



# City of Rowlett Meeting Minutes City Council

4000 Main Street  
P.O. Box 99  
Rowlett, TX 75030-0099  
www.rowlett.com

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Tuesday, January 15, 2008

5:30 PM

Municipal Building - 4000 Main Street

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As authorized by Section 551.071(2) of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into closed Executive Session for the purpose of seeking confidential legal advice from the City Attorney on any agenda item herein.

The City of Rowlett reserves the right to reconvene, recess or realign the Regular Session or called Executive Session or order of business at any time prior to adjournment.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Harper called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.*

**CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*The City Council convened into closed session at 5:32 p.m.*

**2. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*The City Council reconvened into open session at 6:09 p.m.*

- 2A** The City Council shall convene into executive session pursuant to § 551.071 of the TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE to seek legal advice regarding the terms of an Interlocal Agreement with the North Texas Tollway Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation concerning the Eastern Extension of the President George Bush Turnpike / State Highway 190.
- 2B** The City Council shall convene into executive session pursuant to § 551.071 of the TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE to seek legal advice from the City Attorney and discuss pending litigation related The Fain Group, Inc. vs. City of Rowlett.
- 2C** The City Council shall convene into executive session pursuant to § 551.071 of the TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE to seek legal advice from the City Attorney and to discuss settlement of pending litigation related to FIVE LAND LTD., vs CITY OF ROWLETT.
- 2D** The City Council shall convene into executive session pursuant to § 551.071 and § 551.072 of the TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE to seek legal advice from the City Attorney and to discuss acquisition of real property for the Main Street Lift Station improvements in the area around Main Street and Century Drive.

- 2E The City Council shall convene into executive session pursuant to § 551.071 and § 551.072 of the TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE to discuss acquisition of property and eminent domain around Main Street and Rowlett Road.

### RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

*The City Council reconvened into open session at 6:09 p.m.*

### 3. WORK SESSION ITEMS (6:00 P.M.)

- 3A Update from the Mayor. (5 minutes)

*The Council was updated by Mayor Harper regarding the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light rail station extension from Downtown Garland to Downtown Rowlett. The expected completion date is December 2012.*

*He spoke with Hal Langford, Dean of Business at Texas A&M University at Commerce, regarding their locating a higher education facility in Rowlett; no decisions have been made.*

*He plans to meet with United States Senator John Cornyn to discuss federal funding of clean air and transportation issues.*

*He spoke regarding the February 7, 2008 Town Hall Meeting at the Community Centre; February 12, 2008 City Council Work Session; board and commission appointments will be made to the open positions February 5, 2008; the National League of Cities honored the City of Rowlett for five (5) years of service with a certificate; and Council received an invitation from the Texas Transportation Commission to participate on a committee assisting the Department of Transportation with their planning and decision making on the TransTexas Corridor.*

- 3B Update from the City Manager. (20 minutes)

*Craig Owens brought forth a PowerPoint presentation for the City Manager's Update.*

*Results for Rowlett: Report on Progress and Activities (37 page PowerPoint presentation)*

#### *Top Priorities*

- *Neighborhood Quality*
- *Economic Development*
- *Environment/Conservation*
- *Transportation*
- *Public Safety*
- *Culture and Recreation*

#### *Neighborhood Quality*

- *Neighborhood Revitalization Plan presented January 29, 2008*
  - *100% survey of all property in 12 months*
  - *City-wide "worst first" enforcement*
    - *Neighborhoods that need most help*
    - *Top 5 violations - visual impact*
      - *High Grass and Weeds*
      - *Junk Vehicles*

- Fences in Disrepair
- Outside Storage/Junk and Debris
- Tree Limbs blocking sidewalks, streets, and signs
- Safety Net Organization of Community Assistance
- Top 5 violations - visual impact
 

<u>December 2007</u>	<u>Closed Issues</u>	<u>Open Issues</u>
High Grass and Weeds	13	6
Junk Vehicles	8	16
Fences in Disrepair	12	15
Outside Storage/Junk and Debris	23	24
Tree Limbs blocking sidewalks, streets, and signs	5	7
- Resolved several life safety issues (fire damaged, swimming pools, open water wells) on:
  - Madison
  - Bond
  - Lakeview Parkway
  - Aberdeen
  - Columbia
  - Fairway Vista
  - Chiesa
- Mark Woodruff, a certified Code Officer, joined the Code Enforcement Division
- Park Maintenance staff cleaned dead trees along alleyway adjacent to Herfurth Park

#### *Economic Development Update*

- New Applications Pending:
  - National Tire & Battery
  - Andrews Building
  - Colonial Bank
  - Dollar Tree
  - Petsmart
  - Race Trac
  - Ross
  - Expo Towers (5 story mixed use building)
- Certificates of Occupancies Issued:
  - Lakeway Chiropractic Center
  - King Cleaners
  - Mattress Giant
  - Bill Cash Contracting
  - Vere Tech Irie Automotive
  - Lake Pointe Sleep Lab
  - Lake Pointe Medical Partners
  - Lake Pointe Wound Care
  - Great Clips
- Updating business listing to reflect number of employees and total square footage added in 2007.
- Met with developer regarding property at Lakeview and future PGBT
  - To try and maximize development opportunities for them and the City
- UCR (United Commercial Realty) reports a contract pending on the old Brookshire's building.
  - New tenant will take the building down to the shell, redo façade and make it look like a completely new building.
  - Application should be submitted soon.
- Meeting set with a hotel developer for a possible Marriott or Hampton Hotel.

#### *Environment and Conservation*

- Green Building Program for Private Development

- *Green Building Standards for City Facilities*
  - *New Buildings*
  - *Plan to convert existing*
- *Water Conservation*
- *Drainage and Water Quality*
- *Sanitary Sewer*
- *Recycling and Solid Waste*
- *City is offering residents Christmas tree recycling again this year.*
- *Water from North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) is experiencing some odor and taste issues due to a winter algal bloom.*

#### *Transportation*

- *Planning and Budget for efficiency and outcome*
- *Project Delivery*
- *Traffic*
- *Pavement Condition*
- *CIP Update: Word on the Street*

#### *Transportation Update*

- *Project Delivery*
  - *Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)*
    - *Committee-of-the-Whole met on January 8, 2008 at the DART Headquarters.*
      - *Outlined some identified cost savings to better deliver the Rowlett and Irving extensions.*
    - *Holding a community informational meeting in Rowlett.*
      - *Discuss the future of the Blue Line light rail service to Rowlett.*
      - *Thursday, January 17, 2008 at 7:00 pm. at the Council Chambers at City Hall.*
      - *City staff coordinated publicity for meeting with DART.*
  - *Project Delivery*
    - *North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)*
      - *Holding an Open House Public Meeting*
        - *Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. at the Plaza Theater, 521 W. State Street, Garland.*
        - *Discuss design and operational changes to the proposed President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension project; changes to be discussed:*
          - *Conversion to all electronic tolls from the original toll booth.*
          - *Some minor additional turn lanes to add capacity.*
        - *Displays will be available for public viewing.*
        - *Project study team members will be present to answer questions.*
        - *City staff coordinated publicity for meeting with NTTA.*
  - *Traffic*
    - *Roadwork continues, but was delayed through the holiday season*
    - *Designed and placed construction signs*
      - *Depicting zoo animals.*
      - *With special messages.*
      - *About CIP (Capital Improvement Projects).*
      - *Around the City.*
  - *CIP Update: Word on the Street*
    - *Kenwood Heights Update:*
      - *Installation of the box culvert along Kenwood Drive from Long Branch Creek to the channel between Cypress Drive and Maple Lane is complete.*
      - *The waterline has been installed along Kenwood Drive to Maple Lane and is in service.*
      - *Work also continues on the channel between Cypress Drive and Maple Lane.*
      - *The contractor has begun the excavation and sub-grade preparation for the new paving for Kenwood Drive from Wal-Mart to Maple Lane.*

- Kenwood Drive will remain closed until at least February 2008.
- Project is 11% complete.
- Point Royal Estates Update:
  - The sanitary sewer along Point Royal is complete.
  - The storm drain along Point Royal is near completion.
  - The waterline is near completion along Point Royal.
  - Franchise utility conflicts are being worked out for the utilities along Point Royal.
  - Once resolved, the contractor will begin removing old pavement on Point Royal and begin sub-grade preparation.
  - The contractor will begin the sanitary sewer lines along Cedar View and Ashe Bend the week of January 14, 2008.
  - Project is 10% complete.
- Christine St. Reconstruction:
  - This project is now complete with the exception of final approval.
  - The contractor has completed replacing the isolated cracked panels along Christine and several driveways.
  - The project is set for final approval at the February 19, 2008 Council Meeting.
  - Project is 99% complete.
- Miller Road Update:
  - The contractor has installed concrete paving along Rowlett Road for the western and northern lanes.
  - The contractor is in the process of installing driveways to adjacent properties in these locations.
  - When the concrete has cured, the contractor will restore the parkway so traffic can be switched to the new pavement and open all lanes on Rowlett Road.
  - Project is 66 % complete.
- Hickox Road Update:
  - All street paving is complete and open to traffic.
  - The contractor continues to work on ramps and retaining walls and restoring the parkway.
  - The contractor plans to be completed with the project by the end of January.
  - Project is 95 % complete.
- Misc. Concrete/Asphalt Street Reconstruction:
  - The overlay work is complete for:
    - Merritt Road
    - Miller Road
    - Chaha Road
    - Old Rowlett Road
    - Main Street
  - Below are the approximate beginning/completion dates for the remaining asphalt construction projects:
 

<u>Project</u>	<u>Begin Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Dexham Road	April 08	May 08
Liberty Grove Road	February 08	March 08
N. Dalrock Road	Underway	Jan 08

Council questioned staff regarding consideration to prohibit certain weight vehicles to travel south on Dexham Road to extend the life of the asphalt.

Staff suggested that contact be made to the businesses that have heavy weighted vehicles and discuss this matter with them.

Council asked if a legal posting would be required.

Staff recommended the gathering of information and contacting the Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee to discuss the matter.

- *Misc. Concrete/Asphalt Street Reconstruction:*
- *The reconstruction work is complete for:*
  - *Liberty Grove Road (n front of the elementary school)*
  - *Garner Road*
  - *Chiesa Road*

#### *Public Safety*

- *Responsive and Effective Emergency Services*
- *Deterrence and Prevention*
  - *Police Response Times Comparison: All Calls*
  - *Police Response Times Comparison: Priority 1 Calls*

*Council voiced concerns with the emergency response times with the road construction.*

*Staff stated they had concerns with the fire engine response on Rowlett Road.*

- *Fire Rescue:*
  - *Preparing training schedule for 2008 to meet emergency response.*
  - *Developing a plan to begin teaching CPR to city employees and Council then expand from there.*
  - *Emergency Management planning for 2008 Hurricane season with the State; our role will be assisting with reception center for special needs evacuees.*
- *Fire Rescue: Structure Fires - Property Loss*
- *Fire Rescue: Response Times*
- *Fire Rescue: All Medic Units in Use*
- *Fire Rescue: Fire Containment*
- *Park Maintenance staff completed the construction and installation of an emergency cage for the flying field at Springfield Park that includes:*
  - *Fire extinguisher*
  - *First aid kit*
- *Revised City's GIS Federal Emergency Management Association map web page.*

#### *Culture and Recreation Update*

- *The Wet Zone 2008 summer schedule has been outlined and creation of marketing materials has begun.*
- *Main Street trees have been installed and installation of shrubs and perennials will begin next week.*
- *Upcoming events:*
  - *Little Sweetheart Dance, Friday, February 8, 2008 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.*
  - *Breakfast with the Easter Bunny, Friday, March 14, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.*
  - *Eggstra-ordinary Egg Hunt, Saturday, March 15, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.*
- *The Rowlett Community Centre (RCC) is offering 12 new classes this spring.*
- *Through negotiation with the vendor, the cost of the Live Homework Help service for 2007-2008 was reduced by \$1215.*
- *A Reading Wonderland," the Winter Reading Program for children and adults.*
  - *Began on January 8, 2008 and runs through February 2, 2008.*
- *The library has created a separate collection of bilingual and Spanish picture books for children.*

#### *Other Activities*

- *New operating hours went into effect Tuesday, January 2, 2008 for the Animal Shelter; these hours will provide more access to the shelter for customers. New hours are:*

<u>Monday - Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Closed

*Council questioned staff if the new hours were reviewed and approved by the Animal Shelter Advisory Board; asked for the Board's involvement.*

- *The Animal Services Wellness Vaccination Clinic will be held on the following Saturdays from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
  - *January 5, 2008*
  - *January 12, 2008*
  - *January 26, 2008*
- *Rowlett Public Safety Expo is set for Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at the Community Centre.*
- *The first six pets to be posted on the Web site and RTN16 have been successfully adopted.*
  - *The residents said they spotted the animals on www.PetFinder.com.*
  - *We are happy to be a part of the effort to find them good homes.*
- *Police Department celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Citizens Police Academy with a reception.*
  - *Applications for VIPS volunteers were accepted.*
- *The Library Advisory Board held a staff appreciation luncheon for library staff on January 4, 2008.*
- *As an expansion of our customer care program:*
  - *The City's Action Center went live on Friday, January 4, 2008.*
  - *It consolidates the service delivery for call handling for the City's main line, Public Works, and the Business Office (utility billing).*
  - *This offers very consistent information to our customers and a higher level of customer care.*
  - *Action Center will be a one-stop-shop for Public Works, the general Business Office (utility billing) and city operational questions.*
- *A wellness fair was held for city employees and their covered spouses at the Rowlett Community Centre on January 9, 2008.*
- *Donations received:*
  - *Nancy Vermeer - \$500 to Rowlett Library*
- *Communications staff spoke to a group of 16 - 17 year old Girl Scouts at the Library about volunteer opportunities with the City.*
- *Sent out a utility bill stuffer publicizing:*
  - *The Citizen Action Center*
  - *RTN16 programming, including the new talk show, "Rowlett On The Move".*
- *Have completed fiber optic project; connections have been made at:*
  - *Rowlett Community Centre*
  - *Wet Zone*
  - *Fire Station #3*
  - *Fire Station #4 is expected to be connected by end of January.*
- *Replaced the "On Hold" music on the City's phone system and the background music on RTN16 with continuous recorded information about the City of Rowlett.*

3C

*Joint meeting with Keep Rowlett Beautiful. (15 minutes)*

*This item was discussed first during the Work Session.*

*Mike Lancaster introduced the members of the board that were present; thanked the Council for the opportunity to meet during the Work Session.*

*Spoke regarding several of the programs offered by the board: litter pick up through the Adopt-A-Road Volunteer Program; the Lake Ray Hubbard Clean-up Project; sponsored an electronics, cell phone and battery clean-up; worked with Chevron in Humble, Texas to provide the City with two hundred and sixty (260) various types of trees; and supplied recycling containers at Festival of Freedom.*

*Spoke regarding monetary and equipment donations made to the City.*

*Spoke regarding the programs for 2008. The next Lake Ray Hubbard Clean-up day is scheduled for April 19, 2008.*

*Spoke regarding the renewed interest in the Environmental Learning Center.*

*Council asked the role of the Garland Independent School District (GISD) with the Environmental Learning Center.*

*Mr. Lancaster stated the Environmental Learning Center was not part of the GISD; the GISD would participate by allowing the board to promote the Center and allowing students to participate.*

*Council stated it would be interesting to see if the GISD would like to collaborate in a joint venture with the board and the Environmental Learning Center; would like to seek federal grants; GISD's participation would enhance the opportunities to get federal funding.*

*Council asked if the board was getting the support they need to get the news out to the public.*

*Mr. Lancaster felt the board was not getting the support that it needs from the local newspapers.*

*Council suggested the Public Information Office contact the local newspapers to encourage them to pay attention to the board.*

*Council suggested that staff take the lead to inquire with GISD the details to partner with the Environmental Learning Center.*

**3D**

*Discuss the appointing of a Charter Review Commission to make recommendations for Charter revisions for an election to be held November 4, 2008. (10 minutes)*

*Council stated there are statutory obligations in regard to the Charter review; it must be reviewed every five (5) years.*

*Discussed establishing a Charter Review Commission; consists of seven (7) citizens; the scope of the review is set by the Council; the term of office for the Commission as set by the Charter, shall not be more than six (6) months.*

*At the February 5, 2008 meeting, City Council will appoint a group of seven (7) citizens. The Committee will receive the scope of the review at the February 19, 2008 meeting; and all amendments to the Charter to be voted on at the November 4, 2008 election.*

*Mayor Harper appointed Mayor Pro Tem Rushing as a Council representative for the Charter Review Commission; Jeffrey Sheldon was appointed as the Interim Chair.*

- 3E** Discuss casting the City of Rowlett's vote for the fourth member of the Board of Directors of the Dallas Central Appraisal District (DCAD) due to a runoff. (5 minutes)

*Mayor Harper explained the reason for the runoff between R. Scott Wheeler and Michael Hurtt for the fourth member of the Board of Directors of the Dallas Central Appraisal District (DCAD).*

- 3F** Discuss upcoming out-of-town conference with regard to the Council travel policy as prescribed in Resolution 03-16-04J. (5 minutes)

*Staff brought forth information regarding an upcoming out-of-town conference in Austin, Texas that Mayor Pro Tem Rushing would like to attend.*

- 3G** Discuss creating a Residential Green Building Program by adopting the Environmental Protection Agency EnergyStar Program Standards. (10 minutes)

*Staff gave an explanation as to why this item was sent back to the Planning and Zoning Commission to review; the Commission held a public comment period during their January 8, 2008 meeting; a representative from the City of Frisco will attend the January 22, 2008 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to discuss and answer questions related to adopting the Environmental Protection Agency EnergyStar Program Standards.*

*Council reiterated the initiative for this program was to affect a closure on how the City was verifying the compliance to existing code; the program would have to be easily administered by the City (low or no cost); have a proven track record; documented participation by the building community; and an immediate financial impact.*

#### **4. DISCUSS REGULAR SESSION ITEMS**

*Items 9A and 9F were asked to be pulled from the Consent Agenda to be individually considered.*

*Work Session adjourned at 7:20 p.m.*

#### **CONVENE INTO THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS (7:30 P.M.)**

*Convened in the Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m.*

#### **5. INVOCATION**

*The invocation was led by LeNeil Thompson, Stillwater Community Church.*

**6. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Harper.*

**7. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS****7A Proclamation for Diana Cooley - Texas Association for Gifted and Talented Parent of the Year.**

*Mayor Harper presented Diana Cooley with a proclamation.*

**8. CITIZENS' INPUT**

*No one spoke during Citizens' Input.*

**9. CONSENT AGENDA**

*Mayor Harper explained the procedure regarding the Consent Agenda and the rights of each Councilmember and each citizen to have any consent agenda item removed to be considered individually.*

*Items 9A and 9F were pulled from the Consent Agenda to be considered individually.*

*Mayor Harper stated "I've already polled the City Council and there are no agenda items but for Item 9A that needs to be taken for individual consideration. Is there anyone in the audience who wishes to have an agenda items taken for individual consideration?"*

*City Secretary read the items into the record.*

**9A Consider approving minutes from the December 17, 2007 Special Council Meeting and December 18, 2007 Regular Council Meeting.**

*City Secretary read item into the record.*

*Mayor Harper stated "Is there any discussion on that before we ask for a motion? I'd like to make a comment; you will notice that when I vote, my vote will be to abstain. As a point of clarification, I was not present for the December 18, 2007 Council meeting; I was in South Carolina during the holidays and so my abstention means I can't approve it since I wasn't here to know what was said and not said. Any other comments or questions? If not we need a motion.*

*Councilmember Alberts replied "Would you like to consider these separately since you were here for the December 17th meeting?"*

*Mayor Harper stated "No, I realize I was here for the 17th; I'm going to abstain from both, Mr. Alberts. Thank you for that offer though."*

**A motion was made by Councilmember Alberts, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Rushing, that this matter be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** 4 - Councilmember Alberts, Councilmember Maggiotto, Councilmember Mays and Mayor Pro Tem Rushing

**Abstained:** 1 - Mayor Harper

**Excused:** 1 - Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gottle

9B

Consider a resolution approving amendment #2 to the service agreement with ACS State and Local Solutions, Inc. ("ACS") relating to the terms and management of the City of Rowlett Automated Red Light Enforcement Program.

**This Matter was adopted as RES-001-08 on the Consent Agenda.**

9C

Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a license agreement with Dallas Area Rapid Transit for the purpose of installing an 8-inch sanitary sewer across the UP Rowlett Line north of Katy Railroad Park at Mile Post 747.38.

**This Matter was adopted as RES-002-08 on the Consent Agenda.**

9D

Consider a resolution authorizing the final acceptance of the improvements and release of the retainage to the Fain Group, Incorporated in the amount of one hundred five thousand three hundred twenty-eight dollars and five cents (\$105,328.05) for the Main Street sidewalk and hardscaping project.

**This Matter was adopted as RES-003-08 on the Consent Agenda.**

9E

Consider a resolution directing City staff to proceed with the design of rehabilitation of Rowlett Road Phase 3.

**This Matter was adopted as RES-004-08 on the Consent Agenda.**

### **Passed The Consent Agenda**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rushing, seconded by Councilmember Mays, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** 5 - Mayor Harper, Councilmember Alberts, Councilmember Maggiotto, Councilmember Mays and Mayor Pro Tem Rushing

**Excused:** 1 - Deputy Mayor Pro Tem

9F

Consider a resolution casting the City of Rowlett's vote for the fourth member of the Board of Directors of the Dallas Central Appraisal District (DCAD) due to a runoff.

*City Secretary read item into the record.*

*Mayor Harper stated "Council, any comments or questions about that particular agenda item? If not, we will have nominations. For the citizens present, there was a run-off in the election for representative to the Dallas County Appraisal District. We are voting between two (2) gentlemen who have moved to the run-off stage if you will. So we are looking to vote for either Scott Wheeler or Michael Hurtt. So we'll start with Scott Wheeler and we'll vote on that individual and then we'll move to voting on Michael Hurtt. Does that work for everyone, Council? Okay, so we have before us the question of voting for Scott Wheeler. This motion carries; a unanimous vote for Mr. Wheeler so we'll not take up the vote for Mr. Hurtt at this point."*

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rushing, seconded by Councilmember Mays, that this matter be approved as RES-005-08 by nominating R. Scott Wheeler. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Ayes:** 5 – Mayor Harper, Councilmember Alberts, Councilmember Maggiotto, Councilmember Mays and Mayor Pro Tem Rushing

**Excused:** 1 – Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gottel

## 10. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

10A

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending Planned Development (PD) No. 12-18-84B and allowing a retail building that exceeds 14,000 square feet within a PD-C-1 area (limited commercial/retail uses); allowing a maximum 15,520 square foot building with conditions on Lot 2, Block 1, Springfield Plaza, 1.8± acres of land located on the west side of Rowlett Road, 190± feet south of Hickox Road. (Case No. ZAM07-292)

*City Secretary read item into the record.*

*Mayor Harper stated "Before we open the public hearing, we'll have a staff presentation by Ms. Samford.*

*Keri Samford, Director of Planning and Community Development stated "This is in a planned development that's been approved for PD-C-1 which is basically neighborhood services. It was adopted in 1984 by the City Council. At that time, it limited the size of building that could go there to fourteen thousand (14,000) square feet. The applicant has requested that he be able to build up to fifteen thousand five hundred twenty (15,520) square feet; which is really why the request for this PD. There were two (2) conditions put on that at the Planning and Zoning Commission that was approved at their December 11, 2007 meeting. If you have any other questions, I'll be available."*

*Mayor Harper stated "So to reiterate, what is before us is a request to move the maximum limits on a one time basis from fourteen thousand (14,000) feet to a little bit more than fifteen thousand (15,000) feet. Is that correct, Ms. Samford?"*

*Ms. Samford replied "That is correct."*

*Mayor Harper opened the public hearing at 7:55 p.m. and closed at 8:11 p.m. with one person speaking.*

*Dan Adhamy stated "Good evening, I'm one of the owners of the building; I live in Plano, of course, not Rowlett. The request is to increase the size of the building to house what we're trying to put in there."*

*Mayor Harper asked "What will you be putting in there, just as a matter of interest?"*

*Mr. Adhamy replied "Restaurants and retails; we already have three (3) restaurant signs up for Cabbage Patch, Subway and a Chinese restaurant."*

*Mayor Harper stated "Wonderful, very nice."*

*Mr. Adhamy stated "And of course, retail is just typical neighborhood retail."*

*Mayor Harper stated "Council, any questions?"*

Mayor Pro Tem Rushing stated "Yes, Mayor; I have a question for staff actually. On this plan, does it allow enough parking for sit down restaurants, even with the larger building?"

Ms. Samford replied "Yes, ma'am."

Mayor Pro Tem Rushing stated "Okay, thank you."

Mayor Harper stated "We welcome these kinds of endeavors and we thank you for showing the initiative and investing your time and treasure in this. Thank you so much."

Mr. Adhamy replied "Thank you."

Mayor Harper stated "Is there anyone else who wishes to speak for this proposed ordinance? That being the case, we'll close the public hearing. Council, we have before us the proposed ordinance, if there are no more comments. Mr. Alberts."

Councilmember Alberts stated "Thank you Mayor, I have questions for staff. Ms. Samford, at the P&Z meeting they recommended approval of this project with the stipulation of two (2) requirements. One, was the screening wall; the other was a twenty percent (20%)...was a request that a least twenty percent (20%) of the façade be accented stone, accent masonry."

Ms. Samford replied "On the front of the building, yes, that is correct."

Councilmember Alberts stated "Right, I don't see that additional requirement being reflected in the Architectural in Exhibit C. Isn't that something we'd want to put in there to make sure that happens?"

Ms. Samford replied "Yes, sir."

Councilmember Alberts stated "Can we have staff make sure that Exhibit C is amended to include the twenty percent (20%) requirement for accent stone and masonry?"

Mayor Harper stated "And for the record, I believe the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of this 6 - 1 and there were two (2) citizens who expressed interest in this change; one (1) for and one (1) against. I think we're ready to go."

Councilmember Alberts stated "Is the City Attorney comfortable with that with Exhibit C...?"

David Berman, City Attorney replied "Yes, as long as it's clear in the motion to approve."

Councilmember Alberts stated "I was going to make a motion."

Ms. Samford stated "That was clear in the motion of the Planning and Zoning Commission, as well. So thank you for pointing that out."

Councilmember Alberts stated "My motion was going to be to recommend approval approving the recommendation that was made by the Planning and Zoning Commission."

A motion was made by Councilmember Alberts, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Rushing, that this matter be approved as amended as ORD-001-08. The motion included amending Exhibit C to reflect the masonry requirements from the Planning and Zoning Commission recommendations at their January 8, 2008 meeting.

**Ayes:** 5 – Mayor Harper, Councilmember Alberts, Councilmember Maggiotto,  
Councilmember Mays and Mayor Pro Tem Rushing

**Excused:** 1 – Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gottel

Mayor Harper stated "Let me make a few announcements and then we'll move into the State of the City Address. I'm sure a few of you are curious about what is going on with the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Authority (DART) and the Light Rail Station that has been promised for the City of Rowlett. Let me bring you up to date on what I know. As you know, this has been in the newspaper because there has been a shortfall on funding for the light rail station that will be extended from Downtown Garland to Downtown Rowlett; some light rail expansion in the City of Irving. I asked for some DART Board officials to be present this evening; they are in the City of Irving having dinner with them this evening so they couldn't be with us. At any rate, we have expressed to them very strongly at their Board meeting on January 8th, I believe it was, Mr. Owens and I attended and reminded them of the history of our relationship with DART. We were one of the founding members and for the last twenty-three (23) years have been paying one (1) penny of our 2¢ locally controlled sales tax; more than \$40 million into DART with the promise of having a light rail station extended from the City of Garland to the City of Rowlett. That has not happened yet and the dates have been changed twice before and now there was some discussion, I used past tense, there was some discussion about changing that date again. So we spoke very passionately to the Board letting them know that it's time to deliver on the promises; it's time to execute the contract. We've paid faithfully on time more than \$40 million with a present value of roughly \$100 million. We want our light rail station. Furthermore, we want it as previously proposed. That is, it will be a double rail station coming from the City of Garland. We should have Mr. Enoch come in if he's in the back. Mark, if you can hear me, would you please come in? There you are. Mark, would you stand up? This is the Honorable Mark Enoch, prior Mayor of Rowlett and were your ears burning just now sir because he is a member of the DART Board."

Mr. Enoch replied "I thought you were talking about someone other than me."

Mayor Harper stated "I want to tell you...I'm going to interrupt my little speech to tell you that Mayor Enoch represents us extraordinarily well at the DART Board and he is one of many who will be voting on this issue. And we are competing; we are competing for very scarce funds. The funds that we need total \$100 million; the funds that the City of Irving needs total \$800 million. And we are concerned as a city and as a set of city leaders that we are not left behind in order to serve someone else. There was a recent announcement that perhaps what might be done is delay expansion of a line in south Dallas or in Oak Cliff and of course that was expected by us. We had already told them 'Please do not expand your services when there are those who have no services'. And so when that happened and was reported in the Dallas Morning News, I wrote to Dallas Councilwoman Linda Koop who made the public statement as Chair of the Transportation and Environment Committee for the City of Dallas that all members of DART should have their promises kept. No one should be left behind in order to serve one over another. I wrote her and thanked her for taking that position because that is the proper position to take. I also copied the Dallas City Council because they have quite a bit more influence, I believe, with the DART Board than does the City of Rowlett and its Council. I also wrote to the DART Board, Mr. Enoch has received a copy of that letter, reiterating what I said to them on January 8th which is 'live up to your promises'. There were a lot of words but that's what I said 'live up to your promises'. On January 22nd we are taking a bus, it won't be a bus load will it Mr. Owens? It will be a group of people; we're going to take the light rail train from Garland to the headquarters of DART in Downtown Dallas on January 22nd. More information will be presented by Donna Huerta tomorrow, but the January 22nd DART Board meeting, Mr. Enoch, I am told it starts at 2:00 p.m. Does that sound right?"

Mr. Enoch replied "Actually I don't think the exact time of that is set yet, Mr. Mayor. I'll know Friday particularly. Nancy Johnson will probably know tomorrow about 4:00 p.m. when it will start. So that might dovetail nicely with Donna's work."

Mayor Harper stated "I will address the DART Board, yet again. I hope all you citizens, those of you who are here tonight, those of you who will be hearing or reading of this meeting, please plan to attend the January 22nd DART Board meeting so that we can send

a message to the DART Board members that we too are passionate; we too while we are quiet, never the less, are firm in our beliefs that it is time for them to deliver on their promises. So that's where we are on DART. Now I will tell you that the DART staff, the executive staff, has told us the date of 2012 is still intact. They have told us that the scope of the project is still intact but for one piece of it and that piece is at Rowlett Road; we want an elevated track and they are suggesting that may not be possible because of the amount or volume of traffic that is on Rowlett Road. Ongoing discussions, Pat Baugh meets with the DART staff and we'll work that out if it can be worked out; it'll be driven by data not by anything else. I'm not as concerned about that question, but I am concerned that it would be convenient for Rowlett to be too quiet and therefore not heard; we need to be heard on January 22nd. I will be there and I invite you to join me. More information will be sent out electronically and otherwise tomorrow. Council, questions or comments on any of that information? Thank you very much.

I would also like to mention that on February 16th at 2:00 p.m., Veterans Park will be dedicated by Congressman Sam Johnson; thank you for coming to Rowlett and helping us do that. Congressman Sam Johnson served in the Air Force the same time that I did. He, as you know, is a Vietnam POW, prisoner of war, and as it turns out its a small world; when he was welcomed back from being imprisoned for seven (7) years in North Vietnam, I was the young Captain who organized the reception for him at Seymore-Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, so it is particularly a proud day for me to honor Sam Johnson visiting us and honoring all veterans and veterans groups at our Veterans Park. And so I also extend another invitation to all veterans, all veterans groups and to all of the scouts; we want our young people, our cub scouts, our boy scouts, our girl scouts to be present and see what a wonderful hero we have in Congressman Sam Johnson and see us and help us dedicate Veterans Park.

At this time, Mayor Harper called a short recess.

10B

State of the City address by Mayor Harper.

Mayor Pro Tem Rushing stated "I am the Mayor Pro Tem for the City and the Mayor has asked me to do a brief introduction for him and I wanted to welcome all of you here this evening; all of our special guests and our citizens. It's nice to see the Chamber full. There are many nights we sit here with nobody; so it's real nice. I wish all of you would come to every meeting; the first and third Tuesday of the month but I just want to reiterate my excitement of what an exciting time it is in Rowlett. We are moving forward with lots of things; the last eight and one-half (8 ½) months have been the most enjoyable time of my three and one-half (3 ½) years on the Council. Under Mayor Harper's leadership, the current Council has worked as a group discussing and debating issues to reach an agreement to move forward in a prudent and realistic manner to move our City in a forward direction. As the Charter states, tonight the Mayor will fulfill the Charter; the Mayor will address the citizens with his State of the City Address outlining all the exciting things happening in our City and what we have to look forward to in the next year. And with that I'll turn it over to Mayor John Harper."

Mayor Harper stated "Thank you and Council, you should have a handout of the slides; Katie Corder is going to manage the slides for us this evening so if we look at each other from time to time it is because we're trying to coordinate my words and those slides.

Thank you, Mayor Pro Tem Rushing; also for presiding at the last City Council meeting while I was away for the holidays. I am not sure, but I think that was the first time that a Rowlett City Council meeting was presided over by a woman. And if that is correct, congratulations for being a pioneer and as well for being such a positive role model.

*Thank you also to all of the City Council members, the City Attorney, the City Manager and Directors, City Secretary and Staff, and to our Municipal Court officials. And, a special thanks to all city employees, I see some in the audience, they have had to make a great personal sacrifice this year in order to keep providing basic city services to Rowlett citizens. It takes a lot of people working together for a common good to make this large and complex City operate well and effectively serve all of the citizens. So I thank all of you for your service.*

*I am very pleased to have other elected officials either here or represented here this evening. We are blessed by some of the very best elected officials that I have seen in my sixty-five (65) years. Senator John Cornyn is represented this evening by Andy Rittler; is Andy here? Andy hasn't arrived; well, he is the North Texas Regional Director for Senator Cornyn. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson sends her regrets. I've had the privilege with meeting with Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, a very, very wise and wonderful Senator, as well as, lady. So we're blessed by that. For Congressman Johnson, we have Susan Fisher and Mary Barry representing; thanks to both of you. Congressman Hall...is Tom Hughes here this evening? I saw Congressman Hall on Saturday. And Congressman Hensarling represented by Margaret Smith...didn't make it either. We have State Senator Deuell; Senator Deuell is present this evening. When I say that we are blessed by wonderful elected officials, Senator Deuell is perhaps the best model of that. Senator Deuell heard my words on Saturday when I acknowledged him and Congressman Hall as two (2) people that I take personal pride in being in any meeting or any room when they are present. They work hard for the State of Texas; they work hard for the City of Rowlett; and I'm very, very grateful that I can be associated with them. Senator, thank you for coming this evening, it's very, very much appreciated. We also have State Representative Driver who is not here this evening...oh, Joe, my apologizes; now how about that for a gaffe. Joe, you blended right in. Representative Driver just blended right in. I would like to put you in the same category as Senator Deuell; Representative Driver looks after us. He is our primary State Representative. We are blessed with three (3) State Representative but Representative Driver serves us and serves us well, meets with staff, and with the City Manager; the few times that I've had to ask for help, he has been there for us, for the Rowlett citizens, so thank you for all that you do; it's very, very, very appreciated. State Representative Jodie Laubenberg couldn't be here. Dallas County Commissioner Mike Cantrell was to be here; a family matter came up and he called me and what I said to him I'd like to repeat, which is 'You are a good friend of the City of Rowlett.' We can point to projects, activities and events that Commissioner Cantrell has helped us with; we are very, very grateful to him and to all Mike Cantrell does; not just for the City of Rowlett but for all of Dallas County. Although he's not here, thanks to him. We're represented in Rockwall County by Commissioner Jerry Wimpee; the Garland Independent School District Board President is Linda Griffin; Rockwall Independent School District Board President Brad Lamberth; the DART Chairwoman Lynn Flint Shaw; we have Mayor Enoch here somewhere, I think he is still here representing DART. Prior Rowlett Mayors we have Mayor John Schroy, the Honorable John Schroy, thank you sir for being here this evening. We have quite a few Mayors that we invited, Buddy Wall, Mark Enoch, Mike McCallum, J. H. Thompson and Shane Johnson; we're having you, John represent all of the Mayors so thank you so much. Also, the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce, a friend, Drew Howard in the back. Drew has been working extremely hard, not only for the Chamber, but for the City and for economic development, which I will be reporting on in just a few moments. Drew Howard and others from the Chamber have had a major role in that; Drew, thank you for all that you do. And finally, the Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, that would be Ron Gafford; I don't know if Ron is present or not. Okay, I think I covered everyone. This is always dangerous when you don't recognize an elected official; you saw me with a terrible gaffe with Representative Driver but if there are any other elected officials that I missed, please wave at me and I'll be happy to acknowledge you.*

*I do want to say to all of our elected officials, without your continuing support, whether in Washington, Austin, Dallas or Rockwall County, we could not be such a great City. By the way, did you know that the City of Rowlett is in two counties? About 8,000 of our citizens live in Rockwall County and are represented by different congressmen; Congressman Hall, Congressman Johnson and Congressman Jeb Hensarling, as well as, by different State Representatives; State Representative Driver and State Representative Laubenberg. We're fortunate to have more than one (1) representative and I'm grateful for all that they do.*

*As the Mayor Pro Tem said each year the Mayor is required to present the State of the City in a public meeting. And tonight I will present to you my assessment. The State of the City is good. Rowlett is a great place to live and it is becoming an even better place to live, to raise a family, to operate a business and to simply enjoy life. The assessment I will give to you tonight is mine and thus unavoidably biased to some degree. The accomplishments I will cite tonight could not have happened without teamwork. Without the support of the City Council, the Mayor cannot accomplish anything. Without the efforts of the City Staff, the Mayor and Council cannot accomplish anything. Without the citizens support, none of us can be effective for very long.*

*Tonight I will first present my first view of the State of the City prior to May 2007 when I became Mayor of this great City. I have served as your Mayor for a little more than seven months now and so will then present my view of the State of the City today. After that, I will describe what is planned and what I will propose for the next twelve (12) months and then close with a discussion of some of my concerns about the near term. There is much to say so I will be at the podium for a while, please bear with me. I have prepared slides that highlight my main points. My presentation, for those of you who know me won't be surprised; my presentation is going to be very forthright. That is one of my personal values. I am not meaning to be overly critical but I do want to fully inform all citizens. So, please accept my candor in a positive way.*

*The Mission Statement for the City of Rowlett is: 'To provide high quality services, utilize best practices, and promote well-planned growth while enhancing our community's sense of home.' The stated Vision for the City of Rowlett is that it will be: 'A unique community where families enjoy life and feel at home.' None of that has changed. The Mission and Vision of the City remains as it was under the past administration. The City Strategic Plan and sub-plans remain unchanged for now. What has changed is the path that your Mayor and Council are taking to carry out the plans, accomplish the mission, and achieve the vision.*

*Last year, the City Manager wisely commissioned a survey of Rowlett citizens. That survey disclosed that two (2) top things valued most about Rowlett by those citizens is its sense of community and its proximity to Lake Ray Hubbard and to the Metroplex. The four most mentioned things that would make Rowlett better are street improvements, lower taxes, improved spending of revenue, and more restaurants, shopping centers, and businesses. I find it hard to argue with any of those findings.*

*Several months ago, the City hired Tom Stellman, an economic development expert, to conduct focus groups with Rowlett citizens and those interested in Rowlett. The purpose of the focus groups was to determine the general consensus of the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This is commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis and is a very effective planning tool used by both the private and the public sectors.*

*The strengths of the City of Rowlett, as cited by the focus groups, include: our school systems both Garland ISD and Rockwall ISD, our growing regional population, and our proximity to Dallas.*

*Some weaknesses cited are: accessibility to the City of Rowlett, lack of shopping and dining in the City, and a negative perception of City processes.*

*Rowlett has many opportunities as well: the North Shore Commercial District, 1,000 undeveloped acres in northern Rowlett, Main Street Development opportunities, and an expanding number of healthcare service providers locating in Rowlett.*

*The threats to Rowlett achieving its mission and realizing its vision include: delays to the Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension, a ten (10) mile, six (6) lane Tollway that will go right through the North Shore Commercial District and the center of the City, connecting with I-30 and south Garland. Another threat is not having sufficient access to the North Shore Commercial District. One more threat is the continuing housing downturn affecting property taxes and other revenues for the City.*

*Citizens, your Mayor and City Council, as well as, the City Manager and Directors are paying close attention to what you are saying. We do get it.*

*When I asked you, the Citizens of Rowlett, to put your faith in me and elect me as your Mayor, I promised you that I would improve communications with citizens, improve the financial position and operations of the City, and emphasize economic development efforts. My personal assessment of our City then was that major change, cultural change, was needed for all of the citizens of Rowlett to be served fairly and equitably.*

*You will recall that seven months ago the comments made by citizens at the City Council meeting were edited out of the tape that was broadcast on the City's Cable Channel 16. I said then that this was censorship and improper. Citizens then were also not allowed to provide any input on the Consent Agenda at City Council meetings. City Departments were perceived by many to not care about the needs of citizens. And, there was a noticeable lack of press releases about the many good things happening in Rowlett.*

*The financial woes of the City have been well chronicled. Rowlett has the highest city property tax rate of similar size cities in North Texas. Plans called for as much as an eight (8) cent increase to those already high taxes. The City is overly dependent on residents of Rowlett paying property taxes. There is not enough of a commercial tax base right now which generates revenues to allow basic services for the City to grow. At the same time, the City of Rowlett has the highest city utility rates of similar size cities in North Texas. An ordinance in force seven (7) months ago required that any increases in the costs from providers be automatically added to those highest utility rates. Also, contracts for services were renewed without sufficient public hearings, in my opinion. There was more than \$100 million in borrowed funds being held in accounts, earning interest, but the interest earned, by law, could not be greater than the cost of the borrowed funds. Meanwhile, each year the cost of doing capital improvement projects increased far greater than any interest earnings. Most of the \$100 million was money borrowed without the specific approval of Rowlett voters. And last fiscal year the General Fund of the City was allowed to drop below its mandated reserve level of 10%. Only about twenty (20) days of operating funds were being held in reserve.*

*The Economic Development Advisory Board, charged with making recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, had not met in the six (6) months prior to my becoming your Mayor. In my opinion, the Mayor and City Council were not reaching out to the Rowlett Chamber or to other Chambers of Commerce such as in Garland or Rockwall or to the Greater Dallas Chamber that were able to help with the City's economic development. Rowlett has many civic groups such as the Rotary Club, Exchange Club, and Kiwanis that were not involved, and are not involved in planning economic development nor was there sufficient interaction among city leaders and regional leaders, especially those able to affect mass transit projects. Developers and brokers, those who will bring new businesses and new residents to Rowlett, were not sufficiently involved in planning Rowlett's future...save for a few.*

*To learn the State of the City, you need to ask only a few focused questions.*

*Is the City one where its residents and businesses are the center of every decision made by the city leaders?*

*Is the City one where its cost of living and associated benefits are in balance?*

*Is the City one where its customer service is practiced every day?*

*Today, much progress has been made thanks to the hard work and support of your City Council. Your Mayor, City Council, City Staff, and civic leaders are working together for the greater good of all 55,000 Rowlett citizens. There is great citizen involvement in civic affairs. There are eleven (11) boards and commissions with more than eighty (80) volunteer members providing support and advice to the Mayor and City Council. Unlike in the past, each of those boards and commissions have or will have the City Council leadership, either the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, or the Deputy Mayor Pro Tem, meet with them to coordinate goals and objectives and to assure their effectiveness in making a difference in their City. Volunteerism in the City is increasing elsewhere also. The City Library just recently reported that volunteer hours were up more than 43%. The City Manager and staff are making a greater effort to recruit and coordinate volunteers to the City. There are many ways to volunteer: VIPS - Volunteers in Police Service, CERT - Citizens Emergency Response Team, the Animal Shelter, and more. The City must rely on volunteer help; there simply are not enough funds to pay for the services that volunteers provide. I recently received an offer of volunteering from Kurt Horting, Pastor of Still Water Community Church. He wrote: 'Our church has a passion and conviction to help out the community of Rowlett. We were thinking that we could do things like clean up parks or provide labor for light maintenance jobs to help families in need to get their homes up to code.' Thank you, Pastor. This is just what the City and its Citizens need for its volunteers.*

*The City Manager and City Staff are also reaching out to local businesses to provide more sponsorship of special events in the City. The extra funds provided by sponsors will make the difference in the size and scope of special events that are enjoyed by all.*

*Today, the City of Rowlett is an active partner, a full partner, in the planning and decision-making throughout the region. Your Mayor is a member of the Executive Committee of the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC), as well as, a new member of the Finance Committee of the DMRC. Although not now a member of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), your Mayor attends their board meetings and is soliciting a 'place at the table' for Rowlett. I am optimistic that will occur. Your Mayor is an active member of the Rockwall County Planning Consortium. When he can, your Mayor also attends the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) board meetings and the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) board meetings. I also have met with the Garland Independent School District Board and plan to meet with the Rockwall Independent School District Board. All of these agencies and organizations are decision makers affecting the future of Rowlett. We must be partners with them. Each of these agencies has responded very favorably to Rowlett. Recently the City Manager planned and held a Regional Transportation Summit at which many of these agencies were represented and spoke to more than one hundred and fifty (150) Rowlett citizens about major projects and activities. As I said, the City of Rowlett is a full-fledged partner in regional planning now.*

*As a new Mayor, I have been warmly welcomed by other mayors in the Metroplex. I am especially grateful to Mayor Ronald Jones of Garland, Mayor Bill Cecil of Rockwall, Mayor Mike Felix of Sachse, and Mayor Tom Leppert of Dallas. Each of them has given me invaluable guidance and support. I also want to thank prior Rowlett mayors Buddy Wall, Mark Enoch, Mike McCallum, and John Schroy for their advice and counsel, as well.*

*This Mayor and City Council demand that all communications with and to Rowlett citizens be respectful, timely, and forthcoming. Citizens should not have to guess at the answers to their questions or concerns. Citizens should not have to wonder if their phone call or email or letter will even be acknowledged. The City Manager has responded with a very effective system called the 'Citizens Action Center'. Whenever an inquiry or concern is made by a citizen, it is entered into the Citizens Action Center database. The City Manager and the Council can then monitor the issue and the response, thus assuring timely and accurate information being provided. The citizen can also monitor their issue online at the city website: Rowlett.com. This system is still in its early stages but is getting more and more use every day. In November, the Citizen Action Center received and managed more than eight hundred and fifty (850) citizen issues. My thanks to Katie Corder, Assistant to the City Manager, who is leading this project. Another excellent communication system installed by the City Manager is: 'Word on the Street'. This is a bi-weekly update of all the major capital improvement projects of the City. What is especially helpful is a forecast of road construction conditions that might affect commuter travel. This system too can be accessed at the city website: Rowlett.com. At the urging of Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottel, 'Pet Match' was added to the City website. There you can see animals available at the City Animal Shelter for adoption and just this evening I learned that all of the animals that have been on Pet Match have been adopted. What a wonderful result, so thanks to Councilman Gottel and thanks to you Craig for what you've done there.*

*Another strong value of this Mayor and this City Council is that city operations and planning be transparent and available to all citizens. I have already talked about the changes to the City Council meetings. In addition, there is much more programming now on Rowlett Television Network - RTN 16. All of the City Council meetings are rebroadcast, as well as, any special meetings. For example, there will be several extra City Council meetings over the next few months to consider proposed changes in utility rates, changes in budgeting, changes in capital improvement project planning and management, and more. All of those special sessions will be televised on RTN16. By mid-year, we expect to have on demand capability via the city website for those who do not have cable tv access. Since October, your Mayor and the City Manager co-host an hour-long news program that is presented monthly. The two of us go into great detail about projects and activities of interest to Rowlett citizens. The most recent show was just placed on RTN16. Check the city website for broadcast times. Thanks to the effort of Mr. Stanley Pollard and others, your Mayor has a monthly column in the Dallas Morning News. It appears on the fourth Saturday of each month in the NeighborsGo section. Each month I write about a specific activity of our City. And, the first Town Hall meeting for this administration is set for February 7, I believe that will be in the Community Centre, and another Town Hall meeting is set for June 5. Unlike at the City Council meetings where discussions are restricted, town hall meetings are venues where any question can be asked and discussed.*

*Your Mayor and Council have spent quite a bit of time during the last seven (7) months on financial management. The City Charter is clear that the City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the City. However, just as clear is the Mayor and City Council's responsibility to provide effective oversight of city operations and especially oversight of City financial management. To that end, the City Council provided a Statement of Guiding Principles to the City Manager to assist him as he proposed an operating budget and a capital budget for the City. These twenty-six (26) guiding principles set the parameters for budget decision-making and budget execution. The principles, which are still in force, declared that there will be no city property tax increase, no increase in city utility charges, no new borrowing, and the minimum reserves would be met. Following those principles would lead to the highest and best use of the limited resources available to the City. The City Manager and Directors and the City Council considered numerous 'what if' scenarios to determine the highest and best use within the guidelines provided. As you know, your Mayor and Council decided to reallocate funds from the operating budget to the capital budget so that a strategic investment in infrastructure could be done. By now I am sure you have seen some of the results of that investment. Almost twelve (12) miles of neighborhood*

roads have been resurfaced. More than three-thousand (3,000) potholes have been repaired in the past six (6) months. Major repairs are being made to the collector roads leading to and from the neighborhoods. This wise investment in infrastructure not only improves the Rowlett neighborhoods but also leads to lower future operating expenses. At the same time, major projects to renovate the Kenwood Heights neighborhood and the Point Royal Estates neighborhood were started, using the funds previously held as an investment in a bank account. When these decisions were made, your City Council acted in a deliberate and careful fashion to ensure that further reallocations would not be necessary in the future - that this was a one-time correction.

This change in oversight of the finances of the City gives the City Manager more authority but also requires of him more accountability. The City Manager now reports monthly to the City Council financial performance indicators. We receive two (2) pages instead of twenty-seven (27) pages, a short summary of personnel transactions, and a one (1) page summary of budget transfers. In addition, there is a City Council Finance Committee that previews in depth any proposed policy matter that should go to the whole Council for their consideration. This is modeled after the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 that is now mandated for public corporations. Your Council is working hard for you. The City Manager is still looking for ways to save in the current operating and capital budgets. And, any such savings will be reallocated to priority needs, as established by the City Council.

Economic development is a term often used by cities to describe their goals for growth in population, jobs, or tax base. This growth is deemed essential in order to provide funds for more than basic services from the City. However, the growth can be very risky. You can see in other cities where the growth has outstripped the infrastructure, forcing crisis management. To reduce that risk, a strategic plan for economic development is necessary. If the existing infrastructure will not support the desired growth, the City would borrow and raise taxes to build that infrastructure in anticipation. If the forecasted growth in revenues does not occur, the risk then becomes reality and can lead to very serious consequences for the City and for its citizens. In Rowlett, proper planning is essential and is underway. Your Mayor and City Council are working on a strategic plan for economic development that will be finalized in March.

I believe that economic development must first begin with civic pride. If the residents of the City are not proud to say they are from Rowlett, it is foolish to expect that developers and brokers will bring their clients to Rowlett. The Council has already started a program of neighborhood revitalization to assure that Rowlett citizens do take pride in their city. While the comprehensive program will not be proposed by the City Manager until the end of January, several components have already been approved by the City Council. Targeted code enforcement is well underway in the City. The entire city will be inspected over the next twelve (12) months with emphasis on high grass and weeds violations, junk vehicles, fences in disrepair, outside storage in violation of the code, and tree limbs blocking sidewalks, streets, and signs. Another component of neighborhood revitalization is to adopt the latest building standards. Councilman Maggiotto has provided the leadership for implementation of 'Green' building standards in the City. Those standards were approved by the Council earlier today.

For a suburban community like ours, mass transit is the 'trigger' for economic development. As traffic congestion worsens, air quality becomes poorer, businesses and families look to locate where there is mass transit. Retail businesses will locate where there is a critical mass of consumers with the demographics they are seeking. You can see the effect of the President George Bush Turnpike on the City of Garland. You can see the effect of I-30 on the City of Rockwall. Rowlett does not have access to such mass transit systems. That is about to change.

The President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension project is well underway. This will be a ten (10) mile, six (6) lane toll road from State Highway 78 in Garland, passing through the center of Rowlett, and connecting to I-30 via a new one (1) mile bridge over Lake Ray

Hubbard. Purchasing of the rights of way for the roadway is close to completion. Construction should begin by mid-year and will take three (3) years to complete. Segments of the Tollway will be open as soon as July 2010.

The DART Blue Line expansion project from Garland to Rowlett, as I said earlier, has been in the news quite a bit lately. This project calls for light passenger rail to be extended from downtown Garland to downtown Rowlett by the end of 2012. This rail line will allow Rowlett citizens to commute to downtown Dallas and eventually to both airports. DART is now projecting the cost of this project to be much greater than originally planned and the DART Board of Directors must now decide how to find the additional funds needed for this project which will cost around \$250 million to complete as currently planned. Just think what we could have done with the \$100 million dollars that we had paid into DART over the last twenty-three (23) years. Regardless, we are committed to DART. Cities such as Rockwall did not join DART and so have had those extra funds and clearly have enjoyed more economic development because of it. Senior staff members of DART have come to Rowlett and presented their circumstances and also assured the City that the schedule to bring light rail to Rowlett in 2012 will not change. And as I said earlier, the DART Board will make their decision on January 22. Your Mayor will be there to represent each and every one of you and will continue to speak out for the City of Rowlett.

Adding to the effectiveness of the Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension is a proposed Interconnector from Merritt Road to Liberty Grove. This Interconnector will provide the needed access to the North Shore Commercial District. Funding for it will come from toll road revenues in North Texas. A final decision on funding will be made this Spring. I am optimistic since this project does address regional transportation needs.

Another project that is regional rather than local is a proposed Rowlett Waterfront Station Park-N-Ride located on property owned by the City of Dallas at Dalrock Road and I-30. This property is actually located in Rockwall County. Most of the required funding is in place for this project to construct a one thousand (1,000) space parking area and facilities. This project will primarily benefit Rockwall and Hunt counties. And discussions among all the parties continue and a final decision is expected soon.

This slide on the screen now shows the planned route for the Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension. You can see the planned ramps and tollbooths as well. Also shown, in red, is the proposed Interconnector. Both of these roads will provide access to the one thousand (1,000) acre North Shore Commercial District which is at the north end of Rowlett on this map.

The next slide presents the proposed DART Light Rail Extension from downtown Garland to downtown Rowlett. Completion of the light rail extension will be an engine for the development of the downtown Main Street area.

While the Turnpike Extension and the DART Rail Extension are still several years away, the last several months have seen increased commercial development in Rowlett. Three (3) office projects have been recently announced. The Highpoint Industrial Park will have fifty-four thousand (54,000) square feet of office/warehouse space constructed. The Andrews Office Building on Dalrock Road, close to I-30, will be a three (3) story with almost twenty-one thousand (21,000) square feet of office space. The Expo Towers will be a five (5) story thirty-five thousand (35,000) square feet of office space located near the Real Estate Expo on Highway 66. In addition to the office and light industrial development, twelve (12) new retail establishments have announced their plans for construction in Rowlett. You can see them listed on this slide. I am pleased to announce that the Brookshire's property in Rowlett will soon become developed. Where is Ms. Samford? She won't let me give you the rest of my sentence. It will be developed soon. Rockwall ISD has announced an expansion of the Cullins-Lakepointe Elementary School.

*Ms. Keri Samford, whom I just referred to, is acting Director of Economic Development along with her regular duties as Director of Development Services. The commercial development just announced is a tribute to her talent and hard work. I want to express my thanks to Keri and also to Diane Hayes, who assists Keri. City Manager Craig Owens tells me that a full-time Director of Economic Development will be hired in February. In the meantime, Keri, Craig and I continue our efforts to bring significant economic development to Rowlett. I describe it as 'more to come' because conversations with different groups, including the City of Dallas and Texas A&M University at Commerce, are continuing but not yet at a point where anyone is ready to make announcements. But, rest assured, there is much happening but in its early stages and we will keep you informed.*

*The North Texas Council of Government estimates that the population of the City of Rowlett will be about seventy-five thousand (75,000) in the year 2030. The projected growth rate is only about two to four percent (2-4%) each year. Once the mass transit systems are completed that growth rate will increase. So for now, I will propose to the City Council that our economic development efforts be primarily focused on the North Shore Commercial District over the next few years. The North Shore Commercial District will become home to many businesses and allow the City to progress towards its goal of achieving a property tax base of about forty percent (40%) commercial and sixty percent (60%) residential. Such a change is essential to holding or reducing the tax rate for Rowlett citizens while still providing basic city services at a level desired by all citizens.*

*While the primary focus is proposed for the North Shore Commercial District, planning will continue for the transit-oriented development of downtown Main Street in Rowlett. Such development will include high density residential, as well as, retail. It will take longer for this area of the City to fully develop but it will happen.*

*The goal of our economic development is to differentiate Rowlett, making it even more unique and thus attractive to new businesses and residents. The updated draft Strategic Plan for Economic Development...it goes by the name 'Rowlett Next', is still being reviewed and shaped by the Economic Development Advisory Board. That Board, chaired by Greg Sims, has representatives from the Rowlett Chamber and the Garland ISD along with Rowlett City Staff and City Council. The final recommendations to the City Council for the Updated Strategic Plan for Economic Development are expected by March. I believe that the recommendations will include that Rowlett must and will become a 'destination' to businesses, healthcare providers, a higher education institution, and retail shopping. If that recommendation is accepted by the City Council, consideration will have to be given to adding more amenities in the City. Developed parks and bike trails will attract newcomers and visitors. More and better access to Lake Ray Hubbard will provide attractive amenities also. All of this is doable within the next decade. Such aggressive economic development will require new and innovative financing, as well as, private-public partnerships. And I will work with the City Manager and Directors to bring to the City Council sound proposals for the future.*

*This slide shows the Tax Increment Fund Districts in Rowlett. The northern area is the North Shore Commercial District that will be affected by the construction of the Turnpike Extension. The central portion is the downtown area that will be affected by the construction of the Light Rail Extension. The southern area is the Entertainment/Waterfront District. The southern area will also be greatly affected by the construction of the Turnpike Extension. Tax Increment Funding (TIF) is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains.*

*I have spent a lot of time telling you what your City has been doing. I hope you can see and appreciate all that is going on, is going on. Everyone has been working together and working very hard. Now, I want to tell you about where I would like to see the City go over the remaining time of my term as Mayor.*

*The 'Rowlett Next' Economic Development Plan consists of twenty (20) pages of detailed recommendations from Tom Stelman, our external consultant. Tom presented his plan in November 2007 to a meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board. By the way, that meeting was rebroadcast and is available on DVD at the City Library if you want to watch it. The plan places strong emphasis on the need for the City of Rowlett to enhance its image in the region and to aggressively market the 'new' Rowlett. The City Council will receive the Advisory Board advice and counsel at a special meeting in March.*

*Rowlett Road Reconstruction Phase I will be completed in another few months. Additional phases are in the final design stage and will be constructed as quickly as possible. The City Manager and consulting engineers are closely managing all of our road projects to get them done on time and in budget. Miller Road Reconstruction will be completed at mid-year. Hickox Road Reconstruction is just about completed. These thoroughfare roads needed attention badly. Future work on our thoroughfares will be very closely managed and coordinated to minimize the traffic gridlock we experienced last year. However, I must alert you. Construction of the final phases of Rowlett Road Reconstruction, the construction of the Turnpike Extension, and the construction of the Light Rail Extension will add to our traffic woes. Construction of the Turnpike will begin in mid-year of 2008, as will construction on Phase 3 of Rowlett Road. We will be inconvenienced, there's no doubt. The City Manager and consulting engineers are committed to do the best job possible to minimize the conflicts.*

*Earlier this evening, I proposed to the City Council in Work Session the formation of a Charter Review Commission. The City Charter was last reviewed and amended by citizens in May 2003. Many of the current provisions of the City Charter need to be updated. I am particularly interested in a provision in the City Charter that will require all borrowing of capital funds, except in emergency situations, to be approved by voters. That is not a requirement now. There are other changes that should be considered. The timetable that I am recommending calls for all changes to the existing City Charter to be considered by the citizens and voted in November 2008. I have asked Mr. Jeffrey Sheldon to assist with the organization of the Charter Review Commission and he has agreed. Mr. Sheldon served on our last Charter Review Commission.*

*The State of the City address has been presented much earlier in past years, usually right after the budgets were approved by the Council. I delayed the Address until now to allow more time for this newly elected Mayor and newly elected City Councilmembers to properly begin the process of change in the City. You can see that much has happened. One such change that is perceived by me and by many to be needed is a change in the way the City budgets for operations and for capital investment. City Manager, Craig Owens, is recommending a new way of budgeting called 'Budgeting for Outcomes'. I am familiar with this budgeting method and endorse it for the City of Rowlett. The City Council will be given a detailed briefing on this new technique on February 12th; this new technique incorporates zero based budgeting. A formal proposal for adoption of this new method will come after that.*

*It is not too soon to begin consideration of the City's capital investment needs for 2010 and beyond. I will propose the formation of a Citizens Bond Election Committee later this year. I anticipate the work of the Citizens Bond Election Committee will take a year to complete. Consideration will have to be given to the priority needs for water/sewage/drainage projects, as well as, for renovation and expansion of streets, roads, sidewalks, and alleys. There is a need for new facilities and upgrading our parks and trails. There is a need to invest in the latest technologies. I recommend that all of these needs, in priority order, as seen by your Mayor and City Council, be brought to the voters for approval in November 2009. Properly done, a major bond program will reduce the operating expenses of the City to offset the cost of borrowing.*

*We cannot expect to keep going to the Rowlett citizens and taxing them for anything less than critical needs. There are federal and state dollars available to the City to compete for. I propose formal applications for any and all such grants, more than we are doing now. I also plan to work with our elected and appointed officials in Washington and in Austin to seek funds that they are able to allocate to the City of Rowlett. I also believe that corporations, foundations, and private donors can and should help the City of Rowlett. External funding, especially for new parks and trails, will be sought aggressively.*

*I stated earlier that the Rowlett Next Economic Development Plan draft calls for actions to enhance the image of the Rowlett community. That same plan calls for greater economic development effort towards Main Street transit-oriented development. I will propose to the City Council to task the City Manager and Directors to plan future City special events to bring our citizens and visitors to Downtown Rowlett. With sponsorships from the local business community, more and better special events can be done within the limited budget that we have.*

*Donna Huerta, our Public Information Officer, briefed the City Council on the 'All American City' Award several months ago. While the Council did not decide to pursue that award for 2007, I propose that the City of Rowlett do seek All-American City status for 2008. I will ask the City Council to form a Citizens' Committee, working with Donna Huerta, to make application and compete for this award. Donna, I know you're here; Donna, thank you for bringing this to us. And also, City Manager Owens has also investigated another award for the City to earn. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for cities recognizes those who are following best practices. While the City of Rowlett is not yet ready to compete for that award, Mr. Owens will monitor the City's progress and bring a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council at the right time.*

*Well, you can see that the City Council and City Manager have quite a bit to consider. So, I will propose a City Council Planning Retreat in early June to provide the opportunity for all of us to discuss the priorities and capabilities of the City and then update the City Strategic Plan and its supporting sub-plans. It is essential that we plan and then provide active oversight while the City Manager, Directors, and Staff work towards accomplishment of the adopted goals and objectives.*

*I outlined a bold set of "next steps" for the City. Proper strategic thinking also requires that obstacles to achieving that bold agenda also be considered. My concerns are mostly about issues that I and the Council cannot control. But, we have to be aware and try to influence these issues as much as possible.*

*My first concern is the DART Light Rail Extension. Although we've been assured by the DART Executive Director and some DART Board members that the 2012 schedule for completion will be met, I do have a concern. I am waiting to hear the solutions. I will argue against any major changes in scope; however, there is not much we can do except express ourselves directly to the Board members for DART.*

*Similarly, I am worried about the financial condition of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). They have stated publicly that they are out of money for transportation projects. Now, they have assured us that the bridge connecting the Turnpike Extension to I-30 is funded. But, will the schedule be delayed? I certainly hope not and, along with the City Manager and Director of Public Works Pat Baugh and City Engineer Shawn Poe, we'll keep this issue in front of the TxDOT decision makers and our elected representatives in Austin.*

*Funding for transit projects has all but disappeared at the federal, state, and county levels. Additional funding is critically needed. Innovative sources of new funding, such as use of toll road revenue surpluses, are being explored. Unless something is done soon, a crisis will occur. What happens in the Metroplex affects the City of Rowlett. Their traffic congestion*

and poor air quality is our traffic congestion and our poor air quality. Our public safety, public health, and quality of life will be directly affected. So I will work with our elected representatives to find new sources of funds that will cause the least distress and most benefit to Rowlett citizens.

What can I say about our national and state economy? While I am personally very optimistic about both, there are many experts who claim that an economic recession is already here. Any major economic slowdown will directly affect the revenues that the City of Rowlett receives from property taxes, sales taxes, and fees. The City has no built-up reserves to call upon if there is a downturn. We will have to consider such obstacles and plan how to react to them.

An issue that the Mayor and Council and the citizens can control is to focus on what provides the 'greater good' to the citizens of Rowlett. In my short tenure as Mayor, too many times I and everyone else have been aggressively urged to satisfy a special interest of a small group of citizens. Were there enough money for all of those desires, I would be very happy to accommodate all requests. But, there is not enough money. Your Mayor and City Council must exercise their individual judgment and, yes, individual courage, to make decisions to serve the greater good for all citizens of Rowlett. Being a 'silent majority' is not helpful. We, your Mayor and your City Council, need to know what you, the citizens, are thinking. I will continue to propose and promote conservative policy, not tax and spend.

I am also concerned about voter apathy. In May, there will be an election for three (3) places on the City Council. Very few of you will take the time to vote in that election. I urge all citizens to register and vote. Not only will there be an election in May for City Council, but also there will be an election in November that will include City Charter revisions. Later elections will allow voters to approve or disapprove borrowing money for capital projects or to approve or disapprove raising sales taxes in support of statewide transit projects. Your involvement in civic affairs gives you an active voice so I urge you please speak out and be heard. Better yet, volunteer. Your City needs you. We will need citizens to serve on the Charter Review Commission, serve on the All-American City Award Committee, and on the Bond Election Committee.

Let me finish on a much more positive note. Being Mayor of Rowlett is a very special privilege and I am truly grateful for the opportunity and I am excited about our future.

The investments to be made in the President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension, the DART Blue Line Extension, the Interconnector Road, the Dalrock Waterfront Park-N-Ride, the Rowlett thoroughfares, as well as, the completion of renovating Kenwood Heights and Point Royal Estates will total almost \$1.5 billion. Those investments will trickle through the Rowlett economy and have a multiplier effect on our local businesses.

Craig Owens is a young and innovative, as well as, experienced City Manager. He has formed and is completing the formation of a team of Directors that are also innovative and experienced. I am confident that this management team will accomplish all the goals and objectives that the citizens and the City Council establish. I will continue to provide leadership to the City Council and to the City Manager leadership team and I enjoy working with them very much.

All past mayors have told me how important it is to have a supportive Council. How true that is. I am fortunate that my colleagues and I do agree and support one another on most issues. We are also fortunate to have the support of other mayors and county officials. So I will continue to reach out to all elected and appointed officials and keep them well informed about the needs and interests of the City of Rowlett. I call this 'flying the flag'. I am an unabashed cheerleader for the City of Rowlett.

*Citizens do not often get a chance to see cities and counties working together for a regional good. Although we all admit we are in competition with one another the leaders of neighboring cities and counties are also cooperating to achieve regional goals. Such cooperation is very important when major projects that cross city borders or county lines are being considered by funding agencies.*

*Most important of all is our City. Our City is blessed by its location on a beautiful lake and yet be so close to a major metropolis. Rowlett ranks eighteenth (18th) in total population among cities in the Metroplex. Our City is fortunate to have the highest median household income among our neighboring suburbs. Over the next five (5) years the number of households in the \$200,000+ income bracket will more than double in Rowlett it is projected. The largest age group in Rowlett now is thirty-five (35) to fifty-four (54) and is projected to get younger over the next five (5) years. More than one-third (1/3) of our residents have a bachelors degree or higher as compared to only twenty-three percent (23%) for the rest of Texas. These are the demographics that retailers and employers are seeking. We have a bright future.*

*As I like to say...Rowlett is on the move. I usually do that, Rowlett is on the move.*

*I apologize for the length of this Address but believe every word is important to your understanding of your City. Much has been done and much remains to be done.*

*Much of what I said tonight I have also written about. I have those writings archived on my personal website: JohnHarper-Rowlett.com. And I encourage you to take the time to read more about the important issues affecting Rowlett.*

*Let me close by again expressing my thanks to the Citizens of Rowlett. My wife, Debra, on the front row, and my Grandson, James, also on the front row. They have not seen much of me lately but have not complained, so my special thanks to them. My golfing buddies, a couple of them are in the audience, also have not seen as much of me lately and they have complained. Thank you for your patience and thank you for your support. I also want to thank Dr. Ken Cooper, head of the Cooper Clinic, and my boss Fred Meyer; both of them have given me the flexibility to be their Chief Financial Officer, as well as, Mayor of Rowlett.*

*This State of the City Address will be rebroadcast on RTN 16 the next three (3) Mondays and Thursdays at 6:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., as well as, the next three (3) Sundays at 12:30 p.m. You can also check out a DVD of this meeting from the City Library.*

*Remember to attend the Town Hall meeting at the Rowlett Community Centre on February 7th at 7pm.*

*Lastly, I seek your prayers for wisdom and courage for all leaders. Several months ago, Pastor Kason Huddleston organized a group of pastors who do regularly pray for us and I thank you, Pastor. And, thank you to all the pastors, especially Pastor Michael Hankins, who leads the Church in the City in Rowlett, who have invited me and Debra to meet their congregations. I also seek your prayers for our brave men and women in military service protecting our freedom. Let us pray for peace. God bless our great country. God bless our great State. And, God bless our great City.*

*The City Council meeting is officially adjourned.*

*The City Secretary, Susie Quinn, and her staff have set up a reception with cookies and punch for all in the outer foyer. Please do stay for the reception and the goodies.*

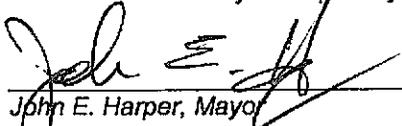
*Thank you all for your attention, thank you for coming.*

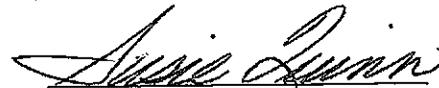
**TAKE ANY NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE ACTION ON CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS**

*No actions were taken during the Executive Session.*

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mayor Harper adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John E. Harper, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Susie Quinn, City Secretary

Date Approved: February 5, 2008