



NEWS RELEASE FROM THE CITY OF DRIPPING SPRINGS & DRIPPING SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

City of Dripping Springs and DSISD Agree on Lighting Mitigation Plan

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 14, 2016

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS – In an effort to reduce light pollution from school district facilities, the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) and the City of Dripping Springs have come to an agreement on a lighting mitigation plan that will be a win-win outcome for both city and district residents.

With DSISD's construction of its new baseball and softball complex underway, the school district sought two variances from the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. The complex will be lit by state-of-the-art Musco Green Lighting, but the variances were requested because the level of lighting necessary to comply with UIL recommendations was greater than what is allowed in the City's ordinance. The Dripping Springs City Council granted the variances on Sept. 15, 2015, contingent upon the school district taking steps to shield, replace, or remove lighting pre-dating the ordinance on DSISD facilities in the city limits.

At the City's expense, an inventory of exterior lights at the school district facilities within the city limits, excluding lighting specifically intended for sport field illumination, was conducted. Once the inventory was completed, the district studied the potential impact and future cost savings of the suggested replacements and renovations to lighting fixtures.

On Jan. 25, 2016, the DSISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution agreeing to the City's full mitigation plan to be implemented over a 10-year period, thus finalizing the variances for the baseball/softball complex. As a result of the mitigation plan, all non-complying fixtures inventoried will be brought into compliance with the City's Lighting Ordinance.

"It is important for us to be good neighbors and support efforts to enhance the quality of life for members of our community, while balancing our role as good stewards of public funds," said Superintendent Bruce Gearing. "We are committed to creating a greater benefit for this community through our partnership with the City."

City of Dripping Springs Mayor Todd Purcell stated that protecting star-filled nights from the light pollution of the rapidly increasing urban sprawl is of great importance to many of the Dripping Springs area residents. "It's not just about being able to see the stars...it's more than that. It's about public health and also increased safety from the reduction of glare." In addition, Purcell said that studies have shown light pollution disrupts ecosystems and affects everything from wildlife to food webs.

"We were the first community in Texas and the sixth in the world to receive the International Dark-Sky Community designation. It is something we are proud of and want to continue to get others onboard," Mayor Purcell said. "This agreement is a good example of how the school district and City can work together, protect our residents' quality of life, and be good guardians of public funds."

Mayor Pro Tem Bill Foulds said the partnership between the two governmental entities is in the spirit of cooperation that DSISD and the City have always had. He also emphasized that the school district has voluntarily agreed to

construct the new middle and elementary schools on Sawyer Ranch Road under the City's Lighting Ordinance. "The new schools are not in the city limits, so they are simply being a good neighbor. We appreciate the school board members and Dr. Bruce Gearing's stewardship and cooperation in this process."

The properties identified in the inventory included Dripping Springs Middle School, Dripping Springs High School, Walnut Springs Elementary School, Dripping Springs Elementary School, the Transportation Center, and DSISD Administration offices.

###