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## Cell phone restrictions put on hold by Cedar Park Council



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### Cell phone restrictions put on hold by Cedar Park Council

Posted Wednesday, September 30, 2009 6:00 pm

by Jenn Rains, Hill Country News

Recently, the Texas House of Representatives passed a new bill, HB55, which prohibits the use of cell phones in school zones. In order to enforce the restrictions though, every city must install signs below the school speed limit signs announcing to drivers that cell phones are prohibited.

At the Sept. 24 Cedar Park City Council meeting, the agenda item to approve the signs in order to enforce the law failed because a second was not made for the item.

"I think this is a poorly worded law," said Mayor Pro-Tem Matt Powell. He said the law was very unclear and confusing to people.

The clarity issues deal with whether the law intends for cell phones to be banned at all times in a school zone or just during school zone hours, if all devices are prohibited such as bluetooth headsets, or if it just refers to handheld devices.

The cost to the city would be \$253 per sign for a total of \$11,891, since signs would have to be placed at 47 different locations throughout the city.

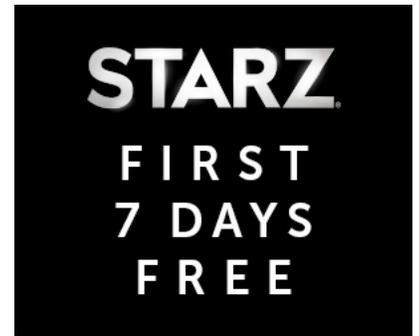
Despite the ambiguity of the law, Powell made a motion to have signs placed in all 47 locations in Cedar Park in order to enforce the law. "Despite all of these problems, the spirit of the law is good," he said.

Other members of the council disagreed though. "It's just punishing the masses for the stupidity of the few as usual, in my opinion," said Councilmember Scott Mitchell.



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"I dislike laws like this," said Cedar Park Mayor Bob Lemon.

Once Powell's motion was made, a silence fell over the dais as no one else on the council seconded. The motion died and the law will not be enforced.

**Council approves budget, tax rate**

After months of staring at numbers, sitting through budget workshops and trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together, the Cedar Park FY10 budget had its final reading and was approved by the council.

This year the budget process had one major change - no paper. In an effort to go green and be environmentally friendly, the entire budget process was done electronically, said Cedar Park City Manager Brenda Eivens.

The 2010 budget will see general fund revenues equal \$28,520,083 while expenditures are expected to be slightly less than revenues at \$28.5 million.

All public services will continue to be funded at the level that citizens currently enjoy, Eivens said.

The budget also includes paying \$14,000 for winter swimming. In an agreement with CP Swim and the Cedar Park High School swim team, the city will pay this year for the staffing necessary to allow the teams to swim, but the swim teams and Leander ISD are footing the bill for heating the pool.

The ad valorem tax rate was also approved. The tax rate stayed the same as this year's rate at \$0.489001 per \$100 valuation. The Maintenance and Operation (M&O) is \$0.2487 while the Interest and Sinking (I&S) is \$0.2402.

**Briefly...**

Kathryn Turner, the Cedar Park Library Circulation Supervisor, was recognized for her retirement. Cedar Park Library Director Pauline Lam thanked Turner for her "remarkable work, dedication and unfailing loyalty." ... City secretary LeAnn Quinn was recognized for 10 years of service to the city, while assistant city manager Jose Madrigal was recognized for five years of service. ... The city contemplated changing the restrictions for number of animals per residence and the city's leash laws. Discussion was heard, but no action was taken at this time.

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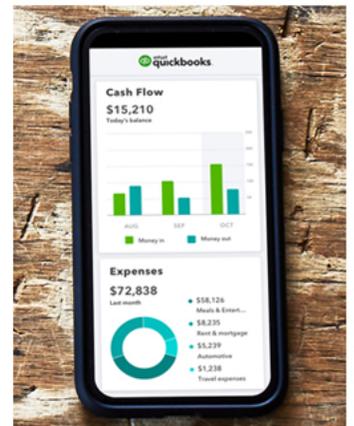
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