

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, ON
WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1973.

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The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by the presiding officer, Mayor Charles L. Becker, with the following members present: BECKER, COCKRELL, SAN MARTIN, BLACK, BECKMANN, MENDOZA, MORTON; Absent: LACY AND PADILLA.

73-36 The Mayor stated the special meeting was called to consider the proposed electrical ordinance.

73-36 The City Clerk read the caption as follows:

"AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 12 OF THE CITY CODE SO AS TO ADOPT A NEW ELECTRICAL CODE FOR THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO, BY DEFINING TERMS, ADOPTING THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE OF THE NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION EXCEPT WHERE IN CONFLICT WITH CITY CODE PROVISIONS AND ADOPTING CERTAIN SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS, SETTING THE DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDING & PLANNING, THE CHIEF ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR, AND OTHER ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS IN ADMINISTERING THE CODE, CHANGING THE COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTRICAL EXAMINING AND SUPERVISING BOARD AND REDUCING THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF PERSONS APPOINTED TO SERVE ON SUCH BOARD, SPECIFYING THE FUNCTIONS OF SUCH BOARD, PROVIDING FOR EXAMINATIONS AND LICENSING OF ELECTRICIANS AND SETTING QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS OF ELECTRICIANS, REQUIRING THAT VEHICLES USED BY ELECTRICIANS SHOW THE ELECTRICIAN'S OR COMPANY'S NAME, AND TYPE OF BUSINESS AND LICENSE NUMBER UNDER WHICH ELECTRICAL WORK IS PERFORMED, REQUIRING BONDS OF ELECTRICIANS, REQUIRING PERMITS FOR ALL ELECTRICAL WORK, SETTING THE FEES FOR PERMITS AND LICENSES, PROVIDING FOR INSPECTIONS OF ELECTRICAL WORK, SETTING STANDARDS AND INSTALLATION RULES FOR ELECTRICAL WORK, PRESCRIBING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF ANY REQUIREMENTS CONTAINED HEREIN OF A FINE NOT TO EXCEED TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS: AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY."

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73-36 Mr. George Vann, Director of Planning and Building Administration stated that last week he gave the Council a briefing on the proposed changes to the Electrical Ordinance. The changes have been reviewed and discussed with the Electrical and Examining Board. The majority of the Board agreed these are the changes they would like to have.

He explained that on March 6, 1972, the Board recommended that the Council adopt the 1971 Edition of the National Electrical Code as revised and amended by the most recent edition of the City Electrical Ordinance which the Council did adopt on March 16, 1972.

The Ordinance under consideration today readopts the 1971 National Electrical Code with twenty-one exceptions. Of the twenty-one exceptions, there are a few in which there is disagreement as follows:

Page 44 (b) - Residential Exceptions, Paragraph 1.

This exception provides for the use of Romex wiring in apartments up to eight units and not exceeding three stories in height.

Page 45 (b) - Residential Exceptions, Paragraph 7.

This exception excludes the requirement in the National Electrical Code that there be one receptacle outlet for each twelve feet of wall space. The present and proposed Ordinance requires that there be only one outlet in the kitchen.

One other area in which there is disagreement and not listed in the Ordinance as an exception is the provision in the National Electrical Code which requires the use of ground fault interruptors (GFI). (A ground fault interruptor is a device to provide protection against electrical shock hazard).

Mr. John Specia, President of Specia Plumbing and Electrical Company and President of the Electrical Examining and Supervising Board introduced members of the Board present as follows:

James B. Otterpohl of the Alamo Neon Company; Tom Sandoval, Allied Electric Company; Robert LaChappelle, LaChappelle Electric Company; Jack Frazier of Jesse and Chandler Electric Company; Raul Fernandez, engineer with Zachary Properties; George Ahlstrom of Ahlstrom Electric Company and Robert Boubel, Union Representative. Absent was Loris Scarborough, engineer with the City Public Service Board.

Mr. Specia reviewed the study which has gone into revising the code. He stated that all members of the Board recommend adoption of the Ordinance except Mr. Boubel. He discussed with the Council the exceptions to the National Code which are in dispute.

The following citizens spoke in favor of the Ordinance:

1. Mr. Wendel Foss, Foss Electric Company, spoke in favor of the Ordinance as written.

2. Mr. Bill Chamberlin, Chamberlin Electric Company.

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73-36 3. Mr. W. B. Edwards, Jagger and Associates, was in favor of the Ordinance, particularly the use of Romex in three story apartments. He said his company has an allocation of \$20 million to invest in San Antonio fifty percent of which will be in three story apartment buildings which have been successful in other cities. He felt that allowing the use of Romex would be safe and would represent a savings to them of \$80,000 or \$120.00 per unit.

4. Mr. Jack C. Faglie, Bexar Design Service.

5. Mr. J. G. Terrell, engineer with Bexar Design Service.

6. Mr. Naun Delgado, Del's Electric Company and representing the Bexar Electric Association.

7. Mr. Tom Sandoval, Allied Electric Company and representing LULAC Council #2.

8. Mr. William Todt, Todt Electrical Company and representing Alamo Electric Contractors' Association. (Non-Union contractors)

9. Mr. G. E. Harrington representing the Home Builders Association, spoke in favor of the Ordinance but opposed the requirement of the ground fault interruptor as there is insufficient experience on it and has not been fully developed where it is a standard item which can be interchanged with all electrical systems and would add to the cost of the house.

10. Mr. Jesse Villarreal of Jesse and Chandler Electric Company spoke in favor of Romex for three story apartment buildings and added that the limits should go up to nine apartments instead of eight.

11. Mr. Robert Ross of Ross Electric Company.

Councilman Black asked what the industry has been doing to help minority groups get into the electrical industry. He added that historically it has been known that Blacks have had great difficulty in getting into this industry.

Mr. F. W. "Bill" Allen, National Electrical Contractors Association (Union Contractors) advised that they are taking in Blacks in the apprenticeship program. At the present time there are 53 percent minorities represented in the program of which nine percent are Blacks. They are making an effort to get Blacks to apply. Recently, nine applied and five were taken into the program.

Mr. Bob Boubel stated that he saw more opportunities coming up soon. He understood another organization has applied for an apprenticeship program. That will give minorities additional opportunities to be good craftsmen.

Discussion then took place as to how examinations are given and graded.

The meeting was recessed at 12:55 P.M. and reconvened at 2:00 P.M.

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73-36 The following persons spoke in opposition to the Ordinance as written.

Mr. Paul Silber, representing Silber and Associates Engineers, stated that he has taken the position of supporting the National Electric Code for the technical aspects of the San Antonio Electrical Code.

Mr. Robert Boubel discussed material which he had presented to each Council member which included an article in opposition to Romex, the San Mateo, California Ordinance and the Summary of Fatalities, Accidents, and Fires, dated June 1970. He alleged that the Department of Housing and Urban Development had come to the City and asked it to adopt the National Code in its entirety but the Board has recommended differently. Generally, Mr. Boubel was in favor of the National Electrical Code.

Mr. George D. Vann, Director of Planning and Housing Administration read the motion adopted by the Electrical Examining and Supervising Board on March 6, 1972 which is as follows:

"We, the Electrical Examining and Supervising Board, hereby adopt the 1971 edition of the National Electrical Code as revised and amended by the most recent edition of the City Electrical Ordinance. We hereby request the City Council to approve this action."

Mr. Vann also read Paragraph C of Section 12-3 of the Ordinance of March 16, 1972 as follows:

"The 1971 edition of the National Electrical Code of the National Fire Protection Association, wherever not in conflict with the provisions of this chapter, is hereby adopted as minimum standards for the City of San Antonio".

Mr. Vann also read from the 1971 National Electrical Code on Page 70-i as follows:

"This Code is purely advisory as far as the NFPA and ANSI are concerned but is offered for use in law and for regulatory purposes in the interest of life and property protection."

Mr. Vann also read from the 1971 National Electrical Code on Page 70-2 as follows:

"90-7. Enforcement. This Code is intended to be suitable for mandatory application by governmental bodies exercising legal jurisdiction over electrical installations and for use by insurance inspectors. The administrative authority supervising such enforcement of the Code will have the responsibility for making interpretations of the rules, for deciding upon the approval of equipment and materials, and for granting the special permission contemplated in a number of the rules."

Mr. Vann also read from Page 5 of the proposed Ordinance the following:

"Section 12-5. Interpretation of Regulations. Director of Building and Planning Administration shall refer to the Electrical Examining and Supervising Board, all disputed questions pertaining to the installation of all electrical wiring, devices and equipment, hereinafter provided for in this chapter. These disputed questions shall be interpreted by the Board in accordance with this chapter."

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73-36 Mr. F. W. "Bill" Allen, Executive Manager of NECA was in favor of using the National Code. He explained how the National Code was written by various panels which have representation from all sectors of the country.

Mr. Rex Schulenberger of Delta Electric Company, spoke in favor of the National Code.

Mr. Roscoe Blaine of Blaine Electric Company spoke in favor of the Ordinance. He said that he personally tested the ground fault interruptor device which failed to work. In the matter of testing, he suggested the giving an applicant for an exam a number which would be known only to the electrical inspector. This would help in eliminating any question of discrimination.

After everyone had been heard, the City Attorney was asked if Council could adopt the Ordinance as written.

City Attorney Crawford Reeder stated that in his opinion, there was no question but that the City Council can adopt this Ordinance. It does not have to comply with the National Electrical Code because the National Electrical Code says that you do not have to.

The Council then reviewed the items in which there was disagreement and after consideration, it was the consensus of the Council that changes be made as follows:

1. The ground fault interruptor requirement should be made optional at this time.
2. That in examinations in order to reduce the possibility of question except for ability that the number system be used.
3. That consideration be given in the make-up of the Board to provide that a layman/consumer be appointed.
4. That habitable buildings be required to have electrical wiring.
5. That there be a minimum of one electrical receptable in each habitable room.
6. That consideration be given to allowing Romex wiring in three story apartments and that the staff make a study of the building code and fire code to determine the number of units to be allowed.

City Manager Granata stated that at next week's "B" session, he will make a presentation of the changes suggested by the Council and then place the Ordinance on the agenda of Thursday, August 2, 1973 for final consideration by the City Council.

The Mayor expressed appreciation to the citizens that participated in discussion of the electrical ordinance after which the meeting was adjourned.

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ATTEST:

A. Schulman
City Clerk

A P P R O V E D

Charles L. Becker
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Charles L. Becker

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