

The Bedford Citizen

THE NEWS YOU NEED TO GUIDE YOUR CITY

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FEATURES

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COUNCILMAN ROY TURNER: VISION FOR BEDFORD 2007 AND FORWARD

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FEATURES

DEADLINE WEDNESDAY FOR SPEAKING AT COUNCIL NEXT WEEK

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Anyone wishing to speak as a “Person to Be Heard” at next week’s City Council Meeting must submit a written request no later than noon Wednesday. The request must include the speaker’s name, address and phone number as well as the topic of discussion. It may be emailed to the City Secretary at: sjennings@ci.bedford.tx.us or mailed to:

Bedford City Hall
ATTN: City Secretary Shanae Jennings
2000 Forest Ridge Drive
Bedford, TX 76021.

PUBLIC HEARING AT TONIGHT’S BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMM MEETING

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The regular session of tonight’s Building and Standards Commission, which begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, will include a Public Hearing on a variance request (B07-008), from C.S.N. Signs on behalf of Fed Cash (Federal Cash Advance), 4105 Hwy 121, #602, requesting allowance of a set of illuminated channel letters to be installed on the rear of the building.

During the work session, which is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the Council Conference Room, the group will review changes and amendments or revisions to

the current Sign Ordinance for the City of Bedford. They also will discuss variance request B07-008.

COUNCILMAN ROY TURNER: VISION FOR BEDFORD 2007 AND FORWARD

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Do you remember the Tom Hanks movie *Cast-Away*? Near the end of the movie is a very poignant scene where Tom Hanks is standing in a desolate-looking West Texas scene at a crossroads. He has suffered some very trying times in his recent past and is at a crucial decision point where he must choose the course of his future. We in Bedford now stand at a similar crossroads. The city has endured some challenges over the recent years and we have the bumps and bruises to show for it. We now have an opportunity to greatly affect the next wave of Bedford’s life cycle. We stand on the edge of an opportunity to move Bedford past the negativity of the past and into a brightness of the future. We are being afforded some opportunities that we cannot afford to let pass.

When elected to the city council last May, there were some very hot issues, such as the library that had to be settled. We also had the new budget to be written. We could not move forward with other significant issues until these items were settled. We fortunately maintained local management of our award-winning library. We were also able to fund a budget that maintained our 2006/2007 tax rate and yet funded some needed emergency equipment and much-needed salary

adjustments for the city staff and police and fire departments. We were also able to fund much needed infrastructure and parks bond issues. We resisted forces that would have tied us to a past of budgetary restraints that could have doomed Bedford to a city in decline. Now that we have successfully settled that, we can start looking at some of the serious issues facing Bedford.

First some very positive things:

- ◆ We have a city staff that is dedicated and qualified to provide the managerial expertise to guide Bedford's path. Beverly Queen leads a staff dedicated to the efficient and progressive direction we want our city to take. Employee morale is very high and employee retention is vastly improved, which is a dramatic turnaround from three years ago.
- ◆ We have a Council that is beginning to demonstrate a consensus that is going to lead our staff and city to make us live up to our city motto that "Life is Better in Bedford".
- ◆ Our police and fire departments are second to none. I have learned much about the workings of our police department over the past several weeks that I have spent in the Citizen's Police Academy. The most important lesson I have learned is the great dedication and expertise demonstrated by the people who man the front lines to protect us. From Chief Flory down to the newest and rawest recruit,

they are some of the most dedicated and driven people in public service. We should be proud and support our police officers in every way possible. I look forward to next year when I will spend some time in the Citizen's Fire Academy and observe Chief Tindell and his staff in action. I know I will find that same degree of dedication to service and excellence that I have seen in the Bedford Police Department.

- ◆ Another area to be proud of in our city's workings is the many boards and commissions at work for the betterment of Bedford. I want to mention just a few of them at this time. I am council liaison to the Parks and Recreation Board and the Beautification Commission. I have watched these groups give of their time and energy to serve in these volunteer jobs. James Hughes, who is Director of the city's Parks and Recreation Department, is a dedicated and hard working public servant. He and his staff were responsible for a very successful HalloweenFest at the Boy's Ranch on Saturday, October 27.
- ◆ Jeanette Cook and her 15 member commission are dedicated to developing a park system that will make us all proud to live in Bedford. I am very supportive of a Dog Park in Bedford and am pleased to see the P&R Board has raised that project higher on its priority list.
- ◆ The Beautification Commission led by Deborah Chaney is helping

create a city environment that is pleasing and inviting to all of us inside and outside of Bedford. This Commission recently led a very successful paper-shredding event that provided a much needed service to many Bedford citizens.

- ◆ The Community Affairs Commission, capably led by Ray Champney, is also making great strides in working with the Home Owner's Associations and the business community to improve current business and cultivate new business for Bedford in a neighborhood-friendly manner. He is working closely with Bill Syblon who is Director of Economic Development for Bedford, to improve current business and to attract new, tax-paying business to Bedford. The recent business round tables have been a good beginning to address this very important part of Bedford's future. We are on our way to becoming known as "business friendly" in Bedford. The money business brings to Bedford will help keep our property taxes in line with growth and development in Bedford.
- ◆ And yet another positive front in Bedford is our newly appointed City Charter Board. It will set about to revise the basic charter on which our city is built and functions. This 15 member group is chaired by Dr. Jeff Corbet and consists of some of the leaders in our city. It has a serious challenge to improve and restructure our Charter to make us

an even more effective and progressive city. I am sure they are up to the challenge. We look forward to their report to the city.

But — on to the Vision of the Future of Bedford — I will list and make short comments in each of these areas to tell you my vision and to spark some discussion. We need more people involved in this process.

Finishing out the new 37,000 sq. ft Bedford Public Library

We will have a bigger, nicer library in this property than we could have had with the earlier plans to build from the ground up. We can incorporate the library and the Old Bedford School into a more unified area for city use.

Developing a Town Center and the Bedford Forum area

Bedford needs a focus — a destination — that is uniquely "Bedford". There are a limited number of sites available for such development. One is the area around current city hall, the old library, library land, and the Bank One building. There are some exciting ideas for developing this area into a town focus. The other possibility is in the Bedford Forum area. What do you think?

Further development of the Bedford Boy's Ranch area.

We have a vastly under-utilized jewel in the Boy's Ranch. The Ranch can be developed to include first class recreation areas and Arts oriented projects. How about a Bedford Arboretum or Botanical Gardens? What are some of your ideas?

All Bedford can enjoy the possibilities that the Boy's Ranch can become.

Plan and help affect the 121/183 road project

We have a sword hanging over our heads. The long planned and much needed expansion of the freeways in our area will dramatically change some areas of the city. We need to be meeting with TDOT and participating in the planning process as much as possible. One of the things we need to address is access off the freeways. We can be terribly affected if we get left out of the process.

Rejuvenate current shopping centers

The Consumers Affairs Commission recently met with the managers of a number of Bedford's shopping center management companies. We asked what Bedford can do to help you be more successful. The discussion was illuminating. A suggestion was to change our sign ordinance to help them be more visible. We are now looking at the city's sign ordinance to see how we can maintain the aesthetics of the community and to help the shopping centers stay competitive.

Attract new and productive development into the remaining land available for development

Beverly Queen and Bill Syblon just returned from a real estate conference to put forth several pieces of property in our city to potential developers. We need to be more aggressive in marketing our available land for development.

Develop a closer, mutually beneficial, working relationship with the HEB ISD for the use of ISD property in Bedford

Did you know that Bedford is the location of several large tracts of land that is owned by HEBISD? We recently purchased the old Food Lion property on Forest Ridge from HEBISD to develop into a new Bedford Public Library. We need to develop a dialog with the school district to more effectively utilize these pieces of land to our mutual benefit.

Become more involved financially and physically in the area-wide transportation projects of the NCTCOG and Tarrant County to help address the growing traffic problems in Bedford

Have you tried to drive on Airport Freeway in early morning or late afternoon recently? If you have, then you do not need much explanation as to why we need to address our substantial traffic problem. I hope next year we can fund our share of the Trinity Railway Express project to help divert some of the traffic to the railroad. There are a number of opportunities to work with NCTCOG and Tarrant County Board of Commissioners to help work on this problem. We need to be taking a more active role in this North Central Texas problem.

Urban Gas Drilling

This is a very controversial topic. We would all like to add to our income by leasing our mineral rights, but no one wants to volunteer their backyard for the first well. We are beginning to realize that none of us are going to get "Bass Rich" from gas drilling in our city. We will not

stop the urban gas drilling train in our area. We hope to make it as safe, aesthetic and rewarding as is possible by creating an ordinance that we can all live with. We cannot make all the players happy. This can be a source of revenue for the school district and the city which can help everyone by helping to hold down property and school taxes. City staff is currently working on the third draft of an ordinance that I think will be in line with the neighboring cities. The “distances from —” will be the most critical decisions the council will have to make. Too far, and no drilling occurs. Too close and safety and aesthetics suffer. We will find a good compromise.

Smoke Free Bedford

We need to begin to look at a No Smoking Ordinance in the city of Bedford. Many cities have adopted such ordinances and Bedford should do the same. We need to coordinate our efforts with our neighboring cities to help stamp out this killer habit. As a physician I am of the opinion that smoking is the biggest cause of diseases that we bring on ourselves. Second-hand smoke is also implicated in many health issues. We need to join the effort to stop smoking in our city’s restaurants and public buildings. Give me some feedback.

Dog Park in Bedford

The Parks and Recreation Board has raised the priority for the development of a park dedicated to people and their dogs. There are some very successful dog parks in the area and Bedford should provide such a facility for its residents. I would support a budgetary request in next year’s

budget to develop a dog park.

These are some of the issues facing Bedford. I would welcome your comments and opinions. The way for our city to move forward is to get more people involved in the process. *The Bedford Citizen* is a good forum for us to voice our opinions and to offer suggestions. Also, come to council meetings and be heard. Your presence is important.

Be a good citizen and get involved.

Roy W. Turner, MD
Bedford City Councilmember

AUTUMN STREET SWEEPING SCHEDULE

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The biggest barrier to an effective street sweeping program is a parked car blocking the path of street sweepers. Please remove parked vehicles from the street during the scheduled street sweeping days.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 817-952-2200.