

**STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF BEXAR  
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

**A BUDGET WORK SESSION AND PUBLIC HEARING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO WERE HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2011.**

The San Antonio City Council convened in a Budget Work Session at 2:00 pm Wednesday, **August 31, 2011**, Municipal Plaza Building, with the following Councilmembers present: Bernal, Taylor, Ramos, Saldaña, D. Medina, Lopez, C. Medina, Williams, Soules, and Mayor Castro. **ABSENT:** Chan.

**1. STAFF PRESENTATION ON THE FY 2012 PROPOSED BUDGET FOCUSING ON, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:**

**B. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

Item B was addressed first.

Rod Sanchez stated that they had consolidated the Development Services and Code Enforcement Departments into one. He outlined that a single point of contact for violations and greater coordination and effectiveness was critical. He noted that the Development Services Department enforces building-related codes and that the Code Enforcement Department enforces codes complementary to those enforced or managed by Development Services. He provided an overview of the FY 2012 Budget, noting that the total funding combining the departments was \$31.9 million.

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Development Services Fund was created as an Enterprise Fund in FY 2007 to align revenue with expenses. He provided a history of New Residential Permitting Activity, noting that requests for permits had declined 80% since FY 2005. He also presented a history of New and Existing Commercial Permits in which there has been an 11% decline since FY 2005. He indicated that the decreases in permitting activity have impacted development revenues and that the FY 2012 Proposed Budget will continue to freeze 23 vacant positions.

Mr. Sanchez spoke of the Inner City Reinvestment/Infill Policy (ICRIP) and indicated that projects certified as meeting ICRIP Criteria are eligible for Development Services Fee Waivers. He noted that the FY 2012 includes \$1 million from the General Fund to cover the ICRIP Fee Waivers. He outlined the FY 2011 Department Accomplishments and stated that they had been granted accreditation by the International Accreditation Service, Inc. He mentioned that the Improved Insurance Service Office Rating evaluates effectiveness in the enforcement of building codes and the city had received a rating of 2 in each the Commercial and Residential Categories with 1 being the highest. He stated that they had amended the Unified Development Code (UDC) Process to make the UDC easier to use and consistent with other applicable laws and regulations.

Mr. Sanchez reported that they had implemented the use of Telenav Software to improve inspector accountability, noting that the software generates reports that show inspector locations throughout the day. He outlined the FY 2011 Performance Measures and stated that 96% of Building Code Inspections were performed as scheduled. He indicated that for FY 2012, \$150,000 would be spent to electronically scan the backlog of printed plans. He spoke of the FY 2012 Initiatives that include the adoption of 2012 International Codes, as well as implementation of the Lackland Joint Land Use Study.

Marc Castro presented the FY 2011 Code Enforcement Services Accomplishments, noting that they had fully implemented the Scrap Tire Facilities Inspection Program. He reported that they had updated the Minimum Property Maintenance Code based on Citizen Code Review Task Force Recommendations and it was the first update in 10 years. He stated that it provides for an appeals process and consolidates the code into one document. He spoke of the Building Standards Board (BSB) that would replace the Dangerous Structures Determination Board into a 14-member citizen board. He indicated that the BSB would review and adjudicate dangerous structure cases and minimum property maintenance violations, as well as hear appeals.

Mr. Castro provided an overview of the Multi-Tenant Inspection Team Pilot Program that had resulted in 27 properties inspected and 14 of those properties passing initial inspection. He stated that they would continue the existing Pilot Program and would review the potential for future expansion. He spoke of the Neighborhood Enhancement Team that proactively addresses code issues along highly traveled corridors. He outlined their education and outreach efforts that include new and updated materials and mentioned that the Graffiti in Tahiti Books were donated to 240 elementary schools throughout the city. He mentioned that the Code Ranger Volunteer Program utilizes volunteers to strategically improve code enforcement and that program orientation would be held three times per year. He reported that a Graffiti Reporting Application was created and could be downloaded for free by residents with Android or iPhones to send real time graffiti information and photos.

Mr. Castro outlined the FY 2011 Performance Measures in which the average number of days to close a case from initial investigation of the code violation was 28 days. He reported that reducing demolitions by focusing efforts on rehabilitation would save \$212,950 in FY 2012 and that three positions would be added to enhance Graffiti Abatement. He stated that \$210,000 would be included for staff and other support for the BSB and that the Neighborhood Enhancement Team would target up to five corridors per Council District in FY 2012.

Mayor Castro asked of the transition due to the consolidation of the two departments. Mr. Sanchez replied that there were many overlapping duties and that the consolidation would provide efficiency and effectiveness.

Councilmember Williams expressed support for the consolidation of the Development Services and Code Enforcement Departments and asked of the number of fee waivers provided to those conforming to the No Smoking Ordinance. Mr. Sanchez stated that he would provide that information to the City Council. Councilmember Williams recommended that the metric "Building Codes Inspections – Perform as Scheduled" be reviewed and potentially revised. He spoke of the new BSB that would be comprised of citizens instead of city staff and asked that the Code Ranger and Smart Phone Application be publicized.

Councilmember Lopez asked of the BSB. T.C. Broadnax replied that it was a 14-Member Board that would conduct an Administrative Hearing. He stated that their ruling was final and that appeals could be heard prior to hearings. Councilmember Lopez asked of fee waivers for volunteer organizations. Mr. Sanchez replied that fees are used for operations and they do not waive fees. Ms. Sculley added that fee waivers for these organizations would have to be budgeted in the General Fund. Councilmember Lopez referenced illegal signage along Culebra Road. Mr. Castro stated that they would look into same.

Councilmember D. Medina stated that he was pleased with the Scrap Tire Ordinance that provided opportunities for small businesses. He requested that the Initiative be expanded to include Bexar County. He spoke of the Smart Phone Application to report graffiti and asked how it worked. Mr. Castro replied that an email was sent to staff and requests were routed within two days. Councilmember D. Medina asked of the positions being added. Mr. Castro replied that two would be placed in the field to abate graffiti and one would serve as the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Councilmember Soules asked of the Performance Measures for Code Enforcement Services. Mr. Castro replied that the Average Number of Days to close a Case from Initial Inspection of Citizen Complaint was the average time it takes for staff to conduct an inspection and identify a violation. He stated that the measures included all types of cases. He explained that the Average Number of Days to Close Case from Initial Investigation of Code Violation was applied to those cases that were already closed and did not include pending cases. Councilmember Soules referenced the BSB and stated that it was a step in the right directions for certain things but expressed concern that there were certain issues that needed to be addressed more quickly.

The Council thanked Development Services staff for the presentation.

#### **A. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

David McCary stated that the Solid Waste Operating and Maintenance Fund was a self-sustaining Enterprise Fund with Fee-Based Revenues. He noted that they collect solid waste generated by 340,000 homes within the city which includes residential curbside recycling and garbage collection, as well as brush and bulky items. He indicated that they collect household hazardous waste, maintain closed city landfills, and operate the Bitters and Nelson Brush Recycling Centers.

Mr. McCary stated that the 10-Year Recycling and Resource Recovery Plan guides department operations and has a goal of achieving a 60% single-family residential recycling rate by 2020. He provided an overview of the history of recycling and other initiatives that include Organics Recycling. He reported that the Multi-Family Recycling Program Ordinance was approved in December 2010 and was currently being implemented. He indicated that the Plastic Bag Recycling Program was implemented in July 2011 in coordination with HEB, JCPenney, Target, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Texas Retailers Association, and Keep San Antonio Beautiful to reduce consumption of single-use plastic bags and promote the use of reusable bags.

Mr. McCary provided an overview of the Organics Recycling Program in which a Pilot Program was being implemented in 30,000 homes. He stated that the Organics Recycling Program is a critical component to reaching the 60% single-family residential rate by 2020. He outlined the Organics Pilot Performance Indicators that include an increase in the recycling rate equal to or greater than 1.1% and total tons collected in 12 month equal to or greater than 5,400. He spoke of other recycling initiatives such as Recycling at Parks and Downtown; Major Events Recycling; and Continued Outreach to Schools through the use of the Recycling Video.

Mr. McCary reported that the Brush and Bulky Collection Program had been redesigned and that they began construction on the Nelson Road Brush Center. He stated that they had completed improvements to the Bitters Brush Recycling Center and promoted curbside collection of bagged leaves using recyclable kraft paper bags. He outlined the FY 2012 Budget and indicated that removing the FY 2012 Organics Program Expansion would result in an increase of \$0.69 to the monthly rate.

Mr. McCary spoke of the FY 2012 Proposed Initiatives that include increasing from one bulky collection to two bulky collections and opening two new drop-off centers. He indicated that the two proposed drop-off sites were the Bitters Brush Recycling Center and the Zarzamora Service Center. He stated that the services would be provided free to residents and that materials accepted would include residential bulky waste and home improvement debris. He reported that the FY 2012 cost totaled \$3.3 million and have a monthly rate impact of \$0.34. He added that other improvements would be made to facilities, alleys, and downtown/parks.

Mayor Castro commended staff for their work and increasing the city's recycling rate. He stated that he would support a Pilot Organics Program and a Citywide Organics Program if the Pilot is successful.

Councilmember Soules expressed concern with the proposed rate increase that would generate \$7 million, noting the cost was too high to implement the three major projects proposed.

Councilmember Williams stated that he was supportive of the Pilot Organics Program and requested a breakdown of the \$3.3 million cost to implement a 2<sup>nd</sup> Bulky Collection. He noted that if the objective was to address bulky items, staff should consider implementing either the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bulky Collection or the Two New Drop-Off Centers. He recommended to include the use of equipment that can remove plastic bags within the next Request for Proposals.

Councilmember Saldaña asked of the Two New Drop-Off Centers. Mr. McCary replied that residents would pay an additional \$0.34 cents per month. He believed that many of the items being left at curbs or illegally dumped would be brought to the drop-off sites. Councilmember Saldaña stated that he had discussed the cost increases for the new programs with his residents and they were inclined to support the increase. He added that he was supportive of a Pilot Organics Program in order to evaluate the success of the program.

Councilmember Ramos stated that her community was in support of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Bulky Collection and asked of the Drop-Off Centers. Mr. McCary replied that two sites were proposed for FY 2012 and two additional sites for FY 2013. He stated that one site was proposed between Districts 2

and 3 and another site was proposed in the Northwest Corridor of the city. Councilmember Ramos spoke in support of the Two New Drop-Off Centers and the Pilot Organics Program.

Councilmember Taylor spoke of a tour she participated in while visiting Beaumont, Texas and the cleanliness of the city. She stated that she was supportive of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Bulky Collection, Two New Drop-Off Centers, and Pilot Organics Program.

Councilmember Bernal stated that he liked the idea of providing residents with options and asked of the rate increase. Mr. McCary replied that the rate increase was associated with building and operating new centers. Councilmember Bernal asked if the rate would decrease once the building was constructed. Ms. Sculley stated that there would always be new costs associated with maintenance and operation.

Mayor Castro thanked staff for the presentation.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Castro recessed the meeting at 4:30 pm to convene in Executive Session for the purposes of:

- A. DELIBERATIONS REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND DISCUSS RELATED ISSUES PURSUANT TO TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551.087 (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT).**
- B. DELIBERATE THE PURCHASE, EXCHANGE, LEASE OR VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY AND DISCUSS RELATED LEGAL ISSUES PURSUANT TO TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTIONS 551.072 (REAL PROPERTY) AND 551.071 (CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY).**
- C. DISCUSS LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO JACOB SANCHEZ V. CITY OF SAN ANTONIO, ET AL, CAUSE NO. 2009-CI-18615, IN THE 407<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT, BEXAR COUNTY TEXAS, PURSUANT TO TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551.071 (CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY).**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Castro announced that no action had been taken in Executive Session and adjourned the Work Session at 5:17 pm.

The San Antonio City Council convened in a Public Hearing at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, **August 31, 2011**, Municipal Plaza Building with the following Councilmembers present: Bernal, Ramos, Saldaña, D. Medina, Lopez, C. Medina, Williams, Chan, Soules, and Mayor Castro. **ABSENT:** Taylor.

Mayor Castro called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm and stated that no action had been taken in Executive Session. He stated that the required Budget Public Hearing would be conducted by the City Council to receive comments on the FY 2012 Proposed Budget and declared the Public Hearing open.

**2. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY 2012 PROPOSED BUDGET PRECEDED BY STAFF PRESENTATION SUMMARIZING COMMENTS MADE DURING THE TEN COMMUNITY BUDGET HEARINGS HELD IN EACH CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT.**

Mayor Castro called upon the individuals registered to speak.

Randy Bear addressed the City Council in support of domestic partner benefits, noting that many other large cities in the US and Texas provide same. He stated that he does not support gay marriage but this is the right thing to do.

Richard Farias stated that he was a Professor at San Antonio College and in support of domestic partner benefits for City Employees. He spoke of the importance of retaining talented individuals and noted that other businesses may follow suit if San Antonio authorizes domestic partner benefits.

Dorian Ayala expressed concern with the proposed changes to Chapter 5 of the City Code regarding the City's Animal Care Regulations. She stated that a consistent trap and release program should be implemented throughout the city and that all cats should be sterilized.

John Dean Domingue stated that he was a college student in support of domestic partner benefits. He noted that all individuals should be treated equally and referenced the other Texas Cities that offer domestic partner benefits.

Dennis Coleman of Equality Texas addressed the City Council in support of domestic partner benefits, noting that all individuals should be treated with dignity and respect. He provided results of a random survey they had conducted of registered voters in the State in which 75.4% were opposed to employment and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Julia DeGrace addressed the City Council in support of domestic partner benefits. She stated that approving same would make the City of San Antonio an employer of choice and help retain top talent.

Dee Villarrubia addressed the City Council in support of domestic partner benefits. She spoke of the Commandments and referenced various Bible Passages in which all individuals are created equally. She thanked the City Council for their courage and bravery in approving domestic partner benefits.

Anna Maria Chavez and various representatives of the Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas addressed the City Council and thanked them for their financial support. Dana, a Girl Scout, spoke of her great experiences as a Girl Scout. Kennedy Brown stated that she has grown and learned through her participation as a Girl Scout.

Patrick Greene stated that he and his wife had been married for 33 years and that a gay couple had served as witnesses at his wedding. He noted that he was in support of domestic partner

benefits and that being supportive of same did not indicate opposition to marriage. He indicated that he and his wife were Atheists but believed in justice for everyone.

Philip Sevilla stated that he was opposed to domestic partner benefits and believed that the family nucleus should be supported. He spoke of concerns with the homosexual lifestyle and noted that it would be grossly irresponsible for the city to expose itself to financial risk.

Gilbert Casillas stated that he was in support of domestic partners benefits and that approving same did not mean that the city supported gay marriage. He indicated that there was a small associated cost and that couples would have to prove that they are in a committed relationship.

Former Councilmember Elena Guajardo stated that she was in support of domestic partner benefits and that approving same was a roadmap for the future of San Antonio. She noted that there was a small associated cost with approving domestic partner benefits. She spoke of the documentation that must be provided and mentioned that abuse would not be tolerated. She added that approving domestic partner benefits would show that all employees are valued.

Lauryn Farris stated that she was in support of domestic partner benefits.

Denise Barkhurst of Big Brothers/Big Sisters addressed the City Council and thanked them for their financial support. She introduced Jim Griese, a former little brother, who spoke of his positive experiences with having a big brother.

Adam McManus addressed the City Council in opposition to domestic partner benefits. He stated that marriage in the State of Texas was recognized between one man and one woman and that the city was a political subdivision of the State. He noted that homosexuality was not condoned in the Bible.

Lorenzo Acosta addressed the City Council in opposition to domestic partner benefits and referenced the Book of Genesis in the Bible. He asked that the city move forward with God in mind.

Arlene Esparza spoke in support of domestic partner benefits. She asked that the city reconsider the documentation being requested from domestic partners, noting that it was too invasive.

Kerry Johnston spoke in opposition to domestic partner benefits, noting that he believes that the costs are higher than what is being conveyed. He expressed concern that there had not been sufficient communication with citizens and asked of the long-term perspective.

James Keenan stated that the issue of domestic partner benefits was a very serious matter and believed that the city was headed down the wrong road. He noted that homosexuals must be respected as human beings but that same sex unions should not be on the same level as marriage.

Pete Ortega addressed the City Council in opposition to domestic partner benefits and asked that the sanctity of marriage be honored. He expressed concern with the future tax increases that would be needed to fund the benefits and asked that City Council vote for what was morally correct.

Paul Comeaux expressed concern that God has been taken out of schools and requested that the San Pedro Playhouse not be provided any city funding.

Mark Perez stated that the city spends a great amount of money on public safety and expressed concerns with the services provided. He also expressed concern with businesses that store hazardous materials without the proper permits. He spoke of the lack of communication between the city and the Texas Department of Transportation.

David Plylar commended city staff for including domestic partner benefits in the FY 2012 Proposed Budget. He spoke of his daughter that lives in New York who will be marrying her same-sex life partner, noting that their right to equal protection of the law will be assured. He expressed concern with comments that the city's group medical insurance would rise because people in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community get sick more often.

Rabbi Barry Block spoke in support of domestic partner benefits and referenced a letter signed by 36 religious leaders also in support. He stated that religious values include fairness and equality, and that God loves all individuals. He noted that he did not want the City Council to reject the proposal due to the false religious beliefs.

Peter Rowe spoke of his involvement in the youth ministry at his church and stated that he was opposed to domestic partner benefits. He referenced that citizens should not have to contribute to this cause. He expressed concern with the taxpayer funds that were allocated to the San Pedro Playhouse and requested that the funds be used for other priorities.

Nancy Goettman referenced various Bible Passages and noted her opposition to domestic partner benefits. She stated that 69% of voters had voted for marriage consisting of one man and one woman. She expressed opposition to funding for the San Pedro Playhouse and asked that an individual vote of the City Council be taken on the issue of domestic partner benefits and funding for the San Pedro Playhouse.

Nazirite Ruben Flores Perez referenced various Bible Verses and noted that he had worked at the State Mental Hospital in the past. He requested that taxpayer funds be used appropriately.

Ernest Sanchez spoke in support of the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Music Program. He spoke of the dedication of the youth that attend the program and requested that the City Council reconsider the proposal and continue to provide music services.

Patrick Sanchez expressed concern with the proposed changes to the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Music Program. He stated that contractors would not have the same impact as the current instructors and may not be as dedicated.

Pastor Gerald Ripley stated that he had been a Pastor for 31 years and that there were no second class citizens. He expressed opposition to domestic partner benefits, noting that 70% of voters were also opposed. He asked that the City Council listen to the voters and added that he was speaking on behalf of 200 Pastors throughout the city.

Janice Flowers stated that she was the wife of a local Pastor and a Business Owner in the City and loved all human beings but not their deeds. She noted that Elected Officials were responsible for representing the citizens of San Antonio. She expressed opposition to domestic partner benefits and added that taxpayer funds should not be utilized for same.

Charles Flowers addressed the City Council in opposition to domestic partner benefits, noting that the costs were too high and the funds could be better spent. He stated that strong families make strong societies and that the City Council should support family values. He noted that the city is dealing with public funds and not private funds, thus, private companies could utilize funds as they wished. He added that 70% of the people do not approve of same and that this does not make the city more welcoming.

Suzanne Dollar stated that God gave Commandments to provide for the nation and provided instructions concerning relationships. She noted her opposition to domestic partner benefits and expressed concern with the process for verifications. She asked the City Council to uphold the standard of marriage and not utilize taxpayer dollars to fund domestic partner benefits.

Margie Harris addressed the Council stating that she works with the elderly and grew up in the city. She noted that the seniors have made life better and paved the way for us. She indicated that she had attended many of the budget hearings throughout the city and reported back to the seniors. She stated that they were opposed to domestic partner benefits and implored the City Council to take their voice into account.

Chris Forbrich spoke in support of domestic partner benefits, noting that it was important to put people first and not discriminate.

Danny Petri addressed the Council and stated that he was opposed to encouraging a homosexual lifestyle. He noted he was not in favor of utilizing tax dollars to fund same as well as unplanned pregnancy services. Lastly, he read a quote from Mother Teresa.

John Hackett referenced the Animal Care Services (ACS) Budget Presentation and stated that although the city would not reach the No-Kill Goal by 2012; there were many improvements that had been made. He expressed support for ACS Funding and additional spay/neuter services.

Natalie Hardy addressed the City Council in opposition to domestic partner benefits. She referenced the Constitution of the State of Texas and the Texas Family Code, and stated that this budgetary proposal is overstepping the bounds of what has been voted upon and placed in the Texas Constitution.

Rebecca Tadeffa spoke in support of domestic partner benefits, noting that fairness and justice should be provided for everyone. She noted that homosexuals pay taxes and that we are all under the grace of God.

Mike Knuffke stated that he represents the San Antonio Family Association to defend the basic unit of society which is family and they are opposed to domestic partner benefits. He expressed concern with the funding provided to the San Pedro Playhouse and opposition to funding for unplanned pregnancy services. He spoke of the challenging economic conditions and asked why

San Antonio would propose same. He noted that the City of El Paso had passed a domestic partner benefits program without voter approval and the program was overturned the following year after a vote occurred in opposition. He spoke of the \$500,000 they wasted, noting that the benefit only applied to 19 employees. He asked the City Council to represent the voters to promote the values of marriage and family. He added that their organization did not share the city's views on animals being more important than people, abortion, promotion of contraception, or the definition of marriage.

Deborah Parish presented a poster of the San Pedro Playhouse and noted the disrespectful language. She stated that her God was slandered in the play and it is not right to slander anyone with taxpayer money. She requested that a disclaimer be placed on the door and marquee if the city is going to continue to fund this organization.

George H. Rodriguez expressed concern with the fiscal responsibility of the city and voiced concern with the renaming of Durango Street. He stated that he was tired of taxpayers funding a liberal agenda and that the City Council was elected to serve the people. He requested that the issue of domestic partner benefits be put to a vote of the citizens.

Ron Littlefield stated that he was opposed to the City Council using tax dollars against the institution of marriage. He noted that strong families make a strong city and to subsidize same sets a dangerous precedent. He indicated that married couples cost the city less and can be proved with actuaries. He added that there were better ways to spend \$300,000 and that this is not a good time to add open-ended entitlements.

David Mayorga expressed opposition to domestic partner benefits, noting that taxpayer dollars should not be utilized to fund same. He recommended that the funds should be utilized for morally accepted programs.

Terelyn Santos addressed the City Council and requested that the San Pedro Playhouse be defunded. She stated that she was also against benefits for domestic partners.

Linda Diaz stated that this is the first time she has been to a City Council Meeting and that the City Council must listen to the people who vote for them. She noted that there are many people her age and younger that are opposed to domestic partner benefits and she represents them since they could not be in attendance. She requested that the City Council cease funding for the San Pedro Playhouse. She added that there would not be a brain drain if benefits for domestic partners are not approved.

Catherine Varella addressed the Council and stated that both the funding of the San Pedro Playhouse and the benefits for domestic partners should be put to a vote. She requested that an individual vote be taken by the City Council on each of these items and asked the City Council to do the right thing.

Henrietta LaGrange thanked Councilmember C. Medina for his work and asked that cats be left alone. She expressed concern with a potential sinkhole on the 2500 block of West Mulberry Street between Morning Glory and Manor Streets.

Michael Wocten spoke to the Take Note Program Funds within the Parks and Recreation Department which makes a difference for the children and families. He stated that the quality will not be the same if the instruction is contacted and that the program greatly benefitted the children.

Irma Valdez stated that she was representing the parents of the children participating in the Take Note Program and introduced the student band members present. She noted that the program teaches morals and respect and does not want to see it restructured. She spoke of the impact to the children and recognized the work of the director and instructors.

Richard Valdez stated that he has been involved in Take Note Program for three years and it has helped him very much. He noted that they need these instructors that go out of their way to make sure everything is taken care of as well as the participants. He expressed concern that removing the current instructors would negatively impact the program.

Patrick Von Dohlen stated that he had a wife and eight children and was opposed to domestic partner benefits. He noted that there was no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. He spoke in opposition to funding programs that promote promiscuity and unplanned pregnancy services. He expressed concern that birth control pills cause breast cancer and that this benefit not be funded with taxpayer dollars.

Sheila Pradia stated that this was the first time she attended a Council Meeting and expressed opposition to funding for domestic partner benefits. She asked that the San Pedro Playhouse be defunded and that the City Council do what is right for children in San Antonio. She spoke of the importance of encouraging and educating children and supporting two-parent households.

Catherine Marie Whitney spoke in opposition to domestic partner benefits. She referenced the Bible, and asked how real love was defined. She spoke of promoting values that will lead people to heaven and doing what is best for them.

Esther Ramirez spoke in opposition to domestic partner benefits and asked that the City Council uphold the value of marriage. She stated that there were better uses for the funds and that San Antonio should be a model in promoting family values.

Jill Thrift stated that she was a native of San Antonio and child educator for 40 years. She indicated that she was present today as a voice for children in opposition to domestic partner benefits. She spoke of the impact that the benefits would have on children and asked that the City Council not legitimize sexual relations outside of marriage.

Mayor Castro read written testimony from Mike Crownover, Senior Vice President of Human Resources for Valero and Philip White, Director of Compensation and Benefits for Rackspace Hosting. Both letters confirmed the extension of health insurance and other employee benefits to same-sex partners of their employees. Rackspace requires it employees to submit a signed and notarized affidavit which states that the domestic partners meet various criteria.

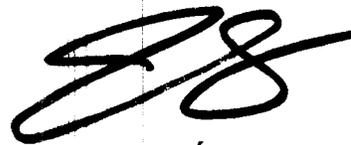
Faris Hodge, Jr. submitted written testimony and expressed concern that he was not allowed to bring his bag of food or candy into the City Council Chambers and needed to have it with him

due to his illness of Diabetes. He requested that the Meals on Wheels and Senior Nutrition Program be combined and that SAWS and Bexar Met should also be combined. He provided an article noting that Former Councilmembers Philip Cortez and Justin Rodriguez are seeking seats in the Texas Legislature. He referenced an article that stated that San Antonio was among the fastest-growing metropolitan areas and wrote that water was good for children. He requested that the Citizens to be Heard portion of the City Council Meeting be televised and that the Social Security Office remain in the Downtown Area. He expressed concern that the men's restrooms in El Mercado were not ADA compliant.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other individuals registered to speak, Mayor Castro declared the Public Hearing closed. He thanked everyone that attended and adjourned the meeting at 10:04 pm.

**APPROVED**



**JULIÁN CASTRO**  
MAYOR

Attest:



**LETICIA M. VACEK, TRMC/CMC**  
City Clerk