



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES  
CITY OF ODESSA, TEXAS**

**April 22, 2021**

On April 22, 2021, a workshop of the Odessa City Council was held at 1:00 p.m., Odessa, Texas. Due to the COVID-19, the meeting was teleconferenced, as allowed by the Governor's executive order. City Council was present through teleconference.

City Council present: Mayor Javier Joven; Council members: Detra White, District Three; Tom Sprawls, District Four; Mari Willis, District Five; and Denise Swanner, At-Large.

City Council absent: Mark Matta, District One; and Steven P. Thompson, District Two.

Others present: Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, City Secretary; Michael Marrero, City Manager; and other members of City staff.

**Presentation on the eligible uses of the local hotel tax and discuss the most effective practices utilized by cities throughout Texas to maximize the impact of these funds.**

Randy Ham, Odessa Arts Executive Director, thanked the Council for attending. He showed the Odessa Arts video that showcased activities and events. Justin Bragiel, Texas Hotel and Lodging Association General Counsel, provided an overview of the Hotel Occupancy Tax. He explained the tax funds to be used needed to pass a two-part test that included to directly promote tourism and the hotel and convention industry and meet a category used for conventions, hand out materials, advertising, promotion of arts or historical restoration and preservation. Mr. Bragiel explained the types of uses that the hotel tax funds could be used. The types included convention centers, advertising and promotions, promotion of the arts, historical restoration and preservation, sporting related events, tourism related signage, and spending funds on shuttles. Some examples were provided. The average hotel tax for cities Odessa's size was 15%.

Mr. Ham stated that the HOT tool kit was available as a resource to maximize investment in the arts. Ann Graham, Texans for the Arts Foundation Executive Director, reviewed the HOT tool kit that was available on the website. It provided different resources and information for using the HOT funds. She stated there were other ways that provided benefit to the arts and hotels by investing without staying a night at the hotels. Events included a gala, hotel catering for an event, art event or artist fees. Odessa has a variety of art funded projects.

Council member White asked for clarification on the 2019 legislative bill on sporting events with the UTPB. Mr. Bragiel stated that the bill allowed the City of Odessa to enter a memorandum of understanding or interlocal agreement to improve the sports facility on land owned by the University with stipulations.

Mr. Ham provided examples of how the HOT funds were used without utilizing hotel nights. Ms. Graham stated that the hotels benefitted from the investment of funds without hotel nights. There were creative ways to express art with the relationships of hotels. It provided for getting a higher return on investment.

Monica Tschauner, Discover Odessa Director, stated that the Chamber has worked with Odessa Arts and had a good relationship. The Chamber has provided staycation promotions

during the pandemic. Mr. Ham encouraged the Council to review the HOT tool kit as it was a great resource to maximize tourism. Ms. Graham stated that there was a case study on the Odessa Spire within the tool kit. Mr. Ham thanked Mr. Bragiel and Ms. Graham.

There was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, TRMC, CMC  
City Secretary

Javier Joven  
Mayor