This is not about the children’s camp.” Raised concerns about traffic, the condition of the roads, and the fact that they advertise for weddings and bar mitzvahs “for family members only.” Complained that the BYOB and “no curfew” language was scrubbed from the website.

**Jim Satterwhite (50 Woodcreek Dr.):**

No opposition whatsoever to the children and what’s being presented tonight by CYJ. I am concerned about the commercial use for corporate conferences and educational symposiums. Raised concerns about prior representations by CYJ officials about the lack of corporate events. Raised concerns about traffic.

**Roger Jones (25 Doolittle Dr.):**

Raised concerns about fraternities and sororities using the Camp. Alcohol use, lack of curfew, amount of traffic, amount of people, etc.

**Debbie Chapman (46 Brookhollow Dr.):**

Raised concerns about traffic and trucks and the use of the camp facilities as a retreat.

**Pat Rawlings (123 Augusta Ln):**

Raised concerns that the Camp appears to be changing the general direction of this facility away from just focusing on the children and instead catering to the other grounds that have been discussed. The only other issue he has that the large vehicles don’t do anymore damage to the roads than a passenger vehicle does. He described research which concluded otherwise. Raised objections to citizens funding the road improvements.

**Dwain Fuller (42 Brookhollow Dr.):**

Raised specific concerns about traffic, appropriate uses.

**Mike Schneider (13 Doolittle):**

Asked the City Council to listen to the citizens’ concerns. Bottom line, the trucks and buses are ruining the streets. Described how he used to unload Sysco trucks for the Blair House Inn.

**Marilyn Pierce (176 Augusta Dr.):**

Used to work in the retreat/hospitality industry. Pointed out that the more that’s invested the more the Camp will need to sell/rent. Urges the Council to consider the residents of the community.

**Tom Gillespie (29 Brookhollow):**

Raised concerns about truck and bus traffic and noise; he lives right by the bridge and hears it all the time. Raised a question about an entrance to Jacob’s Well Road.

**Linda Lang (35 Brookhollow Dr.):**

Noise pollution is her primary concern. Does not want to see a retreat center.

**Terence Stephens (71 Brookhollow Dr.):**

Describes the rural characteristics that the Camp sells. “Getting away from it all.” Raised questions about economics in the future of this area. Expressed concerns about a “business” coming right up next to his home. Health and safety issues.

**Jack Keith (46 Brookhollow):**

Volunteered to be Director of Traffic Control for the buses and 18-wheelers who are looking for CYJ.

**Frank Silberlicht (CYJ):**

“We’ve been doing retreats for years... it’s not as if we are going to make major changes to what we’re doing. It’s a natural outgrowth of the camp. We’ve been doing retreats all along. We are doing critical work. The idea of a retreat is to get a captured audience, especially when we are

doing Jewish retreats, we run what is called Shower Shabatt, we run it without electronics. And, so for 48 hours we have people captured and we're able to build community and family. And, so any camp across the country is doing retreats. It's becoming the new hit way of reaching people. But our number one mission is summer. And, I also want to mention about the website. True those things were on there, the curfew and the bring-our-own, and we heard the feedback and we took it down. Now, we didn't take everything down on our website; we only took down the things that we felt like, hey, that is correct and it should be there. Because the idea is not to take something down and then put it back up, so we did leave universities up there. Universities are from the different social... but, fraternity stories aside, generally, we don't like them much either. We want people that are easy and mission oriented to be there. But, having said that, I must say thank you to everyone. The comments, I thought, they may not agree, but I thought people were very nice in the way they handled it today. So, thank you. I do want to say that as camp director, we're doing important work and our mission is to reach the maximum number of kids and to strengthen Jewish identity and create a love for Israel. And we do have space for 450 people, but that includes staff and kids. Our goal is always to grow it. We must grow our numbers. We must reach more people. Some of the kids come to us from small towns and they're the only Jewish kid in their school. Some of them come that are embarrassed to say they are Jewish. Some of them, they come here and they find out that they have role models that are Jewish. And when they come, they get a deeper understanding of who they are. I think whether it's Jewish, Christian or whatever you do, that it's important to feel comfortable and confident in who you are as a person. I believe we are building good citizens that way. And we've been in the City of Woodcreek before there was a city. We were here before any neighbors were here. We want to continue doing our work, we want to grow what we do. And we also want to be good neighbors and that's why we said let's start with four buildings and let us prove to you all that this is not going to adversely impact the community. The trucks that coming, there won't be any additional trucks, because the trucks that come, they have extra room – if there are more people – to hold more food. The cars that we talked about, we don't believe it's going to be a big issue. In terms of the five thousand dollars that's been brought up, I want to point out that it is five thousand dollars directly to the City of Woodcreek. Some of your taxes go directly to Hays County and different areas. So, it's equivalent value if your home is worth \$3,200,000.00 dollars. But having said that, is five thousand dollars enough? No. I think that if anyone stood up here and said that, they would be wrong. I think it was a start – hey, let's start helping out. I think we could do more. And, I think; like Mike said, we need to bear responsibility on the roads and we need to do more, as well. But it's helpful to do it with the community that supports you and believes in what you are doing. And so, I hope that overall, that everyone has pride that Camp Young Judaea is in our community. Thank you."

**Public Hearing Closed at 6:11 p.m.**

**c. Deliberation and Action:**

Mayor Eskelund said that after hearing everyone's comments this evening, both for and against, I don't think that at this time it would be appropriate for the council to deliberate on this and take any action. I am going to make the recommendation we hold off on taking any action until the last week in September when we will have a special council meeting during that period of time. At that time, after we have had the opportunity to think seriously about all the comments that have been made tonight. At that time, we will make a decision on whether to move forward. A notice will be sent out on that.

**4. Public Hearing**

**a. Tax Rate:** Proposed Tax Rate of \$0.2235 per \$100 valuation for 2017.

**b. Staff Briefing:** In the 2010 plan and the 2020 plan the citizens were most concerned about the condition of the roads and the need to repair them.

**c. Public Hearing: Public Hearing Opened at 6:18 p.m.**

**Enrique Ospina (287 Tully Ct.):**

Believes the increase to property taxes should be incrementally instead of all at once. Also expressed concerns that there is no opportunity to vote on this issue. He's used to voting on these issues.

**Myra Spector (213 Tully Ct.):**

Described moving from Austin to Woodcreek to avoid property tax concerns. Expressed concern that a new resident is being asked to pay for improvements arising from years of neglect. What happens if the bond doesn't get approved?

**Mack Sikorski (278 Tully Ct.):**

I'm not against road improvement. What I am concerned about is I don't want road improvement to occur at the expense of losing our homes. Concerned about a \$2,000 increase in property taxes.

**Ed Hansen (Tully Ct.):**

Encourages the Council to do the right thing.

**Public Hearing Closed at 6:27 p.m.**

**5. Public Hearing**

**a. 2017-2018 Budget: Proposed Budget for the City of Woodcreek for Fiscal Year 2017- 2018 beginning October 1, 2017.**

**b. Staff Briefing:** As a background on this, in the 2010 Plan and the 2020 Plan, everything that everyone was concerned about the state that the road system was in, and the need to repair them. After the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, a survey was sent out and the response received was overwhelming that the repair of the roads was the foremost thing that needed to be addressed by the City Council. During those discussions, Brookhollow was identified as the possible first project with the funding through tax notes. Tax notes are a seven (7) year basis and it is on a vote by the City Council that they can be issued. Council decided to proceed with that. Then the proposed tax rate of \$0.2235 would include \$0.1362 for maintenance and operations and \$0.873 for the interest and sinking fund. That would be the payment for the first year of the seven-year note, if issued by the City Council. On the basis of that it would be about a \$220.00 per \$100,000.00 of valuation. Right now you are paying about \$136.00 per \$100,000.00 valuation, an increase of about \$80.00.

**c. Public Hearing: Public Hearing Opened at 6:29 p.m.**

**Public Hearing was closed at 6:30 p.m.**

**6. Consider an Ordinance cancelling the November 7, 2017 General Election for the City of Woodcreek, Texas.**

**a. Staff Briefing:** We got one application for Mayor and two applications for Council; thus the positions have been filled and the City does not have to hold an election. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the new elected officials will be Mayor Bill Scheel, Councilmember Judy Brizendine, and Councilmember Ray Don Tilley as the other. Mayor Pro Tem Britner moved to adopt Ordinance No. 17-236, cancelling the General Election for City Officers to be held on November 7, 2017. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Moore, which passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

**b. Adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.**

  
Eric C. Eskelund, Mayor

  
Brenton B. Lewis, City Manager