

OSCAR LEESER  
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ  
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL  
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1  
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2  
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3  
JOE MOLINAR, DISTRICT 4  
ISABEL SALCIDO, DISTRICT 5  
CLAUDIA L. RODRIGUEZ, DISTRICT 6  
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7  
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**July 5, 2022**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL AND VIRTUALLY**  
**9:05 A.M.**

.....  
The City Council of the City of El Paso met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:43 a.m. Mayor Oscar Leeser was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Cassandra Hernandez, Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Claudia Rodriguez, Henry Rivera, and Cissy Lizarraga. Peter Svarzbein and Alexandra Annello participated via video conference.

.....  
**AGENDA**  
.....

**1. Presentation and discussion by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Cross-Functional Team providing information on key activities, efforts, and processes.**

**1. Overview (Tommy Gonzalez)**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, began the presentation by highlighting the noticeable increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and related hospitalizations. He explained that the number of new cases were 10 times higher than those reported in May and associated hospitalizations were about 2.5 times higher. Mr. Gonzalez stated that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had raised the classification in El Paso to "high" with regard to the infection rate. The CDC is recommending that the community wear masks indoors, distance and stay up-to-date on vaccinations. Mr. Gonzalez provided the location of City clinics providing vaccinations and boosters free of charge without an appointment along with the website and phone number where additional information could be obtained.

**2. City Attorney Overview (Karla Nieman)**

**a) Greg Abbott, in his official capacity as Governor of Texas v. City of El Paso and Statewide Mask Mandate Litigation**

**b) Additional Updates**

Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney, stated that the City's mask mandate litigation was still pending in the Court of Appeals and said the Texas Supreme Court's Emergency Order was renewed until September 1, 2022 therefore, allowing the continuation of remote hearings in Municipal Courts and relaxing protocols for in person hearings. She ended her briefing by explaining that the Federal Worker Vaccine Mandate was still on hold.

**3. Team Lead Report:**  
**a) Health Focus (Hector Ocaranza, M.D.)**

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, reiterated that the number of COVID-19 cases were increasing and also mentioned that due to the associated hospitalizations, the local infection level was raised to “high”. He recommended that people considered high-risk for severe disease, refrain from large gatherings. Dr. Ocaranza advised the community to stay vigilant, sanitize, wear masks indoors, and keep up-to-date on vaccinations and boosters. He ended by saying that children 6 months to 5 years of age were now eligible to receive vaccinations against COVID-19 and demonstrated an example the new data dashboard soon to be unveiled.

**4. City Manager Wrap-up (Tommy Gonzalez)**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, closed the presentation by providing examples of safety protocols and said that although there was a high vaccination rate, the community was still at risk for contracting COVID-19.

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

- 
2. **Discussion and action to direct the City Manager and City Attorney create a nondiscrimination Policy and/or amend current City policies to address Housing Discrimination, Discrimination in Public Accommodations, Discrimination in Employment Generally, Discrimination in Employment by City Contractors, to prohibit discrimination based on:**

**Reproductive Health Actions Gender Identification  
Sexual Orientation  
Hair Style and/or Texture**

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Annelo, Molinar, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

The following members of City staff commented:

- Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager
- Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney

The following members of the public commented:

1. Andi Tiscareno
2. Lydazia Turner
3. Erika Latines
4. Lorena Soto
5. Natasha Acevedo
6. El Paso Young Democrats submitted a letter that was read into the record by the City Clerk.

Motion made by Representative Annelo, seconded by Representative Rivera, and carried to **DIRECT** the City Manager and City Attorney create a Nondiscrimination Policy and/or amend

current City policies to address Housing Discrimination, Discrimination in Public Accommodations, Discrimination in Employment Generally, Discrimination in Employment by City Contractors, to prohibit discrimination based on:

Reproductive Health Actions  
Gender Identification  
Sexual Orientation  
Hair Style and/or Texture

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, and Rivera

NAYS: Representatives Rodriguez and Lizarraga

---

**3. Discussion and action to direct the City Manager and City Attorney to create the appropriate Ordinance and/or City Policy which honors and protects the right of pregnant women/individuals, to include the following:**

- 1. Taxpayer dollars will not be used frivolously for programs or efforts to criminalize women/individuals who seek abortion.**
- 2. City funds will not be used to solicit, catalog, report, or investigate reports of abortion.**
- 3. Police should make investigating abortion their lowest priority.**

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

The following members of City staff commented:

- Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager
- Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney
- Police Chief Gregory Allen
- Assistant Police Chief Peter Pacillas

The following members of the public commented:

1. Juan Josue Martinez
2. Adriana Montoya
3. Elizabeth Murphy
4. Andi Tiscareno
5. Ivonne Diaz
6. Chris Yost (letter read into the record by Representative Rodriguez)
7. Alex Ramirez
8. Mark Cavaliere (submitted a petition including 520 names in opposition of the item)
9. Nicholla Arriola
10. Daniel Flores
11. Michael Seibel
12. Cristina Flores
13. Kayla Suarez
14. Raymundo Baca
15. Valerie Bowers

16. Kenneth Bell (letter read into the record by Representative Anello)
17. Carol Cassady
18. Caleb Harrelson
19. Bobby Leyva
20. Michael Gutierrez
21. Nydia Correa
22. Veronica Esparza
23. Rebekah Vasquez
24. Leighann Wilson
25. Fatima Flores
26. Susana Acosta
27. Joel Rocha
28. Michael Apodaca
29. Samuel Thomas
30. Valerie Vazquez
31. Raymond Surya
32. Fainot Pierre (letter read into the record by the City Clerk)
33. Judith Blake
34. Elliot Hass
35. Natasha Acevedo
36. Elizabeth Devos
37. Debbie Nathan
38. Erika Latines
39. Juliette Avalos
40. Carlos Montijo
41. Elizabeth Crawford
42. Cecilia Otero
43. Debbie Torres
44. Erica Hovland
45. Robert Vines
46. Angel Ulloa
47. Julie Mendoza
48. Lorena Soto
49. Judy Ackerman
50. Ruben Aguirre
51. Cecy Aguirre
52. Gwentyth Conrad
53. Blanca Savusa
54. El Paso Young Democrats (letter read in to the record by the City Clerk)
55. Ethan Voight
56. Sabrina Bustillos
57. Edward Garcia
58. Nichole Ochoa
59. Victoria Estrada-Martinez
60. Johnny Ruffer
61. Dora Oaxaca
62. Monica Barba
63. Marcia Kovar
64. Martha Duran
65. Janet Crowe

66. Joanne Bernal (letter read into the record by Representative Rivera)
67. Ana Fuentes
68. Maloy Callendine
69. Peggy Hinkle
70. Emma Acosta
71. Anne Oguh
72. Eden Klein
73. Dominique Huerta
74. Wally Cech
75. Catherine Buccuto

Motion made by Representative Annelo, seconded by Representative Rivera, and to **DIRECT** the City Manager and City Attorney to create the appropriate Ordinance and/or City Policy which honors and protects the right of pregnant women/individuals, to include the following:

1. Taxpayer dollars will not be used frivolously for programs or efforts to criminalize women/individuals who seek abortion.
2. City funds will not be used to solicit, catalog, report, or investigate reports of abortion.
3. Police should make investigating abortion their lowest priority.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, and Rivera

NAYS: Representatives Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez and Lizarraga

**Mayor Leeser broke the tie by voting "NAY". THE MOTION FAILED.**

.....  
The meeting was **RECESSED** at **2:29 P.M.** and **RECONVENED** at **3:08 P.M.**  
.....

**4. Discussion and action on the proposed programs and projects for inclusion as part of the Community Progress Bond.**

The following members of City staff presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office) and/or responded to questions from Members of the City Council:

- Mr. Alex Hoffman, Assistant Director of Planning, Capital Improvement Department
- Mr. Sam Rodriguez, Chief Operations Officer
- Mr. Ben Fyffe, Managing Director of Cultural Affairs and Recreation
- Mr. Antonio Bustillos, Transportation Manager, Streets and Maintenance
- Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager
- Mr. Juan Gonzalez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

The following members of the public commented:

1. Lisa Turner
2. Jaime Fischer
3. Ben Avalos
4. Therese Avalos

**1<sup>ST</sup> MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Lizarraga, and carried to **TABLE** the item until July 6, 2022.

AYES: Representatives Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: Representatives Annelo and Rodriguez

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Svarzbein

**2<sup>ND</sup> MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Hernandez, and carried to **APPROVE** the following two propositions for the Community Progress Bond:

1. Streets and Infrastructure and Climate Action and Urban Energy Plan and Implementation
2. Parks and Open Space projects that include all abilities playgrounds, shade structures, and NIP

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: Representatives Annelo and Rodriguez

**3<sup>RD</sup> MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Molinar, seconded by Representative Hernandez, to **INCLUDE** Stahala Drive from Diana to Hondo Pass in the list of top 50 Resurfacing and Reconstruction and Residential Resurfacing, Connectivity, Intersection Safety and Traffic Signs.

AYES: Representatives Molinar, Rodriguez, and Rivera

NAYS: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Salcido and Lizarraga

**THE MOTION FAILED**

**4<sup>TH</sup> AND FINAL MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Rodriguez, seconded by Representative Rivera, and unanimously carried to **DIRECT** staff to return with information for a 2024 Quality of Life Bond Package every six months.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

- 
5. **Discussion and action to review and amend the employment agreement for the City Attorney and City Manager in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan Goal of setting the standard for sound governance and fiscal management.**

**1<sup>ST</sup> MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Rivera, and **unanimously** carried that the City Council **RETIRE** into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 3:12 p.m. pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 (CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY) and 551.074 (PERSONNEL MATTERS) to discuss the item.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera,  
and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

**2<sup>ND</sup> MOTION**

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Lizarraga, and  
unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the Executive Session at 5:53 p.m. and **RECONVENE** the  
meeting of the City Council.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera,  
and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

**3<sup>RD</sup> AND FINAL MOTION**

Motion made by Alternate Mayor Pro Tempore Lizarraga, seconded by Representative  
Hernandez, and unanimously carried to **POSTPONE** the item for **TWO WEEKS UNTIL THE  
JULY 18<sup>TH</sup> WORK SESSION.**

AYES: Representatives Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera,  
and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Svarzbein

.....  
The meeting was **RECESSED** on July 5, 2022 at **5:56 P.M.** and **RECONVENED** on July 6, 2022 at  
**10:37 A.M.**

.....  
**ADJOURN**

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Svarzbein and  
unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the meeting on July 6, 2022 at 12:49 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera,  
and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

.....  
APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura D. Prine, City Clerk