

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 26, 2024

**TIME:** 6:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** San Juan Memorial Library  
Multipurpose Meeting Room  
1010 S. Standard  
San Juan, Texas 78589

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mario Garza, Mayor  
Marco "Markie" Villegas, Mayor Pro Tempore  
Adina "Dina" Santillan, Commissioner  
Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo, Commissioner  
Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez, Commissioner  
Rick Palacios, City Attorney

**STAFF PRESENT:** Benjamin Arjona, City Manager  
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary  
Tirso Garza, Chief of Fire  
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police  
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources  
Leroy Gonzales, Finance Director  
Jaime Tijerina, Library Assistant Supervisor  
Ruben Guajardo, Interim Director of Parks & Recreation / PAL Director  
Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning  
Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/ Public Works  
Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities  
Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator  
Pat Karr, Director of Information Technology

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**  
Mayor Mario Garza called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. INVOCATION:**  
Benjamin Arjona, City Manager led the Invocation.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**  
Mayor Mario Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No Public Comments.
- V. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. Presentation to Recognize the PSJA Early College High School THSWPA State Powerlifting Champions.**

**DISCUSSION:** Ruben Guajardo, Interim Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced Madison Garcia and Valeria Villarreal, along with Head Coach Lisa Canut and Assistant Head Coach Nick Mendoza, who were representing the PSJA Early High School Powerlifting Team. On March 13, 2024, Mr. Guajardo announced that these athletes competed in the THSWPA UIL State Meet in Frisco, Texas, returning with a gold and a silver medal. Mayor Mario Garza thanked and congratulated the athletes for their accomplishments and for putting San Juan on the map.

**B. Presentation on 2024 Golden Gloves - Redemption Boxing Participants.**

**DISCUSSION:** Ruben Guajardo, Interim Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the Golden Glove Regional qualifiers and event in partnership between the San Juan PAL and Golden Glove Association that was held on March 8th, 9th, and 10th. Kim Esparza and Iynara Estrada were the two San Juan qualifiers. Josh Gonzalez with Redemption Boxing thanked the City of San Juan and the PAL program for the support. Mr. Gonzalez introduced and praised Coach Javier Calderon for his amazing experience. Mayor Mario Garza thanked Redemption Boxing for the great work they've done with kids. Mr. Guajardo informed the commission that Miss Esparza and Miss Estrada got invited to participate in the Junior Olympics boxing match in May.

**C. Presentation on Energy Rates by Valiant Energy Sources.**

**DISCUSSION:** Rudy Ramirez, a managing partner with Valiant Energy Sources, presented what they have to offer and what they can do as a valid energy source company for the City of San Juan. Mr. Ramirez stated that Valiant Energy Sources is a full-energy consulting firm broker that specializes in the procurement of energy services. He stated they have a range of clients that range from the private sector, cities, schools' districts, and government entities. Also, their focus is to get their clients paying the best price possible at the current time with their current contract. He moved forward, stating that one of their main focuses is the street lighting project to keep the city safe.

**D. Presentation on Departmental Reports: Department of Finance, Fire Department, Police Department, Municipal Court, and Department of Utilities.**

- 1. Department of Finance Monthly Report.**
- 2. Fire Department Monthly Report.**
- 3. Police Department Monthly Report.**
- 4. Municipal Court Monthly Report.**
- 5. Department of Utilities Monthly Report.**

**DISCUSSION:** Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas asked Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation, if he had the materials for covering the potholes. Mr. Garza stated he does have the material—three or four tons of cold mix. Mr. Garza stated the only problem is that it's just as expensive as hot mix, and he's trying to stay away from cold mix and go strictly with hot mix. The difference is that it takes a lot more time to do the hot mix because they have to do the preparation the right way so it can last for a long time. Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan asked Mary Enriquez, Director, Municipal Court Administrator, how they were doing with case resolutions, if they had been getting a lot of people coming in to address that, and if there was an increase in numbers and collections with the amnesty program and the case resolution going on. Ms. Enriquez stated it has been positive and it has been working.

**VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES**

**A. Hold Second Public Hearing for the Voluntary Annexation Petition of the 6.21-Acre Tract of Land Out of Lot 12, Stewart's Addition to the Conway Gardens, Located Approximately 300 feet North of Hall Acres Road, Along the West side of Stewart Road, as Requested by XLH Investments, LLC. [Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning]**

**DISCUSSION:** Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning, stated this is the second public hearing for this annexation for this property. As Mr. Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, read the caption, the annexation petition was accepted by the City of San Juan City Commission on February 13, 2024. Mr. Tijerina stated that staff recommends approval of the second public hearing as presented.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:31 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:32 p.m.

**Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez. Motion passed (5-0)**

**B. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit to Operate a Drive-Thru Business and the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG – Wine and Malt Beverages Retailer's On-Premise Permit) at "Las Tapatias Drive-Thru" located at 912 E. Business 83, legally described as Lot 1, Mireles Subdivision, as Requested by Erika Cadena Abrego. [Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning]**

**DISCUSSION:** Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning, stated this is a conditional use of permit, went before the planning commission on March 14th, and did have a public hearing. They mailed eight notices out to the property owners over the 200-foot radius and were published in the newspaper. There was one comment against this by Mr. Tommy Phillips, but Mr. Phillips was present at the planning commission meeting, and his concerns were laid there. Mr. Phillips was concerned with previous activity. Everything was pretty much taken care of; it is a family-oriented business, so staff is recommending approval of the conditional use permit subject to compliance with the list of requirements outlining in the report. He also mentioned they added an additional item to add more lighting, and the applicant agrees to the conditions.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:34 p.m.

Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan asked owner Ms. Cadena if she was going to have speakers outside, to which Ms. Cadena responded they are planning to have music but not too loud.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:34 p.m.

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Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion passed (5-0)

- C. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (P - Package Store Permit) at “El Patron Liquor Store” Located at 1101 E. FM 495 Suite C, Legally Described as the West 440 Feet of the South 495 Feet of Lot 5, Block 39, Alamo Land and Sugar Company Subdivision, as Requested by El Patron Liquor Store, LLC. [Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning]**

**DISCUSSION:** Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning, stated this is a conditional use permit for a liquor store and (P) Package Store Permit. There was a public hearing before the planning commission on March 14th, and the proposed hours of operation are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm; Sunday it will be closed. They mailed notices to property owners within a 200-foot radius and also published them in the advanced newspaper. There were no comments in favor or against that were received at the meeting. The planning commission and staff recommended approval.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:37 p.m.

Elizabeth Garcia, applicant, stated that they will follow the TABC guidelines. She also stated she is okay with the city’s guidelines.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

- D. Hold a Public Hearing to Discuss a Variance to have Two Junctures of Dead-End Alley Effects as it Strives to Improve the Area with a New Conference Center by Re-Designating Certain Street Right-Of-Way of Lincoln Avenue for Public Facilities Use (Conference Center); in this Regard, Variance is Sought to have Dead-End Alleys on the Eastern Perimeter of Block 29, and the Western Perimeter of Block 28, Amended Map of San Juan; said Two Junctures Abutting Lincoln Avenue Between 6th Street and U.S. Business Highway 83, as Requested by the City of San Juan. [Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning]**

**DISCUSSION:** Daniel Tijerina, Director of Planning, stated it’s similar to what was done on 7th Street for the Fire station, they went through the same process so that they incorporated the portion of the right-of-way street to be part of the fire station. Mr. Tijerina stated that the City of San Juan is requesting a variance to consider the following matters:

1. To have two junctures of dead-end ally effects along the eastern perimeter and the perimeter of block 29 and the western perimeter of block 28—San Juan’s original townsite—set two junctures of budding Lincoln Avenue between 6th Street and Business 83.

2. To rededicate the 60-foot by 300-foot section by Lincoln Avenue, between 6th Street and Business 83 from Right-Of-Way use to viable city property to conduct a new conference center.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

Jose Alejandro property owner of the business located on Old 83 and Nebraska stated they lost some parking due to the new city hall and asked to please allow them to keep the alleyway as they use it for parking. Robert Debanks asked what is the city planning to do with the street. Adan Garza, business owner stated that they have owned that business since the 2000. They have provided carwash services, vehicle inspections, and mechanic services for over 23 years. Furthermore, stated that they use the Lincoln Avenue all the way to 6<sup>th</sup> Street inspects the vehicles. Ms. Garza stated that he is happy to see the city is beautifying but he asked to please reconsider as they will be affecting many families. Mayor Mario Garza asked Mr. Tijerina to please hold a meeting and provide the business owners the city’s plan for them to understand.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:56 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza recommended that no action was taken.

**No Action**

**VII. APPOINTMENTS**

- A. Discussion and Consideration on the Re-Appointment and Appointment of Board Member(s) to the San Juan Library Advisory Board.**

**DISCUSSION:** Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that staff has recommended that the four members and the liaison for the San Juan Library Advisory Board be appointed or reappointed. Considering that three members' terms were about to end and that Ms. Maria Ayala's resignation letter had been received.

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Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to re-appoint Maria Navarro, Elizabeth Saldana and Iris Lara and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion passed (5-0)

**B. Discussion and Consideration on the Re-Appointment and Appointment of Board Member(s) to the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board.**

**DISCUSSION:** Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that staff recommended appointing or re-appointing four members and the ex-official to the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board. As we have letters of resignation from Mr. Homero Villarreal and Ms. Yvonne Lopez. Also, two additional members, Jelet Martinez and Jennifer Villarreal, whose terms have already ended, are still interested in serving on the board.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villages made a motion to appoint Dr. Fernando Castillo and Ms. Laura Fonseca and was second by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion passed (5-0)

**VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ALL THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:**

**A. Discussion and Possible Action on Accepting the City of San Juan Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2023.**

**DISCUSSION:** Mayor Mario Garza removed himself from the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Manuel Garcia, with Garcia & Pena, CPA, presented the report for the fiscal year ending September 2023.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion passed (4-0)

**B. Discussion and Possible Action to Initiate a Public Service Announcement Concerning the City of San Juan Stage 2 of the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency and Emergency Management Plan.**

**DISCUSSION:** Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities, stated that the City of San Juan plans to send out a public service announcement on social media to remind citizens of our stage two water conservation guidelines. Furthermore, the water statistics for Texas notified the City of San Juan and other Rio Grande Valley municipalities that the combined water levels of the Falcon and Amistad reservoirs are below 26 percent. Mr. Martinez stated that staff recommends approval of the initiation of the PSA to provide the public and our water customers with information about our water state, water choice, and water restrictions.

Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez made motion and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (4-0)

**C. Discussion and Possible Action Authorizing the Use of the San Juan Sports Complex as the Start and Finish Line of 5K for Heroes, as Requested by Marine Corps League RGV Detachment #1456.**

**DISCUSSION:** Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks and Recreation announced that a request to use the San Juan Sports Complex as location for a 5K for Heroes event was scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

Commissioner Ernesto “Nieto” Guajardo made motion and was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

**IX. RESOLUTIONS**

**A. Consideration and Action on a Resolution to Enter Into a Multiple-Use Agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation to Allow the Installation of Motorola License Plate Readers on their Traffic Signal Poles.**

**DISCUSSION:** Lieutenant Jorge Moya stated the San Juan Police Department is seeking authorization from the City of San Juan to enter into an agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation to install Motorola L6Q pole mount license plate readers on the camera on State Highway Railways within the City of San Juan.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion passed (4-0)

**B. Consideration and Action on a Resolution to Suspend the Statement of Intent to Change Rates Proposed by AEP Texas and Authorize the City to Intervene in the Company's Rate Case Proceeding Before the Public Utility Commission in Docket No. 56165.**

**DISCUSSION:** Benjamin Arjona, City Manager stated this is a resolution of the City of San Juan suspending AEP Texas, Inc.'s requested rate change's effective date until April 4, 2024, to give the city time to review the request and determine fair pricing.

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Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez. Motion passed (4-0)

X. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditure Report for the Month of January 2024.

Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. The San Juan City Commission will Convene in Executive Session in Accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Vernon's Texas Statutes and Code Annotated, Government Code Chapter 551 et seq., and 551.071 Consultation with Attorney.

1. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning the Entertainment Agreement for 4th of July Event to be held on July 3, 2024.

Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan made motion to enter in to executive session at 7:28 p.m. and was seconded by Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez. Motion passed (4-0)

XII. RECONVENE

Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan made motion to reconvene at 7:49 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

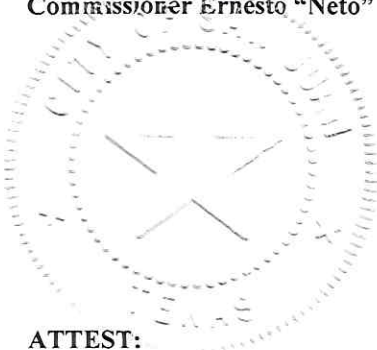
A. The City Commission will Reconvene in Open Session to Take Necessary Action if any, in Accordance with Chapter 551, Open Meeting Subchapter E, Procedures Relating to Closed Meeting 551, Requirements to Vote or Take Final Action in Open Meeting.

1. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning the Entertainment Agreement for 4th of July Event to be held on July 3, 2024.

Commission Adina "Dina" Santillan made motion to approve the City Manager's to negotiate and enter into contract with New Era Promotions was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez. Motion passed (4-0)

XIII. ADJOURMENT

Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez made motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)



ATTEST:

Brenda Escalante, City Secretary

CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS

Mario Garza, Mayor