

CITY COUNCIL: Home builders concerned about new trash contract

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SOLID WASTE DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

A few residents spoke up again at Tuesday's council meeting, asking members to hold off on the trash contract — which was approved on July 1.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Grindstaff pulled an item from the consent agenda, which was the second public hearing to amend ordinances regarding fee schedules for solid waste services, to voice a number of concerns she had been hearing since the trash contract was approved.

"I want this council to consider putting a six-month extension (on the current contract)," said Harry Thomas, community volunteer, "For the public, so they understand what's going on."

The contract, however, already has been approved by the council and will begin Aug. 1.

Lynsey Flage, executive officer of the Home Builders Association, passed along some concerns local developers have about the new contract during public comment.

"As of Aug. 1, roll-off containers are the only option (builders) have," Flage said. "It's different than we've done it in the past."

Many developers, Flage said, have in the past used 6- or 8-cubic yard frontload containers for some of their construction debris.

Shane Kelton, director of operations for the city, said that using frontload containers for construction debris no longer will be an option available to developers in the new contract, because Republic Services said it damages their vehicles and is not a typical industry standard.

"I don't know how it got started in San Angelo," Kelton said.

Flage noted that some San Angelo builders exclusively use frontload containers for their construction debris, simply because as they build on a property, there becomes less and less space for a large roll-off container. Flage also added that eliminating the option of using frontload containers would increase the costs to developers, therefore increasing costs to home buyers as well.

Throughout the request for proposals process "we were not aware that this (service) is not going to be available," Flage said.

Speaking to Kelton after the discussion, however, Flage said that city staff has said they would try to negotiate a term that could be more agreeable to local developers.

There also was some discussion about the city's and the HBA's differing interpretations of Texas Health and Safety Code Title 5, Section 364.034, regarding municipal solid waste disposal services.

"It's very ambiguous," Flage said. "Many cities are using that to open the construction industry (disposal service market)."

Developers contend that an exception under this code allows the city to open up the market for temporary solid waste disposal services in a construction project. The city, however, disagrees.

"As a city, we had a different interpretation," said City Manager Daniel Valenzuela. "We do believe that our interpretation is correct."

"And we believe ours is," Flage said.

The item to adopt an ordinance regarding fee schedules for solid waste services was approved through a 4-2 vote. Grindstaff and Councilman Don Vardeman voted nay. Councilman Rodney Fleming was absent from Tuesday's meeting.

EXCESSIVE WATER USAGE FEE INCREASE POSTPONED

The council will hold off on increasing the excessive water usage fees until all council members are present.

Councilman Rodney Fleming was absent from Tuesday's council meeting and other members wanted to give him the opportunity for input before voting on the item, since "he's a major proponent", said Mayor Dwain Morrison.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Grindstaff requested that a public meeting be scheduled within the next couple of weeks, at a time that would allow more residents to attend and give input on the item.

The proposed increase of excessive watering fees would uniformly apply across all drought levels and will charge additional fees to those who use more than 8,000 gallons of water per month.

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