

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Donna Barron, City Manager

**FROM:** James Kunke, Community Relations & Tourism Director

**DATE:** August 16, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **Approval of a Resolution Naming the Lewisville Rodeo Arena in honor of Former Mayor Bill Weaver.**

### **BACKGROUND**

Lewisville Rodeo Arena is located on 8.3 acres on the north side of Parkway Drive, between Mill and Kealy. It was built in 1964 and remains in use today as a rodeo and special events venue, including the Fiesta Charra event held May 29, 2021. The arena was the site of the annual Labor Day Rodeo for more than 50 years, from 1965 until the Lewisville Saddle Club disbanded in 2018.

The arena facilities were installed on land that had been purchased by the City in 1959. The Saddle Club managed the arena under a series of lease agreements starting in 1965. The buildings and most of the fixtures were Lewisville Saddle Club property until the club sold them to the City in July 2018.

There were multiple small improvements made through the years, including the addition of wooden-seat bleachers in the 1970s that had been salvaged from the former Dallas International Motor Speedway. In 2012, the City spent \$473,000 to replace the bleachers with new ADA-compliant metal bleachers and to install ADA-compliant concrete parking spots and walkways. Lewisville Saddle Club turned arena ownership over to the City in 2018.

Also in 2018, City Council approved an estimated \$835,000 in arena repairs and upgrades. By performing some work in house and finding safe short-term fixes for some of the repair needs, staff was able to complete enough repairs and upgrades to safely accommodate the 2018 event at a cost of about \$100,000. Work included replacing the arena dirt, repairing and painting the arena fence, and making some adjustments to electrical and lighting systems.

After a forced pause due to pandemic response, city staff has been working actively in 2021 with a professional consultant to finalize design of the renovated arena site to make it a safe and efficient location for equestrian and other events. This will include a retaining wall and grading work because the northern edge of the arena footprint is in the flood plain along Prairie Creek. The project is expected to be completed in late 2021 or early 2022.

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The arena will be used on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, for a one-day bull-riding event conducted by Pro Bull Riders (PBR), the world's preeminent organization for bull-riding competition. The event will be called PBR Lewisville. We will use temporary fencing and chutes through Priefert, the same company from which the City is purchasing the long-term fencing and equipment.

The arena has never been officially named, generally being called either Lewisville Rodeo Arena or Saddle Club Arena. City staff would like to have a formal name for the arena prior to the PBR Lewisville event.

## **ANALYSIS**

Bill Weaver was elected mayor in April 1963. He was elected twice more, in 1965 and 1967, and left office in 1969 after serving for six years. He is one of only six Lewisville mayors to have been elected for three or more terms.

It was during his time as mayor that the Lewisville Saddle Club, which had formed in 1962, approached the city with an idea for a community rodeo arena. Mayor Weaver was instrumental in working with the Saddle Club, the Jaycees, city officials, and property owners to create the Lewisville Rodeo Arena in 1964.

Mayor Weaver graduated from Lewisville High School in 1955. He was the second of five LHS graduates to serve as Lewisville's mayor and is a member of the LHS Hall of Fame.

He served his country in the U.S. Army from January 1957 through December 1958. He was involved in chemical biological warfare instruction while in the military. He returned to Lewisville after his military tour of duty and entered the real estate business. He was a successful real estate broker in Lewisville for 32 years.

Professional accomplishments include being a founding officer of Greater Lewisville Area Realtors, being named Realtor of the Year in 1965 and 1972, and serving as president of the Lewisville Chamber of Commerce in 1965. Weaver was named "Citizen of the Year" in 1964.

Prior to his retirement, he continued to serve his city on many committees involving the growth of the City of Lewisville.

In recognition of his many years of dedicated service to Lewisville, and his key role in creating the Lewisville Rodeo Arena, city staff believes it is fitting and appropriate to consider naming the renovated facility in his honor.

If this measure is approved by the City Council, there will be a brief dedication ceremony during a break in the PBR Lewisville event at which we will formally name the facility as Bill Weaver

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Arena. There also will be a Cattle Drive Parade to the arena grounds earlier in the day and Mayor Weaver will be invited to serve as parade marshal.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City Council approve the resolution as set forth in the caption above.