

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

DATE:

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

TIME:

6:00 p.m.

PLACE:

San Juan Memorial Library
Multipurpose Meeting Room
1010 S. Standard St.
San Juan, Texas 78589

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mario Garza, Mayor
Marco “Markie” Villegas, Mayor Pro Tem
Adina “Dina” Santillan, Commissioner
Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo, Commissioner
Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez, Commissioner
Cris Palacios, City Attorney,

STAFF PRESENT:

Benjamin Arjona, City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Tirso Garza, Fire Chief
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources
Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance
Christina Perez, Interim Library Director
Monica Gomez, Interim 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
Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation/ PAL Director

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

Mae Trevino inquired about the possibility of holding citizen meetings/workshops to allow Q&A between residents and the commission. She also asked for an update on the South Ridge Street improvement project, noting it has been under discussion for 18 years.

Dr. Stephanie Alvarez requested that the City Commission consider preserving the San Juan Hotel. She proposed holding a workshop to create a San Juan Historical Preservation Board, noting that community members have expertise in historical preservation and funding restoration.

Joaquin Garcia with LUPE expressed support for saving the San Juan Hotel, emphasizing the importance of preserving local history for future generations.

Sareth Garcia Edinburg resident opposed the demolition of the San Juan Hotel, comparing local preservation efforts to those in San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Juventina Herrera with the RGV Community spoke in favor of preserving the San Juan Hotel and offered support with grant writing, noting that non-profit organizations could leverage available grants to fund the preservation.

Ruben Navarro expressed concern regarding fiber/cable companies digging in front of residential properties across the city. He advocated for property owners having input or authorization prior to work being conducted on their land.

V.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. **Presentation Recognizing Alejandro Rayas as he has been Selected to Represent the USA National University Team at the PanAm University Games in Cali, Colombia, this November.**

DISCUSSION: Master Fabian Cortez with Warrior Taekwondo in San Juan, Texas shared insights from his 20-year career in martial arts, along with the history and relocation background of his school. He proudly introduced Alejandro Rayas, a student at UTRGV, who has qualified to represent the United States at the PanAm University Games in Cali, Colombia. This marks a historic achievement for the local Rio Grande

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Valley community. To help cover the athlete's travel expenses, Master Cortez announced that the school will be hosting an upcoming chicken plate fundraiser.

B. Presentation on a Proclamation Recognizing Eddie Ceballos of Sanchez Family Ranch for his Outstanding Community Contributions.

DISCUSSION: The San Juan City Commission issued an official proclamation recognizing Eddie Salcedo of Sanchez Family Ranch Productions LLC for his outstanding community contributions.

The proclamation highlights Mr. Salcedo's ongoing dedication to the community, which includes:

- Establishing San Juan's first community pumpkin patch.
- Hosting seasonal drives and events.
- Partnering with the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley to assist over 22,000 families through bi-monthly food distributions.

In response to the recognition, Mr. Salcedo expressed his gratitude to the city, the community, his family, and his team of volunteers, emphasizing how rewarding it is to see local youth unite to support families in need.

C. Presentation on Departmental Reports: Department of Planning and Zoning, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Sanitation, San Juan Memorial Library, Department of Finance, Fire Department, Police Department, Municipal Court, and Department of Utilities.

1. Department of Planning and Zoning Monthly Report. [Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning]
2. Department of Parks and Recreation Monthly Report [Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation.]
3. Department of Sanitation Monthly Report. [Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation]
4. San Juan Memorial Library Monthly Report. [Christina Perez, Interim Library Director]
5. Department of Finance Monthly Report. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]
6. Fire Department Monthly Report. [Tirso Garza, Fire Chief]
7. Police Department Monthly Report. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]
8. Municipal Court Monthly Report. [Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator]
9. Department of Utilities Monthly Report. [Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities]

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez requested clarification regarding the building permit revenue figures in the monthly report. Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas addressed traffic and infrastructure concerns, noting plans to order new speed bumps, potential asphalt speed bump construction, and the need to expedite citywide pothole repairs. Mayor Mario Garza inquired about responsibility for code enforcement issues, specifically unpermitted carport construction, wood versus metal building standards, and managing overgrown weeds on private lots to control mosquitoes. Mayor Garza raised the status of Cemetery Road. Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation, explained that because the road is an easement owned by the Hidalgo County Irrigation District rather than the city or county, the irrigation board denied requests to pave or repair it due to concerns regarding canal stability and potential damage from heavy equipment. Officials discussed alternative options, such as creating a new access road behind the cemetery or pursuing further dialogue with county officials. Commissioner Ramirez inquired about the court collections report. Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator, explained that the higher revenue in June 2023 compared to June 2024 despite fewer citations—was due to an extended warrant amnesty program held the previous summer.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES

- A. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance Providing for the Conditional Use Permit for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BQ - Wine and Malt Beverage Retail Dealer's Off-Premise) at the Dollar General Store #30696 Located at 100 E. FM 495, Legally Described as Lot 3, Cantu Plaza Subdivision, as Requested by Dolgencorp of Texas, Inc. [Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning]

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Director of Planning, presented a request for a Conditional Use Permit for the sale of alcoholic beverages (wine and beer) for off-premise consumption at the Dollar General Market store located at the southeast corner of FM 495 and Raul Longoria Road formerly CVS Pharmacy. The surrounding area is primarily commercial.

The proposed operating hours are Monday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., which conform to TABC regulations. Public hearing notices were mailed to fourteen (14) property owners within a 200-foot radius, and staff received no comments in favor of or against the request

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Mayor Mario Garza opened the Public Hearing at 6:43 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the Public Hearing at 6:43 p.m.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

- B. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance Providing for the Conditional Use Permit for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG - Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's On-Premise Permit) at La Curva Taqueria, Located at 2912 N. Raul Longoria Road, Legally Described as Lots 12 A, 13 and 13A, Northgate Manor Phase 1 Subdivision, as Requested by La Curva Taqueria, LLC. [Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning]**

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Director of Planning, presented a request for the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premise consumption at La Curva Taqueria located along Raul Longoria Road, just north of Eldora Road. The business will serve alcoholic beverages as a complement to food sales. The surrounding area along Raul Longoria Road is primarily commercial. Proposed Operating Hours are Monday through Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., which conform to TABC regulations. Staff mailed public hearing notices to seventeen (17) property owners within a 200-foot radius and received no comments in favor or against the request.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

- C. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance Providing for the Conditional Use Permit for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG - Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's On-Premise Permit) at SJ Food Truck Park, Located at 2506 N. Raul Longoria Road, Legally Described as Lot 1, Uresti Subdivision, as Requested by La Curva Taqueria, LLC. [Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning]**

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning and Zoning detailed the surrounding land uses—including neighboring commercial properties, storage facilities, and new apartment developments—and noted proposed operating hours from 10:00 a.m. to midnight daily. Staff recommended approval subject to standard city and TABC compliance, noting that notification letters were sent to 17 surrounding property owners with no objections received. The public hearing opened and closed at 6:46 p.m. without public comments or questions from commissioners, after which an unidentified commissioner moved to approve the permit, another commissioner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the Public Hearing at 6:46 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the Public Hearing at 6:46 p.m.

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

- D. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance Providing for the Rezoning Request from Single-Family Residence District (R-S) to a Multi-Family Residence District (R-MF) of Lots 7 and 8, Miller R/S Subdivision, Located Approximately a Quarter of a Mile West from Cesar Chavez Road, Along the Southside of Carroll Road, as Requested by Cesar A. Solano. [Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning]**

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning and Zoning recommended denial because the combined lot size of approximately 11,000 square feet fell well short of the standard 22,500-square-foot minimum required for multi-family zoning. Notices were sent to nine surrounding property owners within a 200-foot radius, and no public comments were received for or against the request. During the discussion, a commissioner noted that minutes from the Planning and Zoning Board were missing from the packet, and staff agreed to include them in the future.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the Public Hearing at 6:48 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the Public Hearing at 6:48 p.m.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to deny and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion Died (5-0)

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VII. APPOINTMENTS

- A. Consider Removal and Appointment(s) Related to the San Juan EDC Board. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary noted that the EDC Board consists of 7 seven directors who are appointed to serve two-year terms and a proposal was introduced to update the current roster of the board of directors. Lenny Sanchez to be replaced by Jesse Ramirez and RC Flores to be replaced by Elisa Santillan.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to appoint Jesse Ramirez in place of Lenny Sanchez and Elisa Santillan in place of RC Flores and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0).

- B. Consider Removal and Appointment of Board Member(s) Related to the San Juan Library Advisory Board. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary presented a recommendation removing board members Janelle Pena who was no longer able to attend meetings.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan motioned to remove Ellie Santillan and Janelle Pena and appoint Maria Estella Ayala and Christina Garza and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0).

- C. Consider Removal and Appointment of Board Member(s) Related to the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: City staff recommended replacing Jennifer Villarreal, who submitted her resignation, and Laura Fonseca, who was removed due to excessive absences. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to appoint Eric Guajardo in place of Jennifer Villarreal and Raquel Jimenez in place of Laura Fonseca.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez motioned to appoint Eric Guajardo in place of Jennifer Villarreal and Raquel Jimenez in place of Laura Fonseca and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0).

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

- A. Discussion and Possible Action to Contract TRIMAD Consultants, LLC. to Provide Engineering Services on a New Water/Wastewater Comprehensive Master Plan. [Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities]

DISCUSSION: Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities and the engineering representatives explained that a new plan is necessary because the city's current master plan from 2011 is outdated and was never officially signed or completed, and standard guidance calls for updates every five years and full replacements every ten years to account for ongoing growth. TRIMAD Consultants will build upon prior data to evaluate current infrastructure, model water and wastewater system demand, update utility maps, and provide a 15-to-20-year planning roadmap for future growth. The item was awarded to TRIMAD Consultants based on the city's established engineering firm rotation. Commissioner.

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

- B. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Rehabilitation of Water Plant #1 by TIPS Vendor CB3 Consultants. Funding is Available Under the American Rescue Plan (ARP Funds). [Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities]

DISCUSSION: Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities recommended approval, explaining that key infrastructure at the plant—including the sub-settler systems, baffle walls, paddle system, and raw water pump—has exceeded its life expectancy and requires upgrades to meet TCEQ requirements and keep up with city growth. It was noted that Water Plant Number One, located behind the Old City Hall, is currently out of service and has been non-operational for about a year.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

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- C. Discussion and Possible Action to Contract TRIMAD Consultants, LLC. to Provide Engineering Services on a Garage/Storage Building at Water Plant #1. [Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities]**

DISCUSSION: Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities explained that TRIMAD Consultants will collect topographic data, conduct research, and prepare plans and specifications for the facility, which will be used to store materials and equipment for the water distribution division. Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez raised concerns about information/timeline about this project. City manager Benjamin Arjona explained that this specific project was not handled like typical new projects coming before the commission. Instead, it was a project issued directly out of the city office that they had actually been started on. During the discussion, Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez explained how he previously submitted a request for rotation records through a public information request; the mayor and commission clarified that board members should receive city information directly without needing formal requests.

Mayor Pro Tem, Marco “Markie” Villegas made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

- D. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Emergency Repairs on two Sewer Manholes along N Raul Longoria and Authorize the City Manager to Execute all Related Documents and Budget Amendment as Needed. [Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities]**

DISCUSSION: Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities explained that the repairs located at 2301 and 2711 North Raul Longoria on the northbound lane are necessary to protect public health and safety. Staff requested quotes from vendors and recommended awarding the project to OMT Utilities for submitting the lowest quote. Mr. Martinez confirmed OMT Utilities' positive track record on prior city projects, including past emergency repairs and infrastructure improvements.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

- E. Discussion and Consideration to Award RFQ NO. 24-011-07-08 Engineering Services to the Most Qualified Engineer/Engineering Firm. [Lori A. Maldonado, Purchasing Agent]**

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzalez, Finance Director noted that the city currently maintains three engineering firms on rotation, though commissioners discussed expanding the rotation to four firms to keep pace with the city's rapid growth. Rather than hearing live presentations from all attending firms or appointing the full rotation immediately, a motion was passed to appoint TRIMAD Consultants and Cruz Hogan Engineering at this time while tabling the selection of the remaining firms until the next meeting, allowing commissioners time to review additional information before finalizing the remaining appointments.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to appoint TRIMAD Consultants and Cruz Hogan Engineering at this time while tabling the selection of the remaining firms until the next meeting, allowing time to review additional information before finalizing the remaining appointments and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0).

- F. Discussion and Consider Proposed Tax Rate for the City of San Juan for Fiscal Year Beginning October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025 and Set Public Hearing. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]**

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzalez, Director of Finance recommended keeping the tax rate unchanged from the prior year to provide financial flexibility for future projects without increasing property taxes for residents. Additionally, because the proposed rate requires formal notice and statutory procedure, the commission scheduled a public hearing on the tax rate for Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the San Juan Memorial Library multipurpose room.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0).

- G. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Final Floor Plan Layout of the New Municipal Court and New/Expansion Public Safety Building.**

DISCUSSION: The City Commission discussed and approved the final floor plan layout for the new Municipal Court and public safety building expansion. Presenters confirmed that minor design adjustments were coordinated with and approved by Judge Garza, the police chief, and other involved judges. During the discussion, a commissioner inquired about secure access for transferring defendants between the courtroom, booking area, jail cells, and the sally port; project staff clarified that a designated, secure corridor is included

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in the plan to safely handle prisoner movement. Satisfied that all requested modifications were addressed, the commission voted unanimously to approve the final floor plan.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0).

IX. RESOLUTIONS

- A. Consideration and Action, if any, on a Resolution Approving the Municipal Maintenance Agreement Between the Texas Department of Transportation and the City of San Juan.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager noted that this is a routine annual renewal with no changes from previous years, primarily defining the respective maintenance responsibilities between city staff and TxDOT.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

- B. Consideration and Action, if any, on a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan to Enter Into an Inter-local Agreement with the County of Hidalgo for the Implementation of the County Scofflaw Program.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, this agreement is an annual one, consistent with the format used in previous years.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

X. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Approval of City Commission Meeting Minutes:

- March 26, 2024

- April 22, 2024

- B. Consider Approval of Quarterly Investment Report for the Quarter Ending June 30, 2024. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]

- C. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditure Report for the Month of May, 2024. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]

- D. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of June 2024. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez motioned to all items under consent agenda and the motion was seconded by Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The San Juan City Commission will Convene in Executive Session in Accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act, Vernon's Texas Statutes and Codes Annotated, Government Code Chapter §551.071 (Consultation with Attorney).

1. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Entertainment for 2024 Noche de Paz.
2. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Possible Settlement Concerning Cause No. CL-4765-18M; City of San Juan, v. Rigney Construction, LLC; Hidalgo County, Texas.
3. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion Regarding the Proposed Collective Bargaining Labor Agreement Between the City of San Juan and the San Juan Police Officers Association Pursuant to Section 174.108.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made a motion to enter executive session at 7:20 p.m. and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion passed (5-0)

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to reconvene at 8:06 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

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XII. RECONVENE

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 Entertainment for 2024 Noche de Paz.

No Action Taken

2. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Possible Settlement Concerning Cause No. CL-4765-18M; City of San Juan, v. Rigney Construction, LLC; Hidalgo County, Texas.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to authorize the City Attorney to accept the settlement offer and was second by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion passed (5-0)

3. Pursuant to Section §551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion Regarding the Proposed Collective Bargaining Labor Agreement Between the City of San Juan and the San Juan Police Officers Association Pursuant to Section 174.108.

Mayor Mario Garza motioned to approve as discussed under executive session and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

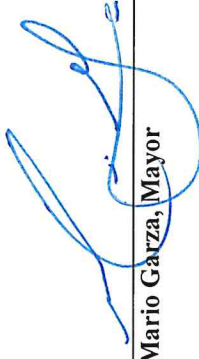
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS

ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary


Mario Garza, Mayor