

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, ON
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 1985.

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The Special Meeting of the City Council was called to order at 6:40 P.M. by the presiding officer, Mayor Henry Cisneros, with the following members present: WEBB, DUTMER, WING, EURESTE, THOMPSON, ALDERETE, HARRINGTON, ARCHER, HASSLOCHER, CISNEROS. Absent: BERRIOZABAL.

85-07

GUADALUPE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER SHOWING
OF MOTION PICTURE "SHORT EYES"

Mayor Cisneros stated that three City Council members had requested this Special City Council meeting to discuss possible termination of funding for the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center (GCAC), and laid down brief ground rules for the conduct of the meeting.

Mr. Eureste spoke to the showing of the motion picture "Short Eyes" at the Guadalupe Community Cultural Arts Center (Guadalupe Theater). He noted that he had spoken to other members of the City Council during executive session of last Thursday's Council meeting, and stated that the City Council at that time joined him in asking that the motion picture not be shown. He spoke to specific reasons for his request, including alleged nudity, violence and bad language, noting his contention that this is not proper for a showing in this public facility. He stated that it was his understanding that, as a result of the executive session, the City Manager was, through City staff, to inform GCAC officials that the motion picture in question would not be shown at the Guadalupe Theater.

Mr. Eureste stated further that as a result of this communication, the motion picture was not shown as scheduled last Friday, and the GCAC board of directors asked to have the City's objections and stance placed in writing. He stated that on Saturday, the following day, the board of directors of GCAC met, reconsidered the decision not to show the motion picture, and decided to proceed with its screening. Mr. Eureste spoke to his belief that a censure of GCAC is appropriate in some form as a means of persuading the agency not to show the motion picture. He stated his belief that this is a family-oriented theater, and he spoke against use of a high degree of nudity, violence and vulgar language in such a public facility. He asked the City Council to provide direction on how tax dollars are to be used in such public facilities. He also stated that he is not opposed to screening of such material in privately-owned theaters, as is already done, but is only opposed to such screening in a publicly-owned theater.

Mr. Eureste then distributed a packet of data to members of the City Council, including various communications and newspaper clippings on this matter, a copy of which is made a part of the papers of this meeting. He stated that the board of directors of GCAC now plans to screen this motion picture this week, beginning at 7:30 P.M. tonight, and stated his belief that the City Council members would not permit members of their own families to see this motion picture. He further stated that he would like for the motion picture not to be screened, but it was his belief that this alone is not enough. He stated that the Council may need to deal with the funding of the agency, should the Council instruct GCAC not to show the motion picture, and the agency decided then to go ahead and do so. He quoted from a newspaper article stating that an actor from the motion picture is accused of performing a murder much like that which takes place in the motion picture of which he was a performer. He asked other members of the City Council to vote their consciences on this issue, stating his belief that the Council is against such usage of a public facility. He then spoke of the need to differentiate between standards to be applied in such cases.

Mr. Eureste then made a motion to direct the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center not to screen this motion picture. The motion died for lack of a second.

Ms. Susie Guerra, a citizen, asked the City Council to take into consideration the total spectrum of programming of GCAC, not just a single event. She spoke of being proud of the activities of the Center and its accessibility to the public because of its public funding and the advantages of having such a facility. She asked that no hasty actions be taken on this matter.

Mayor Cisneros stated his belief that the City Council could be on dangerous ground providing any 'direction' to GCAC as to whether or not it could show any particular motion picture. He further stated his contention that this would be censorship, and would set what he felt would be a dangerous precedent. He stated his belief that the Council is able to set a policy for all City-funded facilities such as this, but it would have to be a definite policy for all, not just one. He stated his belief that the City cannot arbitrarily censor such things as motion pictures such as this on an individual basis, and not without having a firm policy. He quoted Mr. Willie Velasquez, board member of GCAC, as saying he has viewed this film, and in his opinion it is a 'rough film', but not one that should not be shown to the public. Mayor Cisneros stated that the film already has been shown at the University of Texas at Austin as an educational matter.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Council cannot accept and act upon only heresay evidence, since, in his opinion, this would be adhering to another person's moral code.

Mr. Wing then made a motion to ask the City's Arts Advisory Committee to draft guidelines for the use of City facilities so as to

offer protection to the sensibilities of the general community. Mr. Alderete seconded the motion.

A brief discussion of the contents of the motion then took place.

Mrs. Dutmer quoted from a review of the motion picture "Short Eyes" as written in the New West Magazine, and spoke of her objections to this article.

Mr. Pedro Rodriguez, Executive Director, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, stated that he has seen the motion picture; that there is nudity in only one scene; that not a large amount of foul language is used; and in fact stated that he feels the motion picture is a deterrent to possible crime, since it is very explicit about the violent nature of life in a prison. He further stated that some critics have stated their feeling that some scenes of the motion picture could be considered erotic, however.

In response to a question by Mr. Eureste, Mr. Rodriguez stated that a person attending the motion picture must be age 17 or over, as is the case with any "R"-rated motion picture. He stated his belief that the film is not pornographic in nature.

Mr. Harrington noted that no one is being forced to view this motion picture.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that GCAC did not screen the film when it was first asked by City staff not to do so, and only decided to proceed with the screening after the board of directors had met to consider the request. He further stated that if City Council tonight directs GCAC not to show the film, it will not do so.

Mr. Eureste stated that City Council at last Thursday's executive session had voted to ask GCAC not to show the film, and the Council now has the opportunity to reinforce that. He stated his feeling that vulgarity, nudity and such are objectionable in a public facility, and further stated his belief that this is one more episode in a 'track record' being established by GCAC. He stated that GCAC was the scene of an anti-Reagan Administration political demonstration last summer over administration policies as they relate to Nicaragua, and noted that on February 2, a fundraising dance is being held by a group known as "Frente Unido Latino". Mr. Eureste stated his contention that this is the same group which staged the demonstration against administration policies in Nicaragua last summer, and spoke of the group's outspoken concern over the U.S. having taken lands from Mexico. He also voiced objections to a current photography contest being conducted by GCAC which he contended was restricted only to Hispanic females.

Mr. Rodriguez, in reply, stated that this organization planning a February 2 fundraising event at GCAC is not the same one referred to as having sponsored the anti-administration stand on Nicaragua last summer,

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and that GCAC is not co-sponsoring the event. As to the photography contest, he stated that it was not restricted to Hispanic women solely, but was open to anyone who wanted to enter.

Mayor Cisneros stated that he does not agree with many of the beliefs of this group which is planning to use the Center February 2, but will not vote to keep them from using a public building to express their opinions, much as a previous mayor of San Antonio had done in the 1930's.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that it is GCAC policy for any non-profit group to have the first usage of the theater free of charge; then, all groups must pay after the first free event.

Mr. Eureste re-stated his opinion that the same people are involved in both groups.

Mrs. Dutmer stated her belief that it is up to each individual to decide whether or not to attend the film involved in this discussion.

Mayor Cisneros stated that he does not recall that the City Council took a formal vote at last Thursday's City Council executive session on the matter of the film, but rather instructed City Manager Louis J. Fox to look into the matter.

Mr. Eureste reiterated his belief that the same organization is involved in both last summer's demonstrations and the February 2 fundraiser.

Mayor Cisneros noted that the City did not stop the Ku Klux Klan from demonstrating on the steps of City Hall, and did not interfere with Mr. Eureste's participation in a march through downtown streets in which a coffin was carried. He further stated that, in the same vein, he could not vote to stop this group's freedom of expression.

Mr. Eureste stated his contention that there is a disparity in the policy on usage of Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center.

Mayor Cisneros cautioned Mr. Rodriguez to make certain that GCAC policy is stated and followed closely, and not deviated from, as it related to the "first use free" policy.

A discussion then ensued relative to the use of the Guadalupe Theater by the Tobias Theater group, and of the charges made for rental of the facilities.

Mr. Eureste stated that, to his knowledge, Mr. Antonio Cabral, leader of the group planning the February 2 fundraiser, also was a leader in the anti-administration demonstration at the theater last summer in opposition to the Reagan administration stance on Nicaragua.

Mayor Cisneros then briefly restated his understanding of Mr. Wing's motion.

Mr. Eureste noted that he would be voting against the motion.

The motion prevailed by the following vote: AYES: Webb, Dutmer, Wing, Thompson, Alderete, Harrington, Archer, Hasslocher, Cisneros; NAYS: Eureste; ABSENT: Berriozabal.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the special meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

A P P R O V E D

Henry Cisneros
M A Y O R

ATTEST: *Arma S. Rodriguez*
C i t y C l e r k

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