

**CITY OF LAREDO
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1110 HOUSTON STREET
5:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

M96-R-13

MAY 20, 1996

I. CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present Mayor Protem Felipe Cardenas called the meeting to order.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Protem Felipe Cardenas led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

IN ATTENDANCE:

JOSE R. PEREZ,	COUNCILMEMBER,	DISTRICT I
LOUIS H. BRUNI,	"	, DISTRICT II
ALFONSO I. "PONCHO" CASSO,	"	, DISTRICT III
CECILIA MAY MORENO,	"	, DISTRICT IV
ELISEO VALDEZ, JR.,	"	, DISTRICT V
JOE A. GUERRA,	"	, DISTRICT VI
PROTEM FELIPE CARDENAS,	"	, DISTRICT VIII
PETER H. VARGAS,	CITY MANAGER	
CARLOS VILLARREAL,	ASST. CITY MANAGER	
JESUS NAVA,	ASST. CITY MANAGER	
FAUSTO SOSA,	CITY ATTORNEY	

ABSENCES:

Saul N. Ramirez, Jr., Mayor
Jerry Perez, Councilmember, District VII
Gustavo Guevara, City Secretary

Motion to excuse Cm. Perez.

Moved : Cm. Jose R. Perez
Second: Cm. Louis H. Bruni
For: 6

Against: 0 Abstain: 0

IV. INTRODUCTORY ORDINANCE

2. Authorizing the City Manager to execute a lease with International Customs Services, Inc., a Texas Corporation, for approximately 130,680 square feet (3.0 acres) located at 5400 Thomas Avenue at the Laredo International Airport;
 1. Lease term is for twenty five (25) years commencing June 1, 1996, and ending May 31, 2021 and may be extended for

- one (1) term of five (5) years and second term of ten (10) year and ending May 31, 2026, and May 31, 2036;
2. Monthly rent shall be \$1,306.80 and will be adjusted annually during the primary and extension terms of this lease and further adjusted on the twentieth (20th) and thirtieth (30th) anniversaries based on the appraised fair market value at that time; providing for effective date.

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

V. FINAL READINGS

Motion to waive the final reading #96-0-69, #96-0-70, #96-0-71, #96-0-72, #96-0-73, and #96-0-74.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

3. 96-0-069 Amending Ordinance No. 94-0-228 dated November 21, 1994, closing as a public easement the west 69.44' of Rosario Street between Texas and Louisiana Avenues, including the intersection of Rosario and Texas, bounded by the south right-of-way line of the Texas-Mexican Railroad and the east right-of-way line of the U.S. Highway 83; this amendment being to correct the linear feet of the west 69.44' of Rosario Street to read as the west 58.94' of Rosario Street. (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to amend Ordinance No. 94-0-228 dated November 21, 1994, closing as a public easement the west 69.44' of Rosario Street between Texas and Louisiana Avenues, including the intersection of Rosario and Texas, bounded by the south right-of-way line of the Texas-Mexican Railroad and the east right-of-way line of the U.S. Highway 83; this amendment being to correct the linear feet of the west 69.44' of Rosario Street to read as the west 58.94' of Rosario Street.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

4. 96-0-070 Authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to effectively convey fee simple title to Ms. Rosalinda Espinoza for the sale at fair market value of the "surface only" of certain City property known as that section of the west 58.94 feet of Rosario Street between Texas Avenue and Louisiana Avenue including the intersection of Rosario Street and Texas Avenue, situated in the Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, and providing for an effective date. (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to effectively convey fee simple title to Ms. Rosalinda Espinoza for the sale at fair market value of the "surface only" of certain City property known as that section of the west 58.94 feet of Rosario Street between Texas Avenue and Louisiana Avenue including the intersection of Rosario Street and Texas Avenue, situated in the Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, and providing for an effective date.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

5. 96-0-071 Authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to effectively convey fee simple title to H.E. Butt Grocery Company for the sale at fair market value of the surface only of a 0.079 acre (3,441.24 square feet) tract of land out of the former Urbahn Avenue between Zacatecas Street and Highway 83, situated in the Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, and providing for an effective date. (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to effectively convey fee simple title to H.E. Butt Grocery Company for the sale at fair market value of the surface only of a 0.079 acre (3,441.24 square feet) tract of land out of the former Urbahn Avenue between Zacatecas Street and Highway 83, situated in the Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, and providing for an effective date.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

6. 96-0-072 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a lease with Laredo Independent School District for approximately 4,241 square feet constituting the southernmost portion of Building #574 located at 5103 Foster Avenue at the Laredo International Airport;

1. Lease term is for one (1) year commencing May 1, 1996, and ending April 30, 1997, and may be extended for one (1) year ending April 30, 1998;
 2. Monthly rent shall be \$500.00, and will be adjusted during the primary and extension term of this lease according to changes in the consumer price index; providing for an effective date.
- (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to authorize the City Manager to execute a lease with Laredo Independent School District for

approximately 4,241 square feet constituting the southernmost portion of Building #574 located at 5103 Foster Avenue at the Laredo International Airport;

1. Lease term is for one (1) year commencing May 1, 1996, and ending April 30, 1997, and may be extended for one (1) year ending April 30, 1998;
2. Monthly rent shall be \$500.00, and will be adjusted during the primary and extension term of this lease according to changes in the consumer price index; providing for an effective date.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 4

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

Cm. Bruni

Cw. Moreno

Cm. Casso

Cm. Perez

Cm. Valdez

Cm. Guerra

7. 96-0-073 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a lease amendment to the lease agreement between the City of Laredo, and M & M Air Cargo and Delivery Service, Inc., dated November 6, 1995, and approved by Ordinance No. 95-0-241, in order to increase the square footage of the leased premises, change the effective date of the primary term, delete the renewal options, adjust the monthly rent obligation accordingly, and change the anniversary date for the annual rent adjustment; providing for an effective date. (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to authorize the City Manager to execute a lease amendment to the lease agreement between the City of Laredo, and M & M Air Cargo and Delivery Service, Inc., dated November 6, 1995, and approved by Ordinance No. 95-0-241, in order to increase the square footage of the leased premises, change the effective date of the primary term, delete the renewal options, adjust the monthly rent obligation accordingly, and change the anniversary date for the annual rent adjustment; providing for an effective date.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

8. 96-0-074 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a lease with Bowden Medical, incorporated, for approximately 3,588 square feet constituting Building #1432, located at 1803 Pappas Street and Building #1338 and #1439 located at 1719 Pappas Street at the Laredo International Airport.

1. Lease term is for one (1) year commencing May 1, 1996, and ending April 30, 1997;
2. Monthly rent shall be \$600.00; providing for an effective date. (Unanimous City Council)

Motion to authorize the City Manager to execute a lease with Bowden Medical, incorporated, for approximately 3,588 square feet constituting Building #1432, located at 1803 Pappas Street and Building #1338 and #1439 located at 1719 Pappas Street at the Laredo International Airport.

1. Lease term is for one (1) year commencing May 1, 1996, and ending April 30, 1997;
2. Monthly rent shall be \$600.00; providing for an effective date.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

VI. RESOLUTIONS

9. 96-R-057 Authorizing the City Manager to accept conveyance of 50 acre feet of Class A water rights, Certificate of Adjudication No. 23-2721 from North House Inc., for a total of \$25,000 in lieu of payment for water availability fees in connection with platting, in the near future, of University Park Phase III and Woodlands Phase II. To make application to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission for conversion to municipal use, establish diversion point and have City of Laredo Certificate of Adjudication No. 23-3997 amended by Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

Motion authorizing the City Manager to accept a conveyance of 50 acre feet of Class A water rights, Certificate of Adjudication No. 23-2721 from North House Inc., for a total of \$25,000 in lieu of payment for water availability fees in connection with platting of University Park III and Woodlands Phase II.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

10. 96-R-058 Authorizing the City Manager to accept grant no. 3-48-0136-17, from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Airport Improvement Program, for the reconstruction of runway 17L/35R and to construct a connector taxiway to the new air carrier apron at the Laredo International Airport in the amount of \$5,295,623.00 for said project.

Motion to authorize the City Manager to accept grant

13. Award of annual service contract to the Low Bidder, Hollywood Garden Co., Laredo, Texas, in the amount of \$98,850.00, for providing ground maintenance services for the Utilities Department and the Bridge System.

Motion to award an annual service contract to the Low Bidder, Hollywood Garden Co., Laredo, Texas, in the amount of \$98,850.00, for providing ground maintenance services for the Utilities Department and the Bridge System.

Moved : Cw. Moreno
Second: Cm. J. Perez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

14. Award of a contract to the Low Bidder, Victoria Air Conditioning, Inc., Victoria, Texas, in the amount of \$46,850.00, for the purchase and installation of a replacement air cooled chiller at Airport building 134.

Motion to award a contract to the Low Bidder, Victoria Air Conditioning, Inc., Victoria, Texas, in the amount of \$46,850.00, for the purchase and installation of a replacement air cooled chiller at Airport building 134.

Moved : Cw. Moreno
Second: Cm. J. Perez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

15. Award of annual supply contracts to the Low Bidders, DPC Industries, Inc., Corpus Christi, Texas (\$147,016.00), Fort Bend Services, Inc., Stafford, Texas (\$72,700.00), Coastal Products, Houston, Texas, (\$48,000.00), Eaglebrook, Inc., Scherville, IN., (\$35,850.00), AOC, Harlingen, Texas, (\$16,320.00), Boliden Intertrade Inc., Atlanta, Georgia (\$15,095.40), Phoenix, Dist. Service, Houston, Texas (\$14,350.00), Skyhawk Chemical, Houston, Texas (\$11,960.00), PENNCO, Belville, Texas (\$5,497.00), and APG Lime Co., New Braunfels, Texas (\$4,567.80), for the purchase of chemicals on an as needed basis for the Utilities Department.

Motion to award annual supply contracts to the Low Bidders, DPC Industries, Inc., Corpus Christi, Texas (\$147,016.00), Fort Bend Services, Inc., Stafford, Texas (\$72,700.00), Coastal Products, Houston, Texas, (\$48,000.00), Eaglebrook, Inc., Scherville, IN., (\$35,850.00), AOC, Harlingen, Texas, (\$16,320.00), Boliden Intertrade Inc., Atlanta, Georgia (\$15,095.40), Phoenix, Dist. Service, Houston, Texas (\$14,350.00), Skyhawk Chemical, Houston, Texas (\$11,960.00), PENNCO, Belville, Texas (\$5,497.00), and APG Lime Co., New Braunfels, Texas (\$4,567.80), for the purchase of chemicals on an as needed basis for the Utilities Department.

Moved : Cw. Moreno
Second: Cm. J. Perez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

16. Award of a contract to the Low Bidder, Underground, Inc., Pearland, Texas, in the amount of \$154,000.00, for the purchase of one combination sanitary/storm basin cleaner for the Utilities Department - Wastewater Treatment Division.

Motion to award a contract to the Low Bidder, Underground, Inc., Pearland, Texas, in the amount of \$154,000.00, for the purchase of one combination sanitary/storm basin cleaner for the Utilities Department - Wastewater Treatment Division.

Moved : Cw. Moreno

Second: Cm. J. Perez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

17. Award of a construction contract to the Low Bidder, McLean Construction, Inc., Killeen, Texas, in the amount of \$89,783.20 for the Bartlett/Plum Storm Drainage Improvements.

Motion to award a construction contract to the Low Bidder, McLean Construction, Inc., Killeen, Texas, in the amount of \$89,783.20 for the Bartlett/Plum Storm Drainage Improvements.

Moved : Cw. Moreno

Second: Cm. J. Perez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

18. Award of a construction contract to the Sole Bidder, Ramex Construction Company, Inc., Houston, Texas, in the amount of \$97,500.00 for the repairs to the Concrete Channel on Canal Street between Marcella and San Francisco.

Motion to award a construction contract to the Sole Bidder, Ramex Construction Company, Inc., Houston, Texas, in the amount of \$97,500.00 for the repairs to the Concrete Channel on Canal Street between Marcella and San Francisco.

Mr. Rogelio Rivera, City Engineer, stated that the repairs are being done due to the damage of heavy rains in June and July not because of poor workmanship.

Cw. Moreno proceeded to question why repair the streets now.

Robert Gutierrez commented on needing a bridge between San Francisco and Canal Street in order to get from Retama II to H.E. Butt Grocery.

Moved : Cw. Moreno

Second: Cm. J. Perez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

19. Approval of change order no. 4, an increase of \$4,136.00, acceptance of the Cigarroa Outdoor Recreational Complex and approval of final payment in the amount of \$49,426.25 to Gryco Inc. d/b/a Gary Pools Commercial Inc.

Motion to approve a change order no. 4, an increase of

\$4,136.00, acceptance of the Cigarroa Outdoor Recreational Complex and approval of final payment in the amount of \$49,426.25 to Gryco Inc. d/b/a Gary Pools Commercial Inc.

Moved : Cw. Moreno
Second: Cm. J. Perez
For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

20. Approval of change order no. 2, a decrease of \$19,388.60, acceptance of the Bond Street Paving Assessment Project 55 (44 Blocks) and approval of final payment in the amount of \$128,456.29 to Ramex Construction Company, Inc., Houston, Texas.

Motion to approve a change order no. 2, a decrease of \$19,388.60, acceptance of the Bond Street Paving Assessment Project 55 (44 Blocks) and approval of final payment in the amount of \$128,456.29 to Ramex Construction Company, Inc., Houston, Texas.

Moved : Cw. Moreno
Second: Cm. J. Perez
For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

VIII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

21. Presentation by the City's Financial Advisor and the City's Bond Counsel concerning the proposed refunding of the outstanding Toll Bridge Revenue Bonds in order to accommodate the financing of International Bridge IV.

Noe Hinojosa and Pete Tart our City's Financial Advisor and the City's Bond Counsel, respectively, presented a proposal of refunding the outstanding Toll Bridge Revenue Bonds in order to accomodate the financing of International Bridge IV. Mr. Hinojosa presented that there are many favorable terms for Laredo. Current bondholders would get paid first and then the state, interest rates would be at four percent making it very favorable. The life of the bond would be over 30 years. The agreement would be between Texas Turnpike Highway, Federal Government, Department of Transportation and City of Laredo due to the Intermodal Surface Efficiency Act.

Mr. Tart stated that the funds will be a written agreement that will be negotiated at a later time. We will repay out of surplus funds and the city will reserve the rights to issue additional parity in the events of additional improvements or stations to their existent group system. We would also have to refund all of our outstanding debts, which goes back to 1976. He also stated that all title to the bridges must belong to City of Laredo. The Department of Transportation is willing to advance the 11.3 million dollars only if the title to the bridge is in the Texas Turnpike Authority until all the money is repaid.

Mr. Carlos Villarreal proceeded to state that these terms are very much in favor of Laredo and many other cities are dying to have this opportunity being offered to us.

Cw. Moreno questioned why the bonds principal was being increased.

Mr. Vargas replied that the bond is being refinanced to benefit the bondholder.

Trinidad Silva spoke briefly against about the proposed new bridge.

Cm. Guerra proposed that there be a workshop for all council members for any questions concerning this matter.

Motion to have a workshop for all city council members concerning questions on toll bridge revenue bonds in order to accomodate the financing of International Bridge IV.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Guerra

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

22. Status report concerning the construction of a turning lane at Calton Road as well as the status of the signalization of Yeary Avenue and Calton Road.

Roberto Murillo, City Traffic Engineer, stated that H.E. Butt Grocery has reached an agreement with the owners of the land where the center turning lane is to be made. H.E. Butt Grocery has written a letter agreeing to continue with the creation of the center turning lane, letting the City of Laredo acquire the land.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Presentation by Ricardo Santiago concerning the creation of the International Children's Festival of the Arts in Laredo.

Mr. Ricardo Santiago spoke a of proposed project that is starting to become a reality. The project entails the promotion of different nationalities that would target fifth graders. The themes proposed are unity or family. The festival would cover a three week period and would include parades, certificates, scholarships, and direct rewards to the children.

Cm. Guerra proposed that staff look into it.

Marcia Jovel, member of the audience, spoke briefly and commented on the appointment of Chief Martinez. She stated that before the appointment he was not on the top list of candidates until Mr. Edward Perales, Superintendent of U.I.S.D, brought it to Mr. Vargas' attention. She proceeded

to say that there are some tapes in their possession that leads to major corruption.

Robin Roberts briefly advised City Council to capitalize on our assets. She commented that we should clean up what we have and focus on our historical setting and Hispanic heritage.

Robert Gutierrez spoke briefly about his feelings concerning the matters with Chief J.L. Martinez.

X. CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

23. Request by Mayor and City Councilmembers for discussion and presentation.

A. Requests by Councilmember Louis H. Bruni

Cm. Bruni asked for a moment of silence for the death of Senator Judith Zaffirini's mother.

1. Discussion and possible action concerning the City's Weather Modification Resolution No. 95-R-086, with a presentation by Don Griffith from TRC/North American Weather Consultants.

Cm. Bruni stated that there are seven counties already involved in cloud seeding projects. The total estimated costs have been one million dollars for a five year contract. Cm. Bruni pleaded with the public to conserve water because it is our most precious assets.

Don Griffith of TRC/North American Water Consultants made a presentation to City Council concerning the steps involved in this project. He stated that two techniques can be used in order for the needed rain to occur. He commented that a permit would take about 45-60 days to acquire from the state.

Cm. Guerra and Cm. Bruni both strongly urged City Council to act quickly.

Charles Martens, a member of the ranching community, spoke briefly on the funding that is willing to be made by ranchers and other party members.

Cm. Valdez asked Council if the Mexican government had been confronted with the proposed plan and asked if they were willing to participate, due to the airplanes needed for the cloud seeding to enter their jurisdiction.

It was said that Mayor Saul N. Ramirez had already spoken to Mexican government officials.

Commissioner David Cortez spoke briefly about our water problem and strongly expressed that he is willing to commit with the City of Laredo, people, and ranchers of this community. He thanked the invitation from Cm. Bruni to

attend the meeting.

For the record, Cm. Bruni stated that he had invited the County Judge and the rest of the Commissioner's Court.

Motion to apply for a permit by the State of Texas for the proposed cloud seeding project and that staff look into bids for the funding needed.

Moved : Cm. Bruni

Second: Cm. J. Perez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2. Status report on the Santa Isabel Water Well Project with a timeline for its completion.

Fernando Roman spoke briefly about the well being able to produce water. The only problem being that it must be treated due to salinity.

Cm. Bruni questioned when the second well will be drilled.

Mr. Roman replied that he wanted to wait for the results of the first one.

3. Report by Jose Luna from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) concerning the Falcon reservoir and Amistad reservoir water reserves.

Mr. Jose Luna reported that the week of May 11, 1996, the total water level is 45 below normal. He stated that water available for Laredo will dissipate in about 17 months if precipitation does not occur.

B. Requests by Councilmember Alfonso I. "Poncho" Casso

1. Discussion and possible action regarding placing the Chief of Police on administrative leave with possible Executive Session.

Cm. Casso began by saying that the Laredo Police Department is in shambles. He said he regrets that he is the one that has to do this, but this burden has been on his shoulders for two years. He told Mr. Vargas that the City Manager should stay out of politics. Cm. Casso then accused City Council and Mr. Vargas in developing policies in administrative matters. He then stated that politics influence people, which in turn gives the majority a consensus. He feels that the city manager is a powerful administrative head of taxpayer's funds. He told Mr. Vargas that it only takes one city councilmember to force a manager to resign.

Cm. Casso then directed his speech to Chief Martinez. He stated that Laredo Morning Times protects the Chief of Police for some reason. He exhibited the newspaper from May 18, 1996, and stated that Odie Arambula never mentions Cm. Casso

and what he has to say on civil right violations. On May 20, 1996, under the "Monday Wash", Mr. Arambula once again said that the problems stem from those not suited for the public charge, referring to Cm. Casso. He also stated that Mr. Arambula had stated for the record that the newspaper does not have to be impartial or fair. He stated that the City of Laredo paid a consultant \$170,000 for a job that wasn't needed and didn't produce anything. Cm. Casso also added that nepotism has been involved in other appointments for the Laredo Police Department, such as the attorney for the LPD. Cm. Casso brought it to attention and questioned the Chief of Police appointment because he did not have an impeccable record. Cm. Casso then questioned the illegal appointment of Chief J.L. Martinez case. He then stated that he wanted the illegal appointment of the Chief of Police in writing. He then began to state that the recent demotion of Captain Hale is a terrible embarrassment to the City of Laredo. Cm. Casso then questioned the ramifications of the lawsuit and if it is covered under TML. Mr. Vargas proceeded to say that we won't lose because process and procedure was followed. Mr. Fausto Sosa, City Attorney, added that we didn't lose, because we aren't the ones appealing the case. Again, Cm. Casso asked for this in writing. Mr. Vargas stated that he will provide all the information along with Mr. Sosa's report.

Cm. Casso proceeded to say that Lt. Raul Hinojosa, whom is now a constable, had commented in the local newspaper that he had reminded Chief J.L. Martinez during a meeting where he was announcing the promotion of Lt. Hale to departmental captain, that the list in which he was choosing from had expired. Lt. Hinojosa then stated that it was in clear violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Chief Martinez responded that he had already spoken to the attorney and had advised him that it could be made from the list.

Cm. Casso then stated that everything is an embarrassment on Mr. Vargas and Chief J.L. Martinez. Cm. Casso continued by stating that it was said in a newspaper on Friday, May 17, 1996 that Chief J.L. Martinez had approached Cm. Casso for grievance documents, but that he had refused. Cm. Casso said he had never been approached.

Chief J.L. Martinez initiated his rebuttal by telling Cm. Casso that he had asked for the information.

Cm. Casso then proceeded to question why Chief Martinez had asked him for the documents and not Mr. Vargas.

Cm. Casso then advised Chief J.L. Martinez to resign because he doesn't have the support of 90% of his officers and it would just be better for everyone.

Chief J.L. Martinez refused and the discussion was closed.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding the growing crisis of the downtown retail economy.

Cm. Casso confronted Mr. Carlos Villarreal, Asst. City Manager, about a quote that was stated in the Laredo Morning Times.

Mr. Villarreal said that the quote was misunderstood. He explained that what he meant was that Laredo has gone through worse times and has bounced back due to Laredo spirit. He continued to say that Laredo has gone through many economic situations, including the recent peso devaluation. He said he is "compassionate" to the people of Laredo and even though the downtown retail economy is at a low, he feels that Laredo will survive.

Cm. Casso then stated that the difference between himself and Mr. Villarreal is that he was elected and Mr. Villarreal was not.

Motion to table the next two items.

Moved : Cm. Casso

Second: Cm. Perez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

3. Discussion and possible action regarding the Metro Government Ad Hoc Committee.

This item was tabled.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding the placement of issues on the Planning and Zoning Agenda.

This item was tabled.

C. Requests by Councilmember Eliseo Valdez

1. Request for a traffic study do be done at the intersection of Taylor Street and McPherson Road.

Cm. Valdez stated that he has had many complaints about accidents reported on that intersection. He requested a report on the number of accidents within the past year.

Mr. Vargas agreed to have a report for him by the the first meeting of July.

2. Discussion and possible action concerning the development of a comprehensive promotional campaign for the downtown area.

Mr. Vargas briefly commented that he would like to review the issues before the runoff elections on June 1, 1996. He stated that public improvement has increased. He will give a complete report.

3. Discussion and possible action concerning the City's creek cleaning schedule.

Joe Guerra, Public Works Director, stated that 90% of all creeks have been cleaned.

Cm. Bruni then commented that in District II the creeks are very dirty. He questioned where the water is coming from due to the lack of rainfall the past two or three years.

Cm. Casso stated that District III is filthy also. Fernando Roman, Wastewater Director, stated that the water may come from housewater runoff or shallow groundwater.

Cm. Bruni and Cm. Casso requested that water from their districts be tested in order to see where the water is coming from and what is in it.

Motion to direct staff to furnish a report on cleaning of the creeks.

Moved : Cm. Bruni
Second: Cm. Casso
For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

4. Discussion and possible action concerning re-surfacing of the streets in the Retama I and Retama II subdivisions.

Mr. Vargas briefly reported that the recycling program has been very successful over the years. It has become one-third less the cost than restructuring the streets. He stated that he wants to formulate a plan for next year's budget to get into some of the neighborhoods that are ready for recycling in order to extend their life for about five years without having to do some major reconstruction.

5. Discussion and possible action concerning the replacement of street signs in District V.

Luis Landin, Traffic Manager, stated that 1500 signs have already been ordered.

Cm. Bruni stated that he sent a letter to Mr. Vargas concerning street signs needed for his district, due to damage and theft.

Mr. Jesus Nava, Assistant Manager, commented that if anyone notices something suspicious to please call Laredo Police Department.

6. Discussion and possible action concerning the street lighting program for the San Luis Rey neighborhood.

Luis Landin, Traffic Manager, stated that 141 intersects are already being upgraded. He asked Cm. Valdez for specifics to look into.

Cm. Valdez agreed to get them for him.

7. Status report concerning the City's efforts in policing City parks.

Cm. Valdez asked Chief of Police Martinez on the issue of vandalism at the new park off of McPherson Rd. He stated that vandalism has occurred and has received phone calls concerning the police action, including the whereabouts of the Police Park Blazer.

Chief Martinez stated he thought the problem had been taken care of and will look into it.

City Manager Vargas told Cm. Valdez that he would set up a meeting for any other questions posed.

D. Requests by Councilmember Felipe Cardenas

1. Discussion and possible action concerning citizen problems with their water meter readings.

Cm. Cardenas asked Phyllis Colon, Utility Collector, how meters were being read around the Guadalupe Church area. He stated that people were paying under \$72.00 a month. Ms. Colon stated that some meters were being estimated due to the fact that some meters are broken, houses may have dogs or parked cars that prevent readers from reading meters. She proceeded to say that she is more than willing to answer or teach the public on how to read their meters.

2. Discussion and possible action concerning remarks made by Health Department Director Jerry Robinson on a local television news broadcast regarding the handling of food at local food stores.

Jerry Robinson spoke about the recent news broadcast that was shown on KGNS on May 8, 1996. He was interviewed by Jennapher Lynn concerning the cleanliness of some meat markets in Laredo. When speaking about the food handlers in the work force he stated they were not "sophisticated", but intended to say educated. He apologized for his verbal slip and for any embarrassment it may have caused.

XI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

24. Public hearing concerning an ordinance amending the City of Laredo's Fiscal Year 1995-1996 Annual Budget by appropriating \$5,295,623.00, received from the Federal Aviation Administration, Airport Improvement Program Grant No. 3-48-0136-17, for the reconstruction of Runway 17L/35R and to construct a connector taxiway to the New Air Carrier Apron at the Laredo International Airport; and that an ordinance be introduced.

XIII. RECESS AND CONVENE AS THE LAREDO MUNICIPAL HOUSING CORPORATION

Motion to recess as City Council and convene as the Laredo Municipal Housing Corporation.

Moved : Cm. J. Perez

Second: Cm. Bruni

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

26. 96-RMH-059 Accepting the terms of the lowest priced proposal received from J.C. Trevino, Jr. and Richard E. Haynes, and authorizing the purchase of the real property described as the surface only of fifty (50) buildable grade residential lots, zoned R2 being more fully described as lots 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 on block number 1, lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 on block number 2, lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 on block number 3 and lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 on block number 4 in the Riverhill Subdivision Unit 1 for development by the Laredo Municipal Housing Corporation for the Lease/Purchase Program in the amount of six hundred six thousand, three hundred dollars, \$606,300.00 and authorizing the LMHC President to enter into and execute an earnest money contract in the amount of \$10,000.00 pending final closing of this property acquisition on or about 120 days after signing an earnest money contract.

Motion to accept the terms of the lowest priced proposal received from J.C. Trevino, Jr. and Richard E. Haynes, and authorizing the purchase of the real property described as the surface only of fifty (50) buildable grade residential lots, zoned R2 being more fully described as lots 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 on block number 1, lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 on block number 2, lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 on block number 3 and lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 on block number 4 in the Riverhill Subdivision Unit 1 for development by the Laredo Municipal Housing Corporation for the Lease/Purchase Program in the amount of six hundred six thousand, three hundred dollars, \$606,300.00 and authorizing the LMHC President to enter into and execute an earnest money contract in the amount of \$10,000.00 pending final closing of this property acquisition on or about 120 days after signing an earnest money contract.

Mario Maldonado, Internal Auditor, stated that the Riverhill Subdivision is located on Highway

