

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 – 6:30 PM
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS
400 S. OHIO AVE., MERCEDES, TX 78570**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Oscar Montoya
Commissioner Joe Martinez
Commissioner Jacob Howell
Commissioner Armando Garcia

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Ruben Saldana

STAFF PRESENT: Alberto Perez, City Manager
Joselynn Castillo, City Secretary
Martie Garcia Vela, City Attorney
Patricio Avila, Asst. City Manager
Kristine Longoria, Human Resources
Francisco Sanchez, Police Chief
Juan Vasquez, I.T Specialist
Tom Villagomez, Public Works Director
Marisol Vidales, Library Director
Armando Villela, Parks Director
Denisse Hernandez, Interim Planning Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Nellie Zamora, Martin Johnson, Eduardo Castellanos,

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Montoya welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. Establish Quorum

Four members of the Commission were present, which constitutes a quorum. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana was absent.

3. Invocation by Commissioner Martinez

4. Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Garcia

5. Open Forum

There were no residents signed up for open forum.

6. Presentation

- a. Presentation and discussion of proposed development by Santa Cruz properties (TIRZ)

Ms. Adriana Sarmiento addressed the Commission regarding a proposed residential development consisting of approximately 530 lots. The project will include roads, water, and sewer infrastructure built to City standards and will feature a centrally located city park. The development is expected to significantly increase the City's property tax base.

The developers are requesting the creation of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) as an incentive to support the project.

Mr. Perez noted that the City would need to review the development plans in more detail, including the projected property tax revenue and the specific incentives being requested. The estimated property value is approximately \$250,000 per home, with annual property tax contributions anticipated accordingly. The project is planned to be completed in four phases over a three-to four-year period. The proposed homes will average 1,800 square feet in size, situated on 6,500-square-foot lots. The development site is located behind the outlet mall near Mile 8 and Mile 1 E.

Mayor Montoya clarified that the presentation was for discussion purposes only and that the next step would involve a meeting with the City Manager to further evaluate the proposal. Mr. Joel Quintanilla added that the development includes both single-family and some multi-family residential units. He also mentioned that discussions have been held with the drainage district regarding the inclusion of a detention pond to address drainage needs. Garage options include both single- and double-car designs. Mr. Quintanilla emphasized that their current request is solely to explore TIRZ incentives, and no action is required by the Commission at this time.

b. Presentation of proposed Disc Golf Course at Mercedes Dome.

Parks Director Armando Villela provided an update to the Commission regarding a proposed disc golf course at the Dome Park. He began by explaining the basic rules of the game and presented a layout for an 18-hole course. Mr. Villela highlighted several benefits of the project, including the ability to host tournaments, attract visitors to Mercedes, and offer sponsorship opportunities for each hole with visible sponsor markers. He noted that this would be the first disc golf course in the City of Mercedes.

Mr. Scott McFarlan, who has experience developing disc golf courses, also addressed the Commission. He shared his background in organizing disc golf events and mentioned that he typically draws around 50 players per event. He explained that the sport is flexible—playable individually or in groups—and emphasized its growing popularity. Mr. McFarlan also noted that the course could be registered on a national website, making it easy for players to locate and visit the course in Mercedes.

Commissioner Jose Martinez raised a point regarding the compatibility of the disc golf course with the existing Dome Park Master Plan. He also suggested that the Recreation Center promote the course to local youth, who could help introduce the game to their families and increase community participation.

Mr. Villela responded that the course design is flexible, with baskets that can be easily relocated to accommodate other park uses or future modifications.

Mayor Oscar Montoya expressed concern about limited parking at the Dome Park and recommended that a parking plan be developed as part of the proposal. Mr. Villela stated

that they plan to pursue grant funding to support the project.

No action was required at this time.

c. Presentation by RGV Coalition of Drainage Advocates

Commissioner Martinez addressed the Commission regarding a flooding issue affecting the City of Mercedes and the broader Rio Grande Valley (RGV). He explained that the item was placed on the agenda to discuss the creation of a regional entity dedicated to addressing ongoing flood concerns across the Valley.

Ms. Jessica Garcia and Mr. JV Garcia, founders of a civilian advocacy group focused on flood mitigation, provided a presentation to the Commission. They shared the history and mission of their organization, which was formed by individuals directly impacted by flooding. The group is currently in the process of applying for 501(c)(4) nonprofit status. Their mission is to educate, engage, and advocate for improved drainage systems and infrastructure to reduce the impact of flooding across the region.

They noted that the Valley experiences five to ten significant rain events per year, contributing to increasing average annual losses. In response, they are promoting the establishment of an RGV Flood Control District, a regional initiative to prioritize funding and the construction of flood mitigation projects using natural watershed boundaries rather than political subdivisions.

Ms. Garcia explained how the watershed approach works, providing maps and outlining the benefits of managing drainage based on geographic rather than municipal lines. She referenced the Harris County Flood Control District as an example, which implements programs such as home buyouts for repeatedly flooded properties and maintains drainage infrastructure. However, Harris County is a single-county entity, whereas the RGV faces multi-county challenges requiring regional coordination.

The organization has already received support from the City of San Benito, City of Harlingen, and Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, all of whom have approved or expressed support for a resolution backing the concept of a regional flood control district.

They are now seeking support from the City of Mercedes in the form of a non-binding resolution, which would signal high-impact support with minimal legal commitment.

Commissioner Howell expressed his support for the organization's goals and approach. Commissioner Martinez reiterated the need for regional cooperation, emphasizing that flooding is a Valley-wide issue requiring joint action.

No action was required at this time.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held May 6, 2025 & May 8, 2025

- b. Approval of Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-10 to Abandoned Drainage Easement at Mercedes Light Industrial Park Subdivision
- c. Approval of Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-11 amending the Conditional Use Permit Ordinance
- d. Approval of Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-12 amending the R-MH Zoning Ordinance
- e. Approval of Non-Departmental Budget Amendment
Commissioner Garcia motioned to approve all items under consent agenda. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Management Items: Present, discuss, consider and possibly take action regarding:

- a. Adoption of Mercedes Police Department Policy 3.03 - Hiring Procedures
Items A through E were approved in one motion as stated in item E.
- b. Adoption of Mercedes Police Department Policy 3.21 - Personnel Files
Items A through E were approved in one motion as stated in item E.
- c. Adoption of Mercedes Police Department Policy 6.20 - Missing Person
Items A through E were approved in one motion as stated in item E.
- d. Adoption of Mercedes Police Department Policy 10.47 - Misconduct Allegations
Items A through E were approved in one motion as stated in item E.
- e. Adoption of Mercedes Police Department Policy 19.01 - Use of Force
Commissioner Howell motioned to approve item 8A through E with legal recommendations. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- f. Approval to accept the Voluntary Annexation Petition filed for Arturo Palacios Medina
Mr. Arturo Palacios Medina thanked the commission (spanish) for inviting him. He added that his location is on Business 83 and will have 5 staff members at this location. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve item 8F. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- g. Approval of Request by Mercedes Baskets Full Inc. for FY 2024-25

A representative from Mercedes Basketsful, Inc. addressed the Commission to request funding support. He shared that the organization has received 159 applications, with approximately 69% of clients seeking food assistance. On average, the organization serves over 300 families per month, and, since January, has been receiving an average of 15 new applications each month.

The representative expressed concern over food shortages, noting that Feeding America is currently frozen and the RGV Food Bank is experiencing low inventory, raising the

possibility that the organization may have to suspend operations if the situation does not improve.

Mayor Montoya recommended issuing the requested \$20,000 in quarterly payments to mitigate risk in the event of an unexpected closure.

Commissioner Garcia motioned to approve the \$20,000 allocation in quarterly disbursements, and Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Ordinances/Resolutions

- a. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-14 amending the Construction, Placement and Excavation in Right-of-Way

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve and forego the reading. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Approval of Resolution 2025-14 regarding Civil Rights for the 2018 South Texas Floods CDBG-DR

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve item 9B. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Bids/Contracts

- a. Approval of Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for MVCPA Task Force

Chief Sanchez addressed the Commission regarding the interlocal agreement related to the task force. He informed the Commission that the City currently has an investigator assigned to the task force and expressed interest in continuing participation through the renewal of the agreement.

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve Item 10A, and Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

11. Monthly Departmental Reports

- a. Library, Planning, Rec Center, I.T., City Sec/HR, Parks, Finance, PW, PD
Monthly reports included for review only.

12. Executive Session: Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberation regarding Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.087 (Economic Development)

Commissioner Martinez motioned to go into executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting went into executive session at 7:45 P.M.

- a. Discussion with City Manager regarding personnel matters - Section 551.074
- b. Consultation with Attorney regarding update on litigation - Section 551.071

- c. Consultation with Attorney regarding Project Updates - Section 551.087

13. Open Session

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 8:32 P.M.

- a. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item A
No action was taken on this item.
- b. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item B
No action was taken on this item.
- c. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item C
No action was taken on this item.

14. Adjournment

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 P.M.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]