



GARLAND - MESQUITE

Powered by *The Dallas Morning News*

95°



FORECAST

TRAFFIC



ALL COMMUNITIES LOCAL NEWS WEATHER

Garland council backtracks toward original deal with transportation consultant



40

1

0



Share



2



By RAY LESZCZYNSKI

Staff Writer

rieszcynski@dallasnews.com

Published: 08 August 2014 10:17 PM

Updated: 08 August 2014 10:48 PM

The Garland City Council's deal with its transportation consultant is a revision-in-progress, with city leaders this week backtracking toward the original assignment.

The role of the consultant, Dean International, has been among the flash points during the council's sometimes contentious five-hour work sessions, which are dotted with 5-4 votes.

Dean's role had been expanded in March to include an industrial focus, work with Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the creation of a residents' advocacy group. At the same time, its contract was extended through the next legislative session and raised \$10,000 a month to \$360,000 a year.

Since that 5-4 council vote, a single seat changed in the May election. But that swayed the majority. Monday's action undid the industrial focus added by the prior council. Those among the new majority called the industrial focus a distraction. Those on the short side of the vote stood by the deal they'd put in place months earlier.

"I've never seen anybody request less work be done on a contract with a fixed price," council member Lori Dodson said. "So we would like you to do less work, but we are going to pay you the same amount of money."

Mayor Douglas Athas said he believes in the industrial plans being worked by the city and chamber of commerce's economic development teams.

The company headed by former Texas Secretary of State David Dean was hired in Garland in March 2013. At first, it reported directly to the council's Transportation Committee. Athas, elected two months later, was openly critical of being circumvented. At the time, he was

also on the short side of the 5-4 votes.

The mayor removed the committee link this May, sending transportation issues before the full council.

"We are trying to make sure we tackle every issue with the best resources we have," the mayor said.

The consultant's role, he added, is vital if Garland is to get the same type of LBJ Freeway improvements as are in progress west of Central Expressway.

"We don't need to dilute David Dean's effort," he said. "We don't need to inject him into processes we are already doing very competently."

There is unity among council members about the importance of the \$1.5 billion LBJ East project. The city on Wednesday cut the ribbon to celebrate a \$10 million LBJ frontage road.

Dean now reports at the twice-monthly council work sessions. The reports lead with LBJ East and work through the myriad topics once heard only by the subcommittee.

"I personally am tired of staying here until midnight every work session," council member Tim Campbell said in his proposal last month to return work session items to a Transportation Committee.

In addition to bypassing the Transportation Committee, Athas, as is mayoral privilege, made reassignments to other committees after the election. Councilman Stephen Stanley challenged his reassignment from the Administrative Services Committee because of its work in progress.

"I don't know how many times a committee has been right in the middle of an undertaking of this nature and then have two of the three members replaced midstream," Stanley said. "To me, that's inappropriate."

Athas responded that Stanley could do it whatever way he wanted as soon as he was elected mayor.

"In fact, you can declare this evening that you're running for mayor and start your campaign now," Athas said.

Athas' revised committees, and the notion to return transportation items to their own committee, passed with five votes.

Stanley was again in the mayor's crosshairs Monday, supporting a Garland representation at the 100th anniversary ceremony of the Panama Canal. Along with Campbell and Dodson, Stanley had made trips to Panama with the TEX-21 statewide transportation lobbying group that is urging the state to promote and take full advantage of the canal expansion.

Dean International is a consultant for TEX-21 and is charged with travel arrangements for the group's fifth annual trip to Panama next week.

"We've sent four people down there," Athas said, "and I don't see anything from it yet."

Did you see something wrong in this story, or something missing? Let us know.

You Might Also Like



How Much Does it Cost to Rebuild a House?
(The Cincinnati Insurance Companies)



25 Celebrity Wives Who Were Mistresses
(StyleBlazer)



What Happens When Boeing Partners With the Lotus F1
(Boeing)



Two-Nosed Dog Seeks Forever Home
(PetMD)

Recommended by

From the web

[Students at US's 9th oldest college took down its Confederate flags today](#)
Blue Nation Review

[Inside the Shark Tank: This mom from Texas out-sharked the investors](#)
Bigcommerce

[These Are the Only 5 Mortgage Lenders You Should Consider](#) FindTheBest

More from Dallasnews.com

[How downsizing turns into buying more](#) Opinion

[City eyes closing Olive Street where it splits Klyde Warren Park](#) News

[Dallas ISD has mixed results in latest academic ratings from state](#) News

Recommended by

Comments

To post a comment, log into your chosen social network and then add your comment below. Your comments are subject to our [Terms of Service](#) and the privacy policy and terms of service of your social network. If you do not want to comment with a social network, please consider writing a [letter to the editor](#).



2 Comments

Sort [Subscribe](#) [RSS](#)



Erick Howell

1 day ago

If Stanley or any other council person wants to tack a trip to the Panama Canal then the need to pay for it themselves . He also wants us to pay for a trip to China so he can ride their high-speed train.