

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-61**

**AN ORDINANCE TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH THE REQUIREMENT OF ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE LISTENING SESSIONS, DISTRICT-SPECIFIC, AND THE PUBLICATION OF CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONERS**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Harlingen recognizes the importance of fostering transparent communication and active participation between the City Commission and the residents of Harlingen;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Harlingen is committed to ensuring that all residents have equitable access to their elected representatives and the opportunity to participate in local governance;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HARLINGEN, TEXAS:**

**Section 1. Comprehensive Town Hall Requirement**

- 1.01** At least once per calendar year, the entire City Commission, including the Mayor, shall convene for a Town Hall Meeting, at which time the City Commission will have a listening session to hear from Harlingen residents. This meeting shall be open to all residents and shall cover topics of public concern directly related to the operation of the City of Harlingen.
- 1.02** The Comprehensive Town Hall shall be scheduled either during the work week at or after 5:30 PM or on a Saturday to accommodate residents' varying schedules.
- 1.03** The Comprehensive Town Hall shall be scheduled and advertised at least 30 calendar days in advance on the City's official website, social media pages used by the City, and bulletin boards at city-owned public buildings to ensure maximum community participation.

**Section 2. District-Specific Town Halls**

- 2.01** Each City Commissioner shall host at least one (1) Town Hall meeting per calendar year within their respective Single-Member District.
- 2.02** These District-Specific Town Halls shall focus on issues pertinent to the district while also providing a forum for residents to voice matters of public concern regarding the City of Harlingen, and to engage directly with their elected representative.
- 2.03** Each District-Specific Town Hall shall be scheduled either during the work week at or after 5:30 PM or on a Saturday to accommodate residents' varying schedules.
- 2.04** Each District-Specific Town Hall shall be scheduled and advertised at least 30 calendar days in advance on the City's official website, social media pages used by the City, and bulletin boards at city-owned public buildings.

**Section 3. Publication of Commissioner Contact Information**

- 3.01** The City of Harlingen shall ensure that the city cell phone number and email address of each City Commissioner are prominently posted on the City's official website.
- 3.02** The contact information shall be updated regularly to ensure accuracy and accessibility for all residents.

**Section 4. Accessibility and Inclusivity**

- 4.01** All Town Hall meetings shall be held at accessible locations that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that all residents, regardless of physical ability, can attend and participate. Notice of Town Hall meetings will be posted in both the English and Spanish languages.
- 4.02** Any individual who requires the assistance of a Spanish interpreter to communicate with the City Commission should call the City Secretary at (956) 216-5001 at least ten days before

the meeting. The City will endeavor to have a translator present at the meeting upon timely request.

**4.03** Each Town Hall session will feature a listening session at which time the public may address matters of public concern which relate to the operation of the City of Harlingen.

**Section 5. Community Feedback and Follow-Up**

**5.01** The City Commission will consider resident feedback into future decision-making processes and will communicate its decisions transparently to the public.

**Section 6. Effective Date**

**6.01** This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval and will be implemented at the beginning at the first regular meeting of each fiscal year at which time a calendar for town hall meetings will be presented for adoption by the Commission.

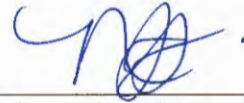
**Section 7. Severability**

**7.01** If any provision of this ordinance is found to conflict with state or federal law, the remaining provisions shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

**APPROVED ON FIRST READING** this 21<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2024

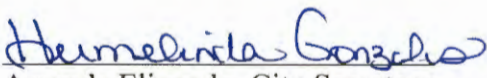
**PASSED AND APPROVED ON SECOND READING** this 4<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024, at a regular meeting of the Elective Commission of the City of Harlingen, Texas at which a quorum was present.

**CITY OF HARLINGEN**



Norma Sepulveda, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

*Foe:*   
Amanda Elizondo, City Secretary