

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

TIME CERTAIN
ITEM NO. 6
3:00PM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Dennis J. Campa, Director, Department of Community Initiatives

THROUGH: Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

COPIES: Frances A. Gonzalez, Assistant to the City Manager; Henry Ross III, Assistant Director, DCI; Laura Cisneros, Social Services Manager, Elderly and Disabled, DCI

SUBJECT: Joint City/County Commission on Elderly Affairs – Survey Results – Council presentation

DATE: June 5, 2003

In June 2002, City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court created the Joint City/County Commission on Elderly Affairs to serve in an advisory capacity relating to issues impacting the senior population. The Commission is comprised of 17 members, one appointed by the Mayor and each City Council member and one appointed by the County Judge and each County Commissioner. The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), Executive Director, serves as an ex-Officio member of the Commission. The Commission is charged with advising the City Council and County Commissioners Court on issues relevant to area seniors, advocating for seniors and their needs, and serving as a clearinghouse for information on elderly issues and services.

Upon establishment of the Commission, members set out to determine the most prominent issues of concern to seniors within the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. Through a series of seven community wide information gathering sessions that began in January 2003 and ended in March 2003, the Commission was able to obtain information and public feedback. The information gathering session were publicized in the Express News and on local television stations. A survey instrument was created by a subcommittee of the Commission and was distributed at all of the information gathering sessions.

Now that these concerns have been identified and analyzed, the Commission is seeking to make appropriate public policy recommendations to City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court. Recommendations of the Commission include:

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS:

- The Commission urges extending City/County negotiated prescription drug benefits to all Medicare-eligible seniors in Bexar County. Increasing the pool of potential beneficiaries could dramatically decrease the cost of prescription drug benefits to City and County employees. Medicare-eligible seniors would be required to pay vendors for their prescription drugs.

NUTRITION:

- The Commission urges increased budgetary prioritization and funding to expand congregate and home delivered meals for seniors throughout Bexar County.
- The Commission urges additional funding from community partners in the private sector through grants or sponsorship.
- The Commission encourages increased program income through fund-raising and other activities.
- The Commission urges continued and expanded partnerships with the San Antonio Food Bank.
- The Commission urges the establishment of additional senior congregate meal sites within the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, such as faith-based organizations.
- The Commission urges exploring senior nutritional partnerships with local school districts.

MEDICARE/MEDICAID:

- The Commission encourages senior-specific programming components be incorporated in local programs, such as healthcare, fitness and wellness.
- The Commission urges increased awareness efforts to educate seniors of available benefits, such as Medicare waivers.
- The Commission urges increased funding for Medicare waivers

TRANSPORTATION:

- The Commission urges the City and County more aggressively advocate within the VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for increased senior access to transportation services.
- The Commission urges the local medical community to re-invest in elderly transportation for essential medical appointments.
- The Commission urges the appointment of a mobility manager to assist in the coordination of transportation for the elderly within the City of San Antonio and Bexar County.
- The Commission encourages increased dissemination of community transportation resource information for area seniors.

SENIOR ONE-STOP ACCESS:

- The Commission urges the City and County to consider the feasibility of establishing Senior One Stop Access Centers in each of Bexar County's four quadrants.
- The Commission urges increased collaboration between the City, County, United Way and Bexar Area Agency on Aging to ensure the development of a streamlined, information access system for seniors.

HOUSING:

- The Commission encourages the City and County to work more collaboratively with the Texas Department of Human Services, Long Term Care Regulatory, to provide adequate oversight of licensed and certified assisted living facilities and to identify unlicensed facilities, which may pose a risk to the elderly.
- The Commission urges increased awareness of grants, maintenance programs and assisted living programs for seniors.
- The Commission urges increased affordable housing for area seniors.
- The Commission urges increased funding for independent living services.
- The Commission urges the City and County to ensure that all new and pre-existing senior housing units have central heating and air conditioning systems.

CRIME & SAFETY:

- The Commission urges increased penalties for crimes against the elderly.
- The Commission urges the City and County to collaborate with cell phone companies to provide emergency cell phone access for seniors.
- The Commission urges the placement of adequate signage adjacent to senior communities to slow vehicular traffic in pedestrian crossing areas.
- The Commission encourages local law enforcement agencies to identify and report incidents of crimes perpetrated against the elderly in order to assist in prevention efforts.
- The Commission urges increased funding and resources for programming, which provides vital information to seniors on how to protect themselves and their property.

TAX RELIEF:

- The Commission urges the Bexar County Commissioners Court to approve a tax exemption for seniors comparable to that provided by the City of San Antonio.


- The Commission urges an increase in the promotion and publicizing of tax relief options available to area seniors, such as working off school taxes.
- The Commission urges the City and County to exempt citizens, aged 65 and over, from special taxing zones, such as the Downtown Improvement Zone.

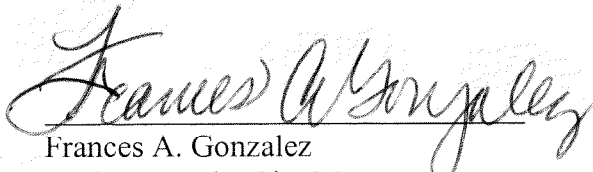
LEGAL ASSISTANCE:

- The Commission urges the City and County to collaborate more effectively with the Bexar Area Agency on Aging to improve access to legal assistance services in the area.
- The Commission urges an increase in the promotion and marketing of "pro bono" and other available low-cost legal assistance services.

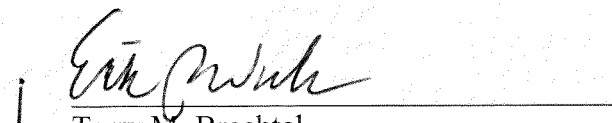
A formal report has been completed and attached for your review. The report is a compilation of the Commission's efforts and establishes the Commission's vision for future public policy consideration by City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court relating to the elderly, aged 60 and older.

The purpose of this presentation is to brief City Council on the results of this city wide survey conducted by the Joint City/County Commission on Elderly Affairs, as requested by Mayor Edward D. Garza, through a six signature memorandum dated May 22, 2003 (attached).


Dennis J. Campa, Director
Department of Community Initiatives


Frances A. Gonzalez
Assistant to the City Manager

Approved:


Terry M. Brechtel
City Manager

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Interdepartmental Memorandum

RECEIVED
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
CITY CLERK

03 MAY 23 AM 10:57

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: Mayor Edward D. Garza

COPIES TO: City Manager; City Attorney; Management Team Members; Assistants to Mayor and Council

SUBJECT: Joint City/ County Commission on Elderly Affairs

DATE: May 22, 2003

Please join me in directing staff to prepare a briefing regarding the Joint City/County Commission on Elderly Affairs on the June 12, 2003 Council agenda. This Commission has actively sought feedback from seniors and information from others in the community relating to issues of importance to seniors. I ask that you join me in requesting that staff provide a briefing on these issues.



EDWARD D. GARZA
Mayor



Bobby Pérez
Council Member, District 1

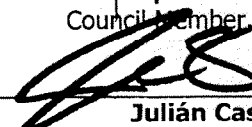

John Sanders
Council Member, District 2


Antoniette "Toni" Moorhouse
Council Member, District 3

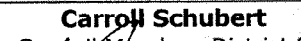

Enrique "Mike" Martin
Council Member, District. 4


Nora X. Herrera
Council Member, District 5


Enrique M. Barrera
Council Member, District 6


Julián Castro
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