

**CITY OF LAREDO
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
M2006-SC-17
1110 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
NOVEMBER 15, 2006**

I. CALL TO ROLL

With a quorum present, Mayor Raul G. Salinas called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

In attendance:

Raul G. Salinas, Michael Landeck, District III	Mayor Council Member,
Johnny Rendon Gene Belmares, District VI	Council Member, District V Council Member,
Juan Chavez, District VII	Council Member,
Juan Ramirez, District VIII	Mayor Pro Tem,
Gustavo Guevara, Jr., Cynthia Collazo, Horacio De Leon, Rafael Garcia, Valeria Acevedo,	City Secretary Acting City Manager Assistant City Manager Assistant City Manager Acting City Attorney

Motion to excuse Cm. Garza, Cm. Garcia, and Cm. Amaya.

Moved: Cm. Belmares

Second: Mayor Pro Tempore

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain:

0

III. STAFF REPORTS

1. Introduction of federal legislative consultants Gerry Lederer, Allynn Howe, and Karen Johnson; and update on current federal legislative issues; with possible action.

Jessica Hein, Director of Communications and Administrative Services, advised that the purpose of the meeting is for City Council to meet the federal legislative consultants.

She explained that the Federal and State Agendas are of the same format. She noted that the packets have been packaged and sent to legislators and consultants.

Gerry Lederer, discussed the following memo issued to Council Members:

I. Executive Summary

In light of the most recent elections:

The City must be prepared to prioritize its earmark requests and to work hard with Congressman Henry Cuellar, in his role with the Budget Committee, to move City projects forward.

The City's March meeting is more important than ever as there are new Chairman and staffs of Committees of vital importance to the City.

The City's March meeting will be increasingly important as a bi-product of the the election may be the commencement of administration professionals departing Administration. We will need to maintain our contact with the agencies of importance to the City.

II. General Impression:

Election results are a net loss to the City of Laredo. While the registration and voting record of past elections indicate that the City is predominantly Democratic, our United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate delegation was better positioned with the Republicans in charge of both the States House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

III. Pluses:

A Democratic controlled House Appropriations Committee may be less likely to fund money in the construction of the border fence. (Question is whether there was enough this year's DHS budget to build fence proximate to Laredo.)

A Democratic House and Senate may be more willing to move the Presidents' comprehensive, as opposed to House GOP's punitive, immigration programs.

Large programs in which Laredo is a formulae beneficiary should see no additional cuts, if not nominal growth. (CDBG, Sec. 8 Housing, COPs, DOJ Grants, etc.)

Representative Cuellar as a senior majority member of the House Budget Committee

will have a first cut on the spending of these programs.

IV. Negatives

If Representative Bonilla survives the special election against former Representative Rodriguez, he will no longer be a Cardinal, i.e. Appropriations Sub-Committee chair.

This means the number of earmarks that he will be able to command will be fewer.

Additionally, we will have to see if the election is read by the Congress as a vote against earmarks. That could further chill the appropriations process.

Senator Hutchinson and Corynyn go from being senior members of the majority party, to senior members of the Minority party. This is not nearly as large an impact in the Senate as it in the House, but it does have some implications that we cannot ignore.

Representative Cuellar, while sitting as a Democrat, was viewed as a “go to” Democrat on issues where the vote was close matters and the Republican leadership needed votes from the minority. This allowed the Congressman to bargain for grants and program of interest to Laredo. He will no longer have this unique position. Additionally, there are more liberal members of the new majority that may hold a grudge against the Congressman.

V. General Thoughts

The election of Democratic majorities in the House and Senate will result in a change in policy discussions in Washington. According to the National Democratic Party’s web page, the new Democratic majority will increase emphasis on:

1. Honest Leadership & Open Government (Ethics reform)
2. Real Security (“Recognizing that homeland security begins with hometown security.”)
3. Energy Independence (“Reducing our dependence on foreign oil, eliminating billions in subsidies for oil and gas companies and use the savings to provide consumer relief and develop energy alternatives, and investing in energy independent technology.”)
4. Economic Prosperity & Educational Excellence (“Raising the minimum wage, expanding Pell grants, and making college tuition tax deductible..”)
5. A Healthcare System that Works for Everyone (“Making sure everyone has access to affordable health care, starting by fixing the

prescription drug program and investing in stem cell and other medical research.”)

6. Retirement Security (“Pension reform, expanding saving incentives and preventing the privatization of social security.”)

such We believe that this translates to emphasis on issues of importance to Laredo as:

- Increased funding for securing rail, transit, maritime and other recommendations of the 9/11 Commission;
- \$2.10 increase in the minimum wage;
- Potential for negotiated immigration bill with the President; and
- Debate over the contours of trade policy as the President’s authority to negotiate international trade agreements expires in June of 2007.

the- The Texas Congressional delegation saw very little turnover, but it will none-
will the state have less be in a weakened position in the 110 Congress. No longer
the positions of chair that the Majority Leader of the House (DeLay) nor many of
no longer will Rep. Barton serve as the Chair of the Energy and Commerce
Committee, nor Senators Hutchison (military & Veterans Appropriations
Subcommittee) or Cornyn serve as subcommittee chairs.

congressional Depending upon the results of the special election for Laredo’s other
Rodriguez, the strength of district between Rep. Bonilla and former Representative
the delegation may be further dissipated.

make For purposes of visits in March of 2007, many of our traditional visits will
delegation, most of greater sense given the position of the members of the Texas
member of the delegation will be whom are now in the majority party. The newest
occupy the former Delay seat. former Representative Lampson, who will

have Below is a list of the Texas and border community members with whom we
met in the past:

Representative Bonilla
Representative Burgess
Representative Cuellar
Representative Tom Delay
Representative Martin Frost
Representative Charlie Gonzalez
Representative Kay Granger
Representative Ruben Hinojosa
Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson
Representative Solomon Ortiz
Representative Ted Poe
Representative Ed Pastor
Representative Silvestre Reyes
Representative Ciro Rodriguez

Representative Max Sandlin
Representative Jim Turner

Allynn Howell and Karen Johnson, Consultants, encouraged the City Council to visit Washington as often as possible noting that the representatives need to hear from them as well.

2. Discussion regarding federal legislative program, including but not limited to program goals and objectives; alignment of agenda with legislators, agencies, and staff; tracing of issues; and plan of action for legislative session; with possible action.

This item was discussed in item number one.

3. Discussion regarding the 2007 legislative trip to Washington, D.C; with possible action.

Jessica Hein, Director of Communications, advised Council that the annual trip to Washington, D. C. would be March 4th through the 8th, 2007. She noted that City staff is continuing to work on the details of getting the trip accomplished. She said that the City of Laredo Legislative Committee would meet the following Monday and some of the items will be discussed. She went on to say that staff would continue to move forward with the Legislative Committee to bring recommendations back to City Council.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The City Council hereby reserves the right to go into executive session at any time during this public meeting, if such is requested by the City Attorney or other legal counsel for the City, pursuant to his or her duty under Section 551.071 (2) of the Government Code, to consult privately with his or her client on an item on the agenda, or on a matter arising out of such item.

V. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Cm. Belmares

Second: Cm. Rendon

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain:

0