

**CITY OF ALPINE
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 - 5:30 P.M.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALPINE, TEXAS, WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 5:30 P.M. ON MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023, AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 803 WEST HOLLAND AVENUE AND VIA ZOOM FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING THE ATTACHED AGENDA. THIS NOTICE IS POSTED PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT. ACTION ITEMS APPROVED AT THIS MEETING WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FINAL ACTION.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order.

2. Public Comments.

3. Public Hearings – None.

4. Approval of minutes of previous Board Meeting –

- a) February 27, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)

5. Discussion Items –

- a) Discussion between Commissioners and City Staff regarding procedural items, questions, and/or recent Planning & Zoning related items. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)
- b) Continue the discussion regarding the creation of a Historic District. (A. Branch, Commissioner)
- c) Discussion regarding the planned April 24th Historic District Workshop and Walking Tour. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)
- d) Discuss stores deemed detrimental to small economies and discuss the article in the New York Times about precautions Cities are taking to minimize the impact of such establishments on local economies. (C. Eaves, Mayor)

6. Action Items –

- a) Approve the list of Commissioner assignments of the tasked City Council objectives for 2023 and discuss the action plan going forward for each item.
 - I. Ordinance Review.
 - II. Updating the Zoning Map.
 - III. Comprehensive Zoning Plan (On Hold).
 - IV. Historic District.
 - V. Control Growth of stores deemed detrimental to small economies.

(C. Eaves, Mayor)

7. Board Member Comments.

8. Adjourn.

CERTIFICATION

I, Geoffrey R. Calderon, hereby certify that this notice was posted at City Hall, a convenient and readily accessible place to the general public, and to the City website at www.cityofalpine.com pursuant to Section 551.043, Texas Government Code. The said notice was posted at 5:00 P.M. on March 23, 2023, and remained so posted for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of the said meeting. This facility is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking space is available. Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact the Office of the City Secretary at (432) 837-330 I, option 1, or email city.secretary@cityofalpine.com for further information.



Geoffrey R. Calderon, City Secretary

INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW

1. Call to Order.

2. Public Comments.

3. Public Hearings – None.

4. Approval of minutes of previous Board Meeting –

a) February 27, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)



**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO
MARCH 27, 2023**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes of previous Board Meeting –

- a) February 27, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)

BACKGROUND

- None

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- February 27, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE.

**CITY OF ALPINE
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023 - 5:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order** – Abbey Branch, Vice-Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission, called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. The meeting was held in City Council Chambers located at 803 West Holland Avenue, Alpine, Texas, 79830 and via Zoom video conference.

Commissioners Physically Present:

Wendy Little, Commissioner Place 2 - Secretary
Eileen Rouke, Commissioner Place 3
Abbey Branch, Commissioner Place 4 – Vice-Chair
Michael Eason, Commissioner Place 5
Matthew Walter, Commissioner Place 6
Eva Olivas, Commissioner Place 7

City Staff Present:

Honorable Judge Gilbert E. Valenzuela
Honorable Mayor Catherine Eaves
Geoffrey R. Calderon, City Secretary
Andrew Devaney, Building Official
Jessica Boorse, Permit Technician

Commissioners Present via Zoom: None.

Commissioners Not Present: None.

Amit Rangra, Commissioner Place 1 - Chair

On a motion by Commissioner Branch and seconded by Commissioner Walter to change the order of business and move the workshop to the end of the meeting, the Planning & Zoning Commission unanimously voted to adopt the motion.

2. **Public Comments** – None.

3. **Public Hearings** – None.

4. **Approval of minutes of previous Board Meeting** –

a) January 23, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)

On a motion by Commissioner Little and seconded by Commissioner Rouke to approve the minutes, the Planning & Zoning Commission unanimously voted to adopt the motion.

5. **Discussion Items** –

- a) Presentation by Rick Stephens regarding the 2016 Alpine Vision Plan. (A. Branch, Commissioner)
b) Discuss the plans for the cleared land along 16th Street between Sul Ross Avenue and Brown Street, on the West side of the Orient Railroad Tracks. (M. Walter, Commissioner)
c) Discussion between Commissioners and City Staff regarding procedural items, questions, and/or Planning and Zoning-related items. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)

6. **Action Items** – None.

7. **Board Member Comments.**

On a motion by Commissioner Branch and seconded by Commissioner Little to adjourn the regular meeting, the regular meeting was adjourned.

8. **Adjourn (5:49 P.M.)**

**WORKSHOP IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
THE CONCLUSION OF THE REGULAR MEETING**

1. Call to Order.

2. Workshop – Downtown Historic District and currently Historic Overlay. (A. Branch, Commissioner)

Vice-Chair Branch called a short recess (6:51 P.M.)

Resume Workshop (6:57 P.M.)

3. Workshop – Resolution 2022-11-02, a City Council resolution tasking the Planning & Zoning Commission with Key City Objectives for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023. (A. Rangra, Chair)

APPROVED:

Officer of the Planning & Zoning Commission

CERTIFICATION

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Geoffrey R. Calderon, City Secretary

Minutes:02-27-2023

Approved: 03-27-2023

DISCUSSION ITEMS OVERVIEW

5. Discussion Items –

- a) Discussion between Commissioners and City Staff regarding procedural items, questions, and/or recent Planning & Zoning related items. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)
- b) Continue the discussion regarding the creation of a Historic District. (A. Branch, Commissioner)
- c) Discussion regarding the planned April 24th Historic District Workshop and Walking Tour. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)
- d) Discuss stores deemed detrimental to small economies and discuss the article in the New York Times about precautions Cities are taking to minimize the impact of such establishments on local economies. (C. Eaves, Mayor)



**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

MARCH 27, 2023

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) Discussion between Commissioners and City Staff regarding procedural items, questions, and/or recent Planning & Zoning related items. (G. Calderon, City Secretary)
- b) Continue the discussion regarding the creation of a Historic District. (A. Branch, Commissioner)

BACKGROUND

- None

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NONE.



**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

MARCH 27, 2023

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- c) Discussion regarding the planned April 24th Historic District Workshop and Walking Tour.
(G. Calderon, City Secretary)

BACKGROUND

- This discussion item is being added to facilitate a conversation regarding the planned Historic District Workshop and Walking Tour.
- Enclosed in the packet is the tentative letter that we wrote to downtown business owners. Commissioner Branch offered to hand deliver the letters.
- Also enclosed is the flyer for the workshop that may be used to share the event on the City website, with the media, and with other stakeholders.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- Letter to downtown businesses.
- Flyer for Workshop.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NONE.

City Manager
Megan Antrim

City Secretary
Geoffrey R. Calderon



Mayor
Catherine Eaves

City Attorney
Rod Ponton

100 North 13th Street Phone 432-837-3301 Fax 432-837-2044

"To provide quality service to the citizens of Alpine"

March 10, 2023

RE: Alpine Historic District Workshop and Walking Tour

Dear Property Owner,

The Planning & Zoning Commission will be conducting a workshop regarding the possibility of a Downtown Historic District. The Workshop will take place at City Council Chambers at 803 West Holland Avenue on Monday, April 24, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

Directly after the workshop, the Commission will host a downtown walking tour to explore the project vision. As a downtown business owner and/or property owner, we are cordially inviting you to participate in the workshop because a thriving Historic District will impact you and your property.

A thriving Historic District is likely to increase property values, increase tourism, and increase economic development among other benefits. Depending on what is implemented, a Historic District might also provide for regulations or requirements that must be met for properties downtown.

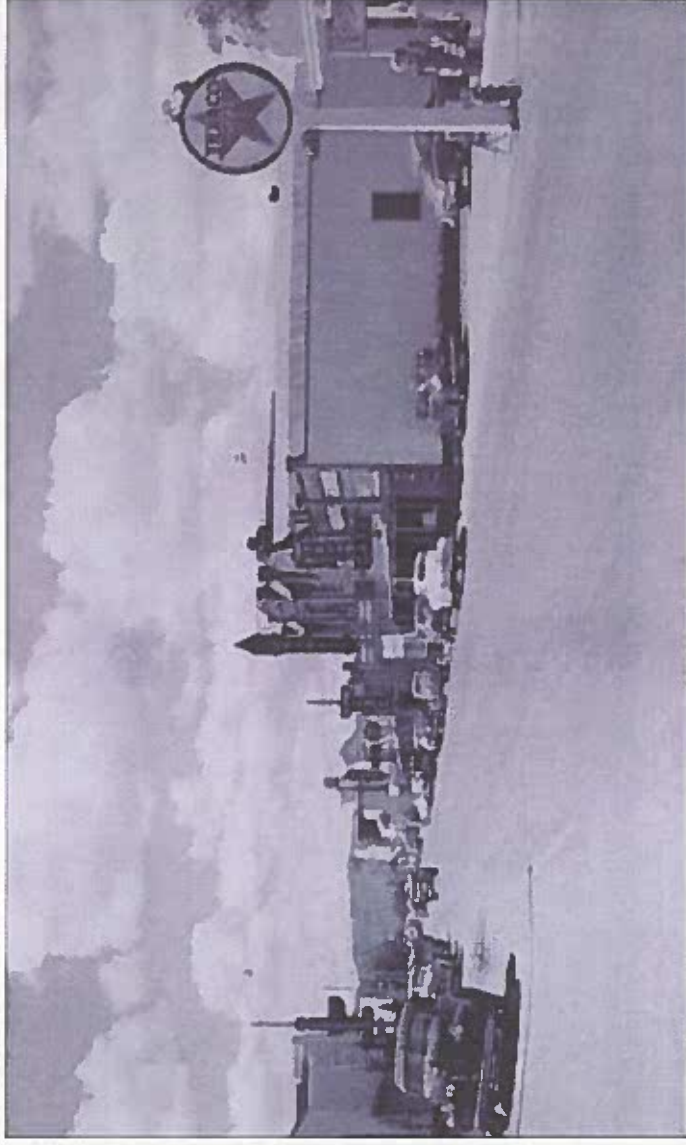
The City invites you to collaborate with us and to provide insight to the City regarding your thoughts and opinions as a downtown business owner. We hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Megan Antrim
City Manager

ALPINE HISTORIC DISTRICT WORKSHOP & WALKING TOUR

Please join the Planning & Zoning Commission for a Historic District Workshop & Walking Tour.



WHEN:
Monday,
April 24, 2023
5:30 P.M.

WHERE:
City Council Chambers
803 W. Holland Avenue
Alpine, Texas 79830



**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

MARCH 27, 2023

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- d) Discuss stores deemed detrimental to small economies and discuss the article in the New York Times about precautions Cities are taking to minimize the impact of such establishments on local economies. (C. Eaves, Mayor)

BACKGROUND

- This item is being added by Mayor Eaves to share the article with the Commission and continue the discussion regarding the P&Z objective about what can be done to stop detrimental stores from coming to the area.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- New York Times Article.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NONE.

As Dollar Stores Proliferate, Some Communities Say No

More than 70 proposed dollar stores have been rejected since 2019, a report shows. It's a small number compared with those that opened but evidence of opposition to the industry.



By Michael Corkery

Published March 1, 2023 Updated March 4, 2023

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, download Audm for iPhone or Android.

Morgan, Minn., a city of about 800 people, has two restaurants, several churches, a grain elevator and one small grocery store that sells rib-eye steaks that, according to the mayor, "are the best around."

The mayor, Jerry Huiras, 76, is protective of the lone grocery, a family business that dates back many generations and operates in a downtown dotted with empty storefronts. So when he got wind in late 2020 that Dollar General was planning to open a store near the town limits, and that this fast-growing national discount chain was known for undercutting local grocers with its low prices, Mr. Huiras vowed to prevent that outcome in Morgan.

Armed with a petition signed by more than a hundred people, Mr. Huiras was direct in addressing the developer seeking zoning approval to build the Dollar General. "We just don't want your store," Mr. Huiras, a Republican, recalled telling him.

Morgan is part of a movement of municipalities across the United States that have pushed back against the dollar store industry's rapid growth during the pandemic.

Since 2019, at least 75 communities have voted down proposed dollar stores, while roughly 50 have enacted moratoriums or other broad limits on dollar store development, according to a new report by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, an organization that is critical of corporate retailers and their impact on communities.

By comparison, from 2015 to 2018, about 25 communities voted down proposed dollar stores while only six enacted moratoriums or ordinances limiting their growth.

Although the number of blocked stores is much smaller than the thousands that Dollar General and similar chains have opened in recent years, the movement against the industry has created an unusual group of allies. On many other issues, they disagree, but they are united in their fight against dollar stores.

Rural, Republican-leaning communities in places like southern Virginia and North Carolina are pushing back against dollar stores. (In 2020, President Donald J. Trump easily carried Morgan, Minn.) And leaders in cities like Toledo, Ohio, and Birmingham, Ala., have also mounted opposition, saying the stores are fueling crime and unhealthy food choices. Across Georgia, 18 cities and towns have restricted dollar store development, according to the think tank's report.

The stores typically operate with lean staffing, and their employees, by some measures, are paid at the bottom of the retail industry's scale. According to a survey by the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank, 92 percent of Dollar General workers earn less than \$15 an hour, lower than many other companies surveyed, including Burger King, Walmart and Dunkin'. About 20 percent of Dollar General workers earn less than \$10 an hour.

At the same time, the company is highly profitable. In December, Dollar General said its quarterly operating profit had increased about 10 percent from a year earlier while net sales had increased 11 percent, to \$9.5 billion. Dollar Tree, which also owns the Family Dollar chain, is posting strong results as well. On Wednesday, Dollar Tree said its profit in fiscal year 2022 increased 23 percent to \$2.2 billion and net sales rose 7.6 percent to \$28.3 billion.

More than one-third of all stores that opened in the United States in 2021 and 2022 were dollar stores. Dollar General alone opened 2,060 locations during those years, far more than any other retailer, according to Coresight Research, and the company now operates 19,000, more than twice as many as Walmart and Target combined.

"As divided as Americans are politically, there's remarkable agreement that too much of what passes as a legitimate business model is, in fact, fundamentally destructive and unfair," said Stacy Mitchell, a co-executive director of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. "Federal policymakers have let big corporations run amok. Cities and towns of all stripes have learned that if you want to protect your community, you have to do it yourself."





Dollar General said it was often filling a void in parts of the country where many retailers did not operate. The company said that 75 percent of its stores were in towns with fewer than 20,000 people, and that it had been significantly increasing the number of its stores that sell produce.

"We believe the passage of moratoria harm customers who depend on us to help them stretch their budgets, particularly in inflationary times," Dollar General said in a statement.

Dollar Tree said its stores had helped alleviate "food deserts" and revitalize struggling strip malls by providing an affordable and convenient place to shop.

"We often take over vacant space in neighborhoods and areas that are already challenged, keeping centers and other adjacent businesses open and serving communities, especially those that are underserved," Dollar Tree said in a statement.

When Lorraine Cochran-Johnson was first running for a seat as a county commissioner in DeKalb County, Ga., in 2018, dollar stores were not something she paid attention to. But after a woman at a campaign event warned her about the stores' impact on Black neighborhoods, she began to do some research online and by simply looking around her district, just east of Atlanta.

The stores were mostly in predominantly Black neighborhoods. She also witnessed, over a two-week span, two brazen thefts at the same dollar store.

She talked with one of the cashiers about the crimes. "She told me, 'This is business as usual,'" Ms. Cochran-Johnson said. "There was a normalcy to this situation that no one should find normal."

Ms. Cochran-Johnson, a Democrat, was elected to the commission in 2019. The next year, she persuaded the commission to pass a moratorium on dollar store developments in DeKalb County.

The moratorium ended in December, but the county is putting into effect new requirements for dollar stores, including that they install video surveillance in their stores and parking lots and turn over security camera footage to the police within 72 hours of a crime. A store cannot be within a mile of an existing store, and 10 percent of a store's shelf space must be dedicated to "healthy foods," a category that includes frozen vegetables.

"This is about community and creating the best outcomes," Ms. Cochran-Johnson said.

In its statement, Dollar General said, "We appreciate the positive and ongoing conversations with the county commissioners on ways we can continue to invest in, and provide access to, affordable, everyday essentials, including produce, to DeKalb County residents."

Regarding the issue of crime, Dollar Tree said, "We continually invest in deploying proven crime reduction technologies in stores located in higher-crime areas and use risk-based analysis and tactics to reduce incidents in our stores." The company added that it turned over



Dollar store executives say the stores often revitalize struggling strip malls. Audra Melton for The New York Times

The dollar stores' growth shows no signs of abating. With inflation still high, discount stores are attracting budget-conscious customers.

In the end, financial analysts say, consumer interest will be the biggest driver of whether the stores continue to spread.

"Sales are really strong," said Shannon Warner, a partner in the consumer and retail practice of Kearney, a global strategy and management consulting firm. "Consumers are voting for dollar stores with their wallets."

When concerns over the proposed Dollar General in Morgan emerged, Mr. Huiras, the mayor, confessed that he had never been to a dollar store.

So Mr. Huiras, who worked in railroad construction until he retired and ran for office, drove to Fairfax, a town 18 miles away, where a dollar store had recently been built. A local electrician said the store had been built entirely with laborers who drove in each day from outside the area. The owner of a local farm equipment store told him that the members of the construction crew had bought exactly one nut to replace one they had stripped — and nothing else from his store. Mr. Huiras said that was when he knew the company would not be invested in his community.

Because the Morgan store would be outside the city limits, it required zoning approval by the county.

One of the owners of the Super Valu grocery store in Morgan, according to the minutes of a county Planning Commission meeting in January 2021, told officials that she estimated a Dollar General would reduce her store's revenue by as much as 20 percent during its first two years of operation. She said a grocer in a nearby town had closed shortly after a Dollar General opened there.

Other residents expressed concern that Dollar General was a large corporation, and one person said the chain was simply not a "good fit" for their small community.

In the end, the Planning Commission recommended denying the zoning application. The next month, the county's Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to follow that recommendation. "And they never did bother us again," Mr. Huiras said.

Audio produced by Adrienne Hurst.

CONCLUSION OVERVIEW

6. Action Items –

- a) Approve the list of Commissioner assignments of the tasked City Council objectives for 2023 and discuss the action plan going forward for each item.
 - I. Ordinance Review.
 - II. Updating the Zoning Map.
 - III. Comprehensive Zoning Plan (On Hold).
 - IV. Historic District.
 - V. Control Growth of stores deemed detrimental to small economies.

(C. Eaves, Mayor)

7. Board Member Comments.

8. Adjourn.