

Setting the Record Straight: Clearing Up Some Rumors About PORT MANSFIELD and the Willacy County Navigation District:

Recently, there have been some misunderstandings circulating from well-meaning citizens regarding the Willacy County Navigation District and its operations—particularly when it comes to Port Mansfield. So, it's important to ensure that everyone has the correct information.

Here are some points to help clear up these rumors and provide transparency:

1. The District Serves ALL Willacy County Taxpayers—Not Just Port Mansfield.

While some citizens express concern about changes to the character of Port Mansfield, it is crucial to remember that the **Navigation District** is, well, a navigation district! And it is supported by taxpayers *all across Willacy County*. The District is working hard to attract business and industry so the taxpayers get what they pay for—fair and equitable economic development that benefits everyone, rather than focusing solely on maintaining the status quo in one part of the District. *This is what the taxpayers of Willacy County deserve and expect, and the District will continue to work towards those goals.*

2. The District Owns the Land in the District Boundaries—including Port Mansfield.

This means that the residents are “lessees.” Some might feel that being called a ‘lessee’ carries a certain emotional weight, but the term simply refers to someone who rents or leases property, as outlined in virtually every dictionary and legal framework. In this context, it means the District, as the landlord, provides the property, and those residing on it are, by definition, lessees.

3. The District Has the Right to Conduct Closed Sessions for Certain Matters—They Are Not to Conduct Business in Secret.

The Board is legally permitted to hold closed sessions for certain things such as attorney-client communications and certain economic development matters. These sessions are not a means to hide information or conduct business without public input. All actions and approvals take place in Open Session.

4. Board Members Cannot Respond During Public Comment for Legal Reasons.

Board members are not able to respond directly to public comments during meetings because, under the Texas Open Meetings Act, topics for Board deliberation must be listed on the official meeting agenda. Public comments, while important, often address issues that are not on the agenda, and responding to them would be a violation of state law.

5. Board Meeting Agendas are Required to be Posted at Least 72 hours prior to the Meeting.

This means, for a Board Meeting which takes place at 9:00 a.m. on a Wednesday, the agenda must be posted no later than 9:00 a.m. on the Sunday before the meeting. Indeed, the District typically posts meeting agendas at least a day early, on the Friday before the meeting.

The Willacy County Navigation District is committed to the responsible and equitable use of public tax dollars. By developing the District as it was intended—for navigational purposes—Willacy County can experience economic development and job creation while preserving Port Mansfield’s recreational character. That way, we can create a brighter future for all taxpayers—whether in Port Mansfield, Lasara, San Perlita, Raymondville, or anywhere in Willacy County!