



*Section A: General News*

**LV council approves Old Town district**



La Vernia city Councilman Marie Gerlich and Mayor Robert Gregory exchange pleasantries Jan. 30, following a special city council meeting.

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The La Vernia City Council has amended its comprehensive zoning regulations, which includes the creation of an Old Town Overlay District and new construction to include 85 percent masonry on all façades. Masonry, according to the amended ordinance, is stone, stucco, or brick.

The proposed amendments drew public attention and input during two previous public hearings Jan. 7 and 9.

Unlike the earlier animated hearings, Thursday evening's was quiet and uneventful. Several residents asked for clarification regarding the Old Town Overlay District and were satisfied with responses from Mayor Robert Gregory about the integrity of their neighborhoods being maintained by creating the district.

"What this does is it says you can rebuild a home [in the event of catastrophe] as your home now is," Gregory assured Tomasa Ortiz, adding that current zoning in the district would not be affected; residential properties will remain residential, and industrial areas will remain as they are.

Planning and Zoning Commission member Dianell Recker also addressed the meeting.

"The whole purpose [of the Old Town Overlay] is to keep La Vernia with its old style and also allow new homes that will make us proud," she said. "We have no hidden agendas."

Councilmen Randy Leonard and John Richter recused themselves from the council discussion and vote, as both live in the proposed overlay district.

The council approved the amendments to the zoning ordinance, including masonry requirements and the Old Town Overlay District, with a supermajority vote of 3-0 by councilmen Marie Gerlich, Eloi Cormier, and Jennifer Moczygamba. Gregory explained a supermajority vote was needed, as more than 20 percent of responses received from property owners in the affected areas were against the proposal.

The council also approved changing the starting times of school zones on F.M. 775 (Bluebonnet Street) from 7 a.m. to 6:45 a.m.

In attendance: La Vernia Mayor Robert W. Gregory; councilmen Marie Gerlich, Randy Leonard, John Richter, Eloi Cormier, and Jennifer Moczygamba; Planning and Zoning members Gordon Bake and Dianell Recker; City Secretary/Treasurer Angela Cantu; Attorney Jameene Banks; and Police Chief Bruce Ritchey.