Minutes of Workshop held November 6, 2008

Workshop with the following present: Mayor Mark Bowen; Aldermen Ward Sanders, Rudy Hernandez, Jerry Stone, Erik Dahler; City Secretary Josie Campa; Police Chief Richard Priest; Director of Public Works James McGrath; Assistant City Secretary Virginia Medina.

Mayor Bowen opened the workshop at 6:30 p.m. and said he would ask each of the Council members what their thoughts were for a five-year plan for the City.

Alderman Rudy Hernandez stated he would like to see growth and new businesses. He also said the city needs to know that kind of businesses the citizens would like to have come to our city.

Alderman Dahler agreed that citizens need to get involved and let Council know what kind of city we want to be.

Council discussed whether the city ordinances need to be strengthened or weakened to accommodate more businesses.

Alderman Hernandez told Council the city may want to hire someone to take care of Economic Development.

Mayor Bowen said the city's new website may be a good tool for getting an idea from citizens on what they want for the city.

Alderman Hernandez said his goals include a viable plan for Council; hiring an Economic Development Director; and a streets plan for drainage and gutters. Alderman Hernandez told Council that once a plan is drawn up the Council can utilize the citizens.

Alderman Jerry Stone told Council he feels that getting utilities on the other side of IH 35 is very important in order to get more businesses to come to Lytle.
Alderman Erik Dahler told Council Economic Development is needed and immediate steps need to be taken such as forming an enterprise zone, infrastructure, tax abatements; and an industrial park.

Alderman Dahler told Council the city has to have incentives to bring businesses to Lytle. Mr. Dahler said the city needs a revenue generator and feels a meter changeout program or new technology meters could help the city with cutting down on water lossage. Mr. Dahler told Council, zoning is also something to be discussed, and maybe have certain areas in the city for manufactured homes to be placed instead of throughout the city.

Council discussed Main Street and what the goal should be for beautifying or revitalizing this area of the city.

Alderman Sanders told Council he has looked at several websites of cities in Texas and said there are six categories that are covered in their long range plans. They were: economic development; land use and zoning; infrastructure, urban design, community services and housing and neighborhoods.

Mayor Bowen told Council he would like to get the community involved and that once Council prioritizes the goals for Lytle, committees can go to work.

Alderman Hernandez told Council that incentives and recognition are good for bringing businesses to town and told of a loan program that was set up in Uvalde.

Alderman Stone told Council that Council could consider a "road society" to encourage people to plant stuff along city's Main Street and other thoroughfares.

Council discussed whether the city needs to have a plan in place for incentives and infrastructure before hiring someone to be Economic Development Director.

City Secretary Josie Campa told Council she feels infrastructure is most important and that it might be a good idea to list each of the six categories named by Alderman Sanders and set goals for each of them.

Director of Public Works James McGrath told Council utilities need to be extended to land being developed and answered questions about some of the utility lines throughout the city that need replacing.

Chief Richard Priest told Council that the city needs to appear appealing from the interstate; maps need to be upgraded; police department will need a new larger building; animal control needs to be better and park improvements are also needed. Chief Priest told Council that the tax rate will probably have to be increased to provide these services.

Assistant City Secretary Virginia Medina told Council she agrees with Alderman Stone that utilities need to be extended on the other side of IH 35 first and then economic development can be improved.

Mayor Bowen told Council that TxDot is holding a meeting next week to discuss the new exit ramps, and that he feels these ramps will bring in more businesses.

Council discussed what the next step should be for developing a large range plan.

Alderman Hernandez suggested that Council members each give top five goals for each of the six categories mentioned earlier and Council agreed. Council asked the City Secretary to prepare a survey sheet for Council members and send them with the agenda on Friday.

Mayor Bowen asked Council members to fill out this survey sheet and return in one week for review.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.