

# STAY ALERT SO YOU DON'T GET HURT!

On August 4, the Willsboro Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) held a public hearing and received public views on new ordinances proposed for adoption by the City. They are:

- 1029-2020 Creation of a Historic Overlay District to run from Carnegie St. to Pine St. and from Mill St. to Chestnut St.
- 1030-2020 Regulations for and Administration of the Historic Districts
- 1027-2020 Vacant Building Registration Ordinance requiring conspicuous signage identifying buildings as vacant and creating a whole raft of new regulations and rules for owners of a vacant building— even if it's for sale or lease.

Violations of the provisions of these ordinances carry a criminal penalty punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000 per day

The August 4 public hearing had such a large turnout that the police were turning people away at the door and some people had to wait outside City Hall.

P&Z allowed the City Administrator, Craig Lindholm, to read a lengthy prepared statement. Afterward, the P&Z permitted the public to speak, limiting each speaker to only 3 minutes. P&Z blithely accepted the City Administrator's representations about the proposed ordinances as truth, the meeting chair parroting the Administrator's words to cut off speaker after speaker who owned homes in the proposed Overlay with "the ordinance does not apply to residential property" when those speakers tried to voice their displeasure with the ordinance. Some homeowners even left after hearing that the ordinance did not apply to their homes, thinking their problem was solved. It wasn't.

Finally, a determined woman, not to be deterred by the Chair's brusque admonition to her that "the ordinance does not apply to residential property," demanded to know where that language appeared in the Ordinances. Soon after, the P&Z took a break, huddled with the City Administrator, and decided to defer action on the Historical District Ordinances for 30 days and on the Vacant Building Registration Ordinance for 90 days. The woman demanding to see the exclusion of residences from the Historical District Ordinances was never shown any such section of the Ordinance. Here's why.

**Ordinance 1029-2020 provides as follows:**

**Section 14.05.006 (4) Any regulations for a specific overlay Historical District shall apply to all properties or structures wholly contained within that district and to those portions of any property or district [sic] located within the district.**

This is just one example of the misinformation disseminated by the City Administrator and the P&Z, whose members relied upon the City Administrator and gave the public false information. Don't be misled. These are bad Ordinances that should not pass. They will cause more economic hardship than advantage. We have a more common sense Historical District Ordinance now. Why not leave it alone?

The P&Z will meet again in September. They promised another public hearing on the proposed Historical District then. The Public needs to be there. Obtain copies of the Ordinances and read them. Whether you own a building or a house in the Historical District, this meeting may affect you. Your property could be the next target. Help stop it now.

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If you would like to join the campaign against these ordinances, please let us know at [alex2@peoplescom.net](mailto:alex2@peoplescom.net) or write to PO Box 104 Willsboro, Texas 75494