

**CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

430 North Brazosport, Freeport, TX
Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

FEDC BOARD MEMBERS: Quorum Present

Directors:

Josh Mitchell	President
Ken Tyner	Treasurer
Mark Parker	
Ronnie Martin	

Robert Johnson: Executive Director

Jerry Cain – City Liaison

Rachael Cohen: EDC Staff

I. Call to Order

Josh Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge

Ken Tyner led the invocation and Mark Parker led the pledge.

III. Citizens Comments

There were no citizen comments.

IV. Discussion and Action Items

1. Discuss and take possible action on the mowing bids.

Robert Johnson introduced the bid process. Two bidders, Mr. Greg Fields and Mr. Guardo Campbell, could not attend the special meeting.

Josh Mitchell inquired whether the participants would be speaking and then invited Matt Covey from Grass Masters, the current contractor, to come to the podium.

Matt Covey expressed gratitude to the Board for the meeting. He mentioned that Grass Masters currently holds the contract for mowing, weeding, and lawn care of EDC properties. After emerging from the non-growing season, when the grass remains dormant, it suddenly begins growing rapidly, and they are working diligently to catch up and restore the properties to good condition. With sufficient equipment and manpower, the team is well-prepared to handle the work. Matt Covey believes their bid

is competitive and appreciates the opportunity to care for the properties, given the progress they've made since starting.

Josh Mitchell noted that, based on discussions with the Board and citizens, his primary concern, which he hasn't personally witnessed but heard from others, is regarding the quality of work provided. From tonight's discussion, it appears that the contract stipulations might have played a role in this. He asked if the challenge lies in the bi-weekly mowing schedule rather than being able to mow when the properties start looking unkempt.

Matt Covey responded that this is indeed a challenge. At home, mowing can be done whenever necessary, but the contract makes it challenging to adhere to fixed intervals, resulting in less attractive lawns. During dormancy, small weeds emerge around the edges monthly, but in summer, mowing happens multiple times per month, and this will help restore the quality.

Josh Mitchell suggested adding a clause in the contract that allows the mower discretion for flexibility based on the property's appearance.

Robert Johnson stated that the old contract was much more "loosey-goosey," but Olsen and Olsen have drafted a new contract that is much stricter with its timelines. Having clearly outlined stipulations will significantly improve the quality of work, as the previous contract was vague and open to interpretation.

Josh Mitchell inquired if there were any additional questions.

Ken Tyner: what other clients do you work for?

Matt Covey responded that they work with the City of Galveston, D.R. Horton, Lennar, Freeport EDC, and several smaller commercial clients, including Shipley's. They focus exclusively on commercial work, specializing in mowing and hydroseeding (replanting).

Josh Mitchell: Thank you, we will move to At Ease Services

Joe Garcia introduced himself and emphasized the importance of ensuring agreement on cutting intervals and answering questions up front. He stressed the need for clarity in determining when properties need to be cut and maintaining consistency to deliver excellent service.

Josh Mitchell requested Joe Garcia to come forward and share details about his business and explain why they should consider his services.

Joe Garcia explained: We are At Ease Services. Our services extend beyond mowing and include equipment rentals, brush removal, brush and land clearing, tree removal,

and dumpster rental. We maintain high standards across all these services. Some properties are more intricate, involving trees and other maintenance needs, and we're ready to provide those additional services if required. If you need more than just mowing, we can be your comprehensive solution. We cater to both commercial and residential clients, maintaining high standards to meet all expectations. Residential projects are challenging due to varying standards, but we have the manpower and equipment to handle brush clearing, mowing, edging, and pressure washing. This is our first presentation to the EDC, and we're excited to deliver. Regarding pricing, our rates are per visit, whether weekly or bi-weekly. We weren't aware of specific terms and guidelines, so our prices reflect a per-visit rate, and if bi-weekly, the cost will remain consistent for each visit.

Josh Mitchell asked Joe Garcia to explain fallen limbs, trash pickup, and anything outside of mowing and weeding, the cost being \$200 per hour.

Joe Garcia clarified that there might be a discrepancy between the documents. His submission includes details like acres per hour, heavy equipment, and manual labor. He doesn't see a \$200-per-hour rate listed, suggesting a possible misunderstanding. If we go out to the property and there's an excess amount of trash pickup, that's what we charge \$25 an hour for just general labor.

Josh Mitchell confirmed \$25 an hour.

Joe Garcia explained that they had previously worked for the City of Freeport, handling the overgrown lots of Ms. Vasquez after being notified about them. They managed these lots during the winter months. While no further notifications have been received yet, they're currently working with the City of Lake Jackson on a bid for utility mowing. Most other projects they handle are primarily residential.

Josh Mitchell asked if Joe Garcia's company had a contract with the City of Freeport.

Joe Garcia responded that they had done some mowing for the City of Freeport, following a similar bidding process. They would submit their prices and take care of overgrown lots after receiving a 3-day notification.

Mark Parker asked if there were any additional questions for Joe Garcia.

Josh Mitchell stated that they had Gardner Campbell's bid at \$2,000 biweekly, which totals \$4,000 monthly. G-Coast Mow and Wash LLC were at \$700 bi-monthly, making it \$1,400 each month.

Robert Johnson noted that there was no executive session on the agenda, and legal counsel had confirmed this.

Josh Mitchell clarified that they couldn't go into an executive session.

Robert Johnson reiterated that since they weren't negotiating a grant, no executive session was possible.

Josh Mitchell asked if there were any motions.

Ronnie Martin made a motion to accept Grass masters.

Josh Mitchell acknowledged the motion and asked for a second.

Mark Parker seconded the motion so they could open the floor for debate and discussion.

Josh Mitchell confirmed that there was a motion on the floor to accept Grass Masters, proposed by Ronnie Martin and seconded by Mark Parker. He asked if there was any debate or discussion.

Ronnie Martin stated that he had reviewed all the properties needing mowing on two occasions, once with Robert Johnson.

Mark Parker agreed, saying he [Mr. Parker] maintains his own house with care, including the flower beds, but noticed that some of the properties weren't well-kept, especially near the river. Mr. Parker didn't think the work was done properly and found the presence of trash and lack of edge on two other properties disappointing.

Josh Mitchell thanked them and asked if there were further comments.

Mark Parker emphasized that the new contract should be stricter.

Robert Johnson agreed and said their attorney had drafted a new, tighter contract in November, which clearly outlined expectations.

Josh Mitchell recalled the meeting where they discussed the new contract.

Robert Johnson said they needed a closer working relationship with the mower to monitor quality without constant supervision. He also asked if someone on staff could be directly contacted.

Matt Covey confirmed that their work is handled in-house, and he can be contacted directly for issues.

Josh Mitchell asked if the contract could include a clause ensuring that any necessary cleanup would be part of the job.

Matt Covey agreed, saying that it was a good idea.

Robert Johnson brought up the four houses, including two dilapidated ones that are likely to be demolished, asking if they would be mowed.

Matt Covey confirmed that they have permission now. Initially, they were told not to touch the property because it was under the city's jurisdiction and involved litigation. However, these properties are now included in the mowing estimates.

Robert Johnson noted that the property has significant growth around the edges, which will take time to fix, and asked if it's still included in the current bid.

Matt Covey stated that it is included. The previous contract was too vague, and there was uncertainty about who was responsible for mowing. Nevertheless, they will ensure it gets cleaned up.

Robert Johnson asked if the river area would also be maintained.

Matt Covey assured the Board that he would take care of the river area as well since he appreciates it.

Josh Mitchell asked if there were any further debates or discussions regarding the motion.

Ronnie Martin made a motion to approve the request to continue the contract with Matt Covey, Grass Masters Inc. Mark Parker seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED 3 AYES to 1 NAY.**

V. Board and Executive Director Comments

VI. Adjourn

Josh Mitchell requested a Motion to adjourn the board meeting. Ronnie Martin made the motion to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Ken Tyner. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Josh Mitchell adjourned the board meeting at 6:18 p.m.