

THE STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF CAMERON §

BE IT REMEMBERED on the 9th day of **SEPTEMBER, 1997**, there was conducted a **SPECIAL Public Meeting of the Honorable Commissioners' Court of Cameron County, Texas, at the Courthouse thereof, in the City of Brownsville, Texas, for the purpose of transacting any and all business that may lawfully be brought before the same.**

THE COURT MET AT:

PRESENT:

GILBERTO HINOJOSA
COUNTY JUDGE

PEDRO "PETE" BENAVIDES
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 1

CARLOS H. CASCOS, C.P.A.
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 2

JAMES R. MATZ
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 3

HECTOR PEÑA
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 4

Hilda V. Treviño **Deputy**
COUNTY CLERK

ABSENT:



The meeting was called to order by Judge Gilberto Hinojosa.

The Court considered the following matters as posted and filed for Record in the Office of the County Clerk on September 5, 1997, at 3:33 P.M.:

(1) **PUBLIC HEARING AND PRESENTATION ON THE BOCA CHICA BEACH PARK AND WILDLIFE REFUGE BY CAMERON COUNTY, UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

At this time, Judge Hinojosa expressed his gratitude to the participants and residents for their attendance at the Public Hearing and stated that the Project had evolved due to the illegal activities at the Boca Chica Beach Park. He stated that the United States Fish and Wildlife and the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife had proposed a County Park and a Wildlife Refuge in the area, noting that the area would remain in its natural state and added that the Park would be self- supporting with a proposed access fee.

Mr. Kenneth Conway, Parks System Director, explained that the United States Fish and Wildlife and the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife would own and control approximately ninety percent (90%) of the land and added that the two (2) agencies assured that the land would be maintained for public recreation.

Mr. Larry Ditto, United States Fish and Wildlife, stated that the land acquisition process was pending for the Wildlife Refuge and stated that the intent of the Wildlife Refuge System would be to protect the dunes, vegetation and wildlife in the area.

Ms. Kathryn Nichols, Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife, stated that currently the Texas Departments of Parks and Wildlife had undergone financial and policy changes which limited the creation of Parks and State Parks, but noted that the Agency focused the financial efforts on capital improvements and maintenance of the existing sites.

Judge Hinojosa stated that the United States Border Patrol had expressed concern regarding the alien smuggling and drug trafficking and added that a check point had been implemented on Highway 4, on a temporary basis until the patrolling issue was resolved.

At this time, Lieutenant Katelyn Porter, United States Coast Guard, stated that the United States Coast Guard patrolled the Boca Chica Beach for twelve (12) hours a day for the alien smuggling and drug trafficking and noted that the patrolling was a temporary measure which assisted the local law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Jackie Kieger, United States Coast Guard, highlighted the responsibilities carried out at the Boca Chica Park area and added that a large number of undocumented immigrant extradition were performed.

Mr. Eduardo Campirano, Parks Board Chairperson, reiterated that there would be no restrictions of recreational activities, inability to access the beach or significant construction on the beach, but added that trash receptacles, signage and portable bathrooms would be implemented at the beach area. He stated that the construction would take place at the entrance of the Park on Highway 4 and added that the Visitor's Center would provide

educational programs and would serve as a storage area to retain the maintenance equipment to be utilized for the Park.

Mr. Capirano stated that the natural setting of the Park would remain and noted that the fees would assure the recreational activities and would assist in enhancing the Park.

Judge Hinojosa stated that the Proposal included the creation of a Children's Beach a mile in length and that there would be denial of access onto the beach for vehicles for one (1) mile South of Highway 4. He stated that the existing road South of Highway 4, behind the dune line, would be extended to a mile and added that a parking area would be provided behind the dunes with wooden ramps over the dunes for access to the beach. Judge Hinojosa stated that there would be eight (8) portable bathrooms with showers located throughout the beach area in addition to the permanent bathrooms constructed at the Visitor's Center and added that an access fee would be implemented, similar to the existing fees at the County Parks', noting that the monthly and yearly access fees would be honored at all the County Parks.

At this time, the following individuals expressed their opinions regarding the Boca Chica Beach Park and Wildlife Refuge by Cameron County, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:

Mr. Darrel Renfrow, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Joseph Link, Rancho Viejo, Texas,

Mr. Mike Enlow, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Adolf Betancourt, Brownsville, Texas,

Constable Conrado Cantu, Precinct No. 2,

Mr. Francisco Sinfuentes, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Franklin Graham, Jr., Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Zenon Perales, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Tom Dunham, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Ralph Muñoz, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Robert Cole, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Jack Larue, Brownsville, Texas,

Mr. Roy Gonzales, Brownsville, Texas, and

Mr. Clark Owen, Brownsville, Texas.

Commissioner Cascos stated that additional information was needed, in order to make a decision regarding the Project and expressed his opposition until a break even analysis was provided regarding the access fee, the costs for operating the Project and alternate funding in case the projected revenues were not generated.

Commissioner Benavides expressed his opinion in support of the Project and stated that alternate funding should be addressed and examined, in order to have minimal costs to the residents.

Commissioner Peña stated that the public's comment was very important regarding the decisions made by the Court and added that his support would be based on the residents opinions.

Commissioner Matz expressed his gratitude for the public's attendance and input regarding the Boca Chica Beach Project.

Hearing and sensing no further comment, the Public Hearing was closed.



APPROVED this **30th** day of **September, 1997**.

GILBERTO HINOJOSA
COUNTY JUDGE

ATTEST:

JOE G. RIVERA,
COUNTY CLERK AND EX-OFFICIO CLERK
OF THE COMMISSIONERS' COURT OF
CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS