

**EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER**

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

**ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 29, 2018**

**The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Advisory Board convened in a regular meeting at 600 River Street, in Austin, Texas.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

**Anna Maciel, Chair**

**Rosemary Banda, Member**

**Tomas Medina, Member**

**Andrea Chavez, Member**

**Endi Silva, Member**

**Angelica Erazo, Member (Arrived at 10:50am)**

**Art Navarro, Member**

**David Goujon, Member**

**Claudia Massey, Member**

**Board Members Absent:**

**Aida Cerda-Prazak, Vice Chair**

**Staff in Attendance:**

**Herlinda Zamora, ESB-MACC Manager**

**Tina Herrera, ESB-MACC Administrative Assistant**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Maciel called the Board Meeting to order at 10:09am.

**B. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:**

Chair Maciel announced to the Board and the community that the Special Called Meeting was specifically scheduled to provide a recap of the Council Approved Agreement. She stated that after the two presentations were given that the first 10 community members that signed up under Citizens Communications would be able to speak during the Briefing, Discussions, and Possible Action Items.

**C. PRESENTATIONS:**

**Recap of the Council Approved Agreement regarding the use of 64 Rainey Street as a temporary staging area and the City's initiation of a Right-of-Way Vacation for a portion of the alleyway between the Cultural Center and 64 Rainey Street.**

1. Ricardo Soliz, PARD Division Manager gave a recap of what Council approved in 2015.
  - Effective August 2015-July 2018, City granted permission for temporary construction of development on 64 Rainey Street to install and construct improvements.
  - July 2018 there was an agreement option where the developer could renew their lease with the City for an additional 9 months. The developer chose to renew, and the agreement was then renewed from July-April 2019.
  - Soliz explained that PARD could not stage private development on Parkland but could stage on City owned land so under the agreement that Council made, it was decided that once the staging was completed then 64 Rainey Street would become Parkland.
  - Soliz announced that through the process the developers had gained a zero-setback line, which meant that the developer could build right on their property if there was a road

way or if the Parks Department agreed to a 10 ft. setback then the area would be made into a no build zone. He believes that if a roadway was built in between the development and the alleyway then it could solve the traffic issues.

- CJ Sackman, Fremont Holdings LLC Managing Member stated that from the beginning the developers knew there would be traffic issues. He informed the Board that the alleyway is the only North/South alternative to Rainey Street. Sackman believes there is a benefit to having a 20 ft. alleyway but will leave the decision up to the community, stakeholders, and the MACC to decide upon.

**Note:** Please see the Board & Commissions website to view back up material of the Presentation given by Ricardo Soliz.

#### **Rainey Street Study by Michael Abelson.**

2. Michael Abelson, Rainey Neighborhood Association Member thanked Council Member Kathy Tovo, and all involved for orchestrating and getting the \$50,000 to conduct the traffic study. Abelson shared with the Board that his primary objective was to work effectively with the community and staff in order to meet the needs of the MACC.

- Abelson provided a map of the district and pointed out that there are 16 high-rises that are either functioning, being improved, or working with the City to get approval to be built. He mentioned that the towers would probably not be completed for the next 5 years but what that meant was there would be an equivalent of 53,000-bedroom units and office spaces. Based off the study he provided the area is experiencing 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of what the traffic will be in 5 years.
- He informed the Board that a group was put together from different organizations to discuss ways to help solve the traffic issue. The group consist of the following; President of the Towers, President of the Town Neighborhood Association, President of the Rainey Neighborhood Association, President of the Rainey Neighborhood Business Coalition, President of the Shore, and President of the Milago.
- Abelson believes that the solution to the MACC's problem is not to close traffic flow down but to increase traffic flow. He's certain that by closing the alleyway it would decrease access for traffic flow. He noted that the vacation process will start when 70 Rainey is complete and expressed that he would like to work cooperatively with the Center when effective to Rainey Street.

#### **D. BRIEFING, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:**

Chair Maciel opened the floor for all those who signed up to speak under Citizens Communication.

- Gloria Mata Pennington, Citizen asked the Board to help protect the MACC and to stand with the community and say, "NO" to making any changes to the Master Plan.
- Juan Oyervides, Former ESB-MACC Advisory Board Member believed the best solution would be to make the alleyway a one way moving North. Oyervides does not believe that by keeping the alleyway as is that it will make any difference from what the traffic currently looks like but feels that it will wreck the Master Plan.
- Jonathan Gauthier, Citizen expressed that there is a public safety issue and from that stand point does not feel that by closing an existing opening is in alignment with what will be happening with the community in terms of the congestion. He gave an example of the bomb scare that had taken place a couple months back stating that if something were to happen and cops or the fire department were needed how could closing off access to the alleyway help that kind of situation.
- Jane Rivera, Chair of Parks Board urged the Board to take no vote or to stay with the current agreement.
- Paul Saldana, Former AISD Board Member shared that his main concern was to protect and maintain the integrity of the MACC. He stated that the MACC has partnered with the school district to make sure that children could learn and experience their cultural

heritage. He believed that the traffic issues are something that the City needs to fix but doesn't believe it should be imposed on the Center.

- Joseph Wheeler, Resident of Shore Condos thanked the MACC and the Board for inviting the residents of the condos to comment on the traffic issue. He expressed that he believed whatever was best for the MACC was best for the community and hoped that everyone could work together to have access to the pocket park and improve traffic flow for the neighborhood.
- Marc Stevens, Resident of Shore Condos stated that the MACC was a great resource not just for the Mexican American community but also for the community. He let the Board know that he was hoping to see and hear more details rather than a drawing of the plan.
- Gilbert Rivera, Raza Roundtable Member expressed that the MACC was a sacred place to the Hispanic community and that there was a lot of history that revolved around the Center. He believed that negotiation for the alley was necessary and vacation for the alleyway must move forward.
- Stacy Livesay, Shore Condos Owner expressed that she was not convinced that what is being presented will help stop the traffic long term but would like to compel some of the new developers to come and solve the traffic issues that are going to be caused by the increase in population from all the buildings that have been developed.
- Angela Valenzuela, Director of Academia Cuauhtli agreed that there is a lot of history and has been a painful struggle with gentrification but at this moment does not believe there is enough information to go ahead and make a decision. She thinks the best thing to do would be to develop a committee and come up with a process.

Council Member Tovo thanked the community for coming out and supporting the Center. She stated that she hopes that going forward there will be productive and civil dialogue. She let the community and staff know that they would be pulling in the Transportation Department to help resolve the issue, but it would also be the developer's responsibility to come up with a solution.

1. Chair Maciel did not believe that voting was necessary. She stated the process has been in place and needed to move forward for the alley vacation once the development was complete.

- She also let the community know that the MACC Board did have a Transportation Committee and that if anyone would like to attend, they were welcome. Jane Rivera asked when the next meeting would be held. Chair Maciel responded, letting her know a date had not yet been decided on but she would contact Mrs. Rivera once a date was determined.

#### **E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS:**

Future agenda items will be discussed during the October 3<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Goujon motioned to adjourn with a second by Banda. Motion passed. (9.0)

Member Cerda-Prazak was absent. Chair Maciel adjourned the meeting at 11:48am.