

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, ON
MONDAY, JULY 1, 1974.

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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: COCKRELL, SAN MARTIN, BECKER, LACY, MORTON, MENDOZA; Absent: BLACK, PADILLA.

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HEMISFAIR PLAZA

Councilman Clifford Morton, Chairman of the HemisFair Plaza Committee, introduced other members of his Committee as well as the Citizens Advisory Group.

In opening his remarks, Mr. Morton stated that his Committee had been assigned the Alamo Plaza Project as well as the redevelopment of HemisFair Plaza. The various projects which would have an effect were also studied. They included the River Corridor, the Downtown circulation patterns, Urban Loop proposals, Rosa Verde, Vista Verde projects, Mission Parkway, Arciniega properties and the proposed transportation center. He said that his Committee had concentrated on the HemisFair Plaza project because (1) the land is already owned by the City and would require less time and money than would the development of Alamo Plaza; (2) the City is currently subsidizing the operation of HemisFair Plaza at the rate of approximately \$400,000 annually; (3) this is an asset owned by the City that begs for immediate attention; and (4) under utilization of facilities results in loss of much revenue for the City. The focusing on HemisFair Plaza does not in any way prejudice Alamo Plaza.

Mr. Norton said that the following are the general recommendations of the Committee:

1. The recommended use of the property is that it should be developed "people place" for recreation, cultural and educational use.
2. Though it is desirable for the area to be self-sustaining, uses should be considered based on benefits to be derived by the community as well as projected costs and potential income. Benefits may justify a subsidy.
3. A separate authority or commission should be created by the City Council to not only govern HemisFair Plaza but also La Villita and the Market. The authority should be appointed by the City Council and would require a Charter amendment.
4. Improve vehicular and pedestrian access to all sections with special attention to the Institute of Texan Cultures, the Arena and Theater and the central core of the site.

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5. Improved parking should be located as near to the Tower and Convention Center as possible.

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Mr. Morton stated that the deans of the various local colleges had expressed a desire to maintain a continuing education center in the southwest corner of the site. A preliminary plan for development is due to be presented by this group by August 1, 1974.

The Committee recommended that Ordinance No. 42016 passed March 29, 1973, be corrected to re-establish the boundary of HemisFair Plaza correctly.

Mr. Morton showed on a map proposed locations for three hotels. One site would be the Arciniega property at Durango and Alamo Streets, another straddling the river extension adjacent to the Marina Garage and a third area in the northeast part of the property. It was recommended that bids be invited on these properties for the purpose of erecting hotels on them.

The Committee recommended the following physical modifications other than parking and access:

All improvements should be designated into one of the following categories:

1. Permanent - non movable
2. Permanent - movable
3. Expendable

It was the Committee's feeling that buildings designated as expendable which could be razed should be razed now.

The elevated walkways and waterways may be eliminated or modified when they conflict with the ultimate development plan for the Plaza.

The Committee recommended that action be taken in regard to the following:

1. Construction of a two way four lane boulevard along the east boundary of HemisFair Plaza between Market and Durango Streets. This will require acquisition of some right of way from the Texas Highway Department and from the Institute of Texan Cultures. A two way access street be built from the proposed boulevard to the Tower of the Americas.
2. The tying together as much as possible La Villita and HemisFair. This could include consideration of some type of transportation system between the two facilities.
3. The renaming of the Plaza as a part of the overall development.

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4. The retention of the Arciniega property until the hotel question is resolved.
5. The acquisition by the City of property immediately south of the property owned by the federal government on Durango Street.
6. The relocation of the Arena box office to relieve traffic congestion in the area.

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Mr. Pat Legan, member of the Citizens Advisory Group, said that he would like to make two points as an individual member of the Committee. One, was the unanimous consensus that the HemisFair Plaza not be bisected by the inner loop or a collector street. He also said that the Committee was recommending against large areas of surface parking in the interior. In closing, Mr. Legan said that this matter has been deliberated many hours by the Committee. He hoped that the Council would take some action based upon the Committee's recommendation and that this report not simply be filed away.

Mr. Morton called these recommendations the first steps toward the revitalization of the HemisFair area. He reviewed some of the preliminary estimates of cost which were:

1. To expand the Lake Pavilion structure into a 400 parking space structure - \$850,000; to expand to 600 spaces - \$1,200,000.
2. The four lane road - \$82,950

This cost would not include any abutments that may be required.

3. Two streets to Tower - \$28,440

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After consideration, Mrs. Cockrell moved the Council accept the plan for HemisFair Plaza as recommended by the Committee and that the staff be asked to proceed immediately with negotiations for right-of-way and that staff proceed with preparation to advertise for bids for the hotel sites including the clearing with Urban Renewal Agency for the acquisition of the Arciniega site and that the Council extend its appreciation to the HemisFair Plaza Committee for its efforts.

The motion was seconded by Dr. San Martin and carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: Cockrell, San Martin, Becker, Morton, Mendoza; NAYS: None; ABSENT: Black, Lacy, Padilla.

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Mrs. Cockrell moved that the present HemisFair Plaza Committee be asked to continue in the status of an Advisory Committee until such time as a Charter change would permit a permanent authority and that they be requested to continue looking at such things as the Continuing Education Center, the recommended designation of the buildings and continue to make recommendations to the Council.

The motion was seconded by Dr. San Martin and carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: Cockrell, San Martin, Becker, Morton, Mendoza; NAYS: None; ABSENT: Black, Lacy, Padilla.

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Mr. Charles Barrera, President of the Texas Hispanic American History Institute, read a prepared statement requesting that steps be taken to initiate contacts with the government of Spain to seek the establishment of a permanent Spanish Cultural Center at HemisFair Plaza. It could house the offices of the Consul General, a tourist center, archival collection, the Hispanic Institute and other organizations. (A copy of Mr. Barrera's statement is included with the papers of this meeting.) He recommended that the former Woman's Pavilion be set aside and offered to the Spanish Government.

In answer to Dr. San Martin's question, Mr. Barrera said that he would undertake any travel to Washington or Spain at no expense to the City.

Mrs. Cockrell advised Mr. Barrera and the Council of the organizations currently talking about wanting to use the Woman's Pavilion. This may cause some problems.

City Manager Granata stated that the staff would work with Mr. Barrera and assist him.

Mayor Becker expressed appreciation to Mr. Morton and members of his Committee for their efforts on behalf of the City. He presented Citations of Appreciation to each of them.

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Dr. James McKay, speaking for St. John's Lutheran Church, said that his church has had completed plans for more than a year to build a retirement home for senior citizens on the Arciniega property. The City would not sell the land until the HemisFair study was completed. He said that he felt this project would be much better than a hotel.

Dr. Leon Tolle, President of St. John's Lutheran Church, explained the efforts being made to obtain funding for the retirement home. It would have approximately 200 apartments and 90 medical units. The main idea is to have the retirement home in close proximity to the church. It was the church's intention to seek the entire site, but might take less. At the present time they would not be interested in a substitute location at this time.

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Mr. Morton said that he had a brochure on some available properties in the area that he would make available to Dr. Tolle to go over.

Mr. Pat Legan urged that Council not get stampeded into selling this vacant property. It should be saved for the highest and best use.

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The meeting was recessed at 11:00 A. M.

At 11:30 A. M., Mayor Becker announced that due to unforeseen circumstances it would not be possible to maintain a quorum of the Council and, therefore, there would be no discussion of Charter revision.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A. M.

A P P R O V E D

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ATTEST:

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