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City Council Approves New Tax Abatement Guidelines

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City Council approves revisions to tax abatement guidelines

By BRAD KELLAR Herald-Banner Staff

GREENVILLE — The Greenville City Council agreed this week to revise the criteria it uses to determine whether a business should receive a tax abatement.

Greenville Board of Development (GBOD) Executive Director Greg Sims had advised the abatements should no longer be granted based only on the potential number of jobs which might be added or retained.

Instead, Sims recommended, “taking tax abatements and look at it from the perspective of focusing on the capital improvements to the community.”

The Council voted unanimously to approve the revisions during Tuesday's regular session.

Sims said the Board of Development staff has researched the guidelines, which had been adopted by the City of Greenville in June 2010, as to whether they restrict new or existing businesses from qualifying for a tax abatement.

But he also wanted to stress that the Board is not saying that the creation or retention of jobs should not be a factor in the decision to grant an abatement.

"They wanted to reiterate the importance of jobs to this community," Sims said. "Jobs are very, very important."

City Manager Steven Alexander also believed the revisions were needed.

"Overall, I think this is a good change to the guidelines," Alexander said. "There still is a minimum threshold on the value of the improvements."