

WP suspends efforts on potential wastewater site south of I-20

By Autumn Owens news1@weatherforddemocrat.com
Aug 26, 2020



With unanimous approval, the Willow Park city council suspended all efforts on a potential location for a new wastewater treatment facility south of Interstate 20 Tuesday night.

“Staff was directed to negotiate an option and bring it back to council for approval. At the end of that meeting, the following day, I reached out to the real estate firm who had the property and we were not really successful in getting anything done with them,” WP City Manager Bryan Grimes said. “We had one or two ‘I’ll call you later’ conversations, but we never had a price, never had terms, never had any sort of efforts and then as another site developed, the southside location just ceased to exist.”

The city received pushback from many residents who spoke out against the potential for constructing a wastewater treatment facility on the property south of I-20. Willow Park has been looking at wastewater treatment options following capacity issues with its current facility. The options have

included constructing a new treatment facility or entering into a wholesale agreement with a neighboring city.

“I have had some individuals and some groups reach out to me individually to talk about this, so I really appreciate everybody who has reached out and I’m open to anyone that wants to discuss anything with me,” Place 1 Councilmember Eric Contreras said. “I really appreciate a lot of those conversations, those concerns, that a lot of folks have told me.”

The council also approved a request for sealed bids for a land exchange for property suitable for the proposed treatment facility.

WP City Attorney Pat Chesser said the property they look to get will have to meet certain criteria — it must be inside the city limits, be between eight and 15 acres in size and be located within one mile of city property.

“We’ll publish this request for bid in the newspaper twice and then we’ll have hopefully some exchange offers in by [Sept.] 18,” Chesser said. “We’ll open the bids on [Sept.] 18 here at city hall and at that point we then have our next council meeting on [Sept.] 22, so we can consider and talk about it then.”

Back in June, the council approved a financial assistance resolution for funding from the Texas Water Development Board that could be put toward building a new facility.

“This has a lot of openness to it because we’re going to have to have a lease, for example, for the two to three years that we’re building a new plant. So that lease will have to be negotiated with the successful offer and those are the kinds of issues we’ll have to work through,” Chesser said. “We’re not going to close on the property until 60 days after we’re awarded funds from Texas Water Development Board and there will also be some other conditions that have to be met. We have time to work out some of the details.”