



MINUTES OF THE SAN BENITO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

On January 22nd, 2026 the San Benito EDC Board convened for a meeting at the San Benito EDC Building, 701 N. Bowie Street, San. Benito, Texas

Board Meeting Presided by Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes, EDC President

Board Members Present

Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes, Board President
Mr. Daniel Cortez, Vice President
Mr. Tom Goodman, Secretary/ Treasurer
Mrs. Deborah A. Morales, Board Member
Mayor Ricardo Guerra, Board Member
Mr. Hector Gomez, Board Member
Mr. Pedro A. Galvan, Board Member

Board Member Absent

None.

EDC Staff Present

Mr. Fred Sandoval, Executive Director
Mr. Mario Palomo, Assistant Executive Director

Others Present

Mr. Michael Pruneda, EDC Attorney
Mr. Roy Garcia, Carpe Nox Industries LLC
Mariana Smith
Velma De Los Santos
Mary Valdez
Gilbert Galvan
Luis Gonzales

1. Determination of a quorum

[Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes](#) made welcoming remarks and determined there was a quorum.

2. Call to Order

[Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes](#) called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

3. Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Flag Pledge; Invocation

[Mr. Mario Palomo](#) lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Flag Pledge. [Mr. Tom Goodman](#) led the invocation.

4. Public Comments

No public comments

5. Executive Director's Report

Status report presented by EDC Executive Director Fred Sandoval on the following projects.

- Hog Waddle press conference scheduled for 10:00 a.m. tomorrow at the EDC building and invited board members to attend. Media representatives, including K-TEX Radio Station.
- Mr. Sandoval reported he received a training proposal from TEEEX (Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service) for a program titled Economic Development for Local Leaders. The training would require Board approval through an interlocal agreement and is expected to take place in San Benito within the next 30–45 days. The training may include EDC Board members, City elected officials, Chamber of Commerce representatives, department heads, and other key staff. Following the training, TEEEX may assist with developing an Economic Development Strategic Plan, which could also help inform the City's Comprehensive Plan. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** Thank you for providing alternative educational tools. What is the cost with this, I know TEEEX does free training too. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** Not in this case, but with the amount of people participating, the program becomes cost effective. I am asking for board approval. **Mrs Anna Garza Llanes:** This should be on the agenda, we will get that some other time.

Consent Agenda: The following are considered to be routine and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the board of directors requests it, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered independently.

6. Consideration and possible Action on request by the Texas Veterans Land Board to use the SBEDC office to conduct a Veterans Resource Fair in march.

Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes: The Board considered a request from the Texas Veterans Land Board to host a Veterans Resource Fair at the San Benito EDC office on March 26 or March 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., providing veterans and their families with information on available programs, services, and benefits.

Mr. Tom Goodman made a motion to approve the request. **Mr. Daniel Cortez** seconded the motion. All in favor: 7 All against: 0 The motion carried unanimously (7-0)

Individual Items for Consideration:

Mr. Daniel Cortez: I would like to move items 7,10,11,14,15,17, & 19 to executive session for further discussion. Remove 19 from discussing in executive session. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** Requested to deviate from the agenda and jump to Item 13. City Cultural Arts Director Aleida Garcia and a property owner, Ms. Mariana Smith would like to present a report. They have a prior commitment and would like to make this presentation at this time. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Okay, on to item 13.

7. Consideration and possible action on negotiation of attorney's fees (Galvan & Morales)

Mr. Tom Goodman: Motions to direct the Executive Director to come back with options for renegotiating a contract. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** Seconded. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** All in favor: 7 All opposed: 0 Motion passes unanimously (7-0)

8. Consideration and possible action on an assistance program for start-up and existing businesses within city limits (Galvan & Morales)

Mrs. Deborah Morales: discussed the need for an assistance program to support new and existing businesses in San Benito, particularly during their first year of operation. She emphasized that many small business owners invest significant personal resources to open their businesses and may benefit from additional support to help them succeed. Board members discussed the possibility of creating a program that could provide financial assistance as well as educational resources such as business planning, accounting, and operational training. Staff noted that previous programs had been implemented but required

extensive documentation, and alternatives could be developed that better support entrepreneurs while maintaining accountability.

Mr. Pedro Galvan: made a motion directing staff to bring back a proposed grant or assistance program for start-up businesses within the City of San Benito for consideration at the next meeting. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** Seconded **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** All in favor: 7 All against: 0 Motion passes unanimously (7-0)

9. Consideration and possible action on a budget amendment to re-allocate funds from the San Benito Fairgrounds to the revitalization of San Benito (Galvan & Morales)

No Action

10. Consideration and possible action on Director's Evaluation Form (Galvan & Morales)

Mr. Pedro Galvan: motions to schedule workshop. **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** Table that after TEEKs workshop? **Mr. Ricardo Guerra:** seconded Mr. Cortez motion, after TEEKs workshop. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** we have a motion to reevaluate the goals after the workshop, is that correct? **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** no, there is a motion that commissioner Galvan just said. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** I made a motion to schedule a workshop with the EDC Board. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** Seconds **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** I was trying to clarify your motion because were supposed to have a workshop, training by TEEKS, and after that training, we will be able to better establish our guidelines for him (Exe. Dir.). **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** I was not aware that TEEKS was coming in. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** I can set it up, its up to board members to attend. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** This I recind my motion and I will wait until workshop. **Mr. Michael Pruneda:** He (Galvan) is recinding his motion. **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** Motions - After we have our TEEKS training for EDC, we will establish guidelines to use for evaluation of the Director: **Mayor Rick Guerra:** Seconded **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** all in favor: 7 all opposed: 0 motion passes unanimously

11. Consideration and possible action on a budget amendment for legal fees (Galvan & Morales)

No Action

12. Consideration and possible action on an additional monthly meeting (Executive Director)

Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes: I realize that lately these meetings have lasted several hours. I want ask if board members would like to hold 2 meetings a month. The regular scheduled meeting would be for normal business and the second meeting would be to discuss special projects. Board members discussed the idea and agreed that an additional meeting could be beneficial, when necessary.

Mrs. Ana Garza Llanes: Motioned to approve holding an additional monthly meeting on an as-needed basis. **Mrs. Deborah Morales :** Seconded. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** All in favor: 7 All against: 0. Motion passes unaminously (7-0)

13. Consideration and possible action on downtown cultural gateway project (Executive Director)

Presentation:

Mrs. Aleida Garcia: Cultural Arts Director: I'm here to present the Downtown Cultural Gateway Project to the Board. The proposed project is located at 298 South Sam Houston Boulevard and would serve as a key anchor point for the development of a future cultural arts district in downtown San Benito. The project would contribute to establishing a designated cultural district, which could allow the City to pursue additional grant opportunities and support cultural tourism. I want to introduced Mariana Smith, one of the owners of the building. **Ms. Mariana Smith:** explained that the property, purchased in 2023, is a historic structure formerly known as the Ford Building and consists of approximately 15,000 square feet. The vision for the project is to restore the building while preserving its historical character and transform it into a multi-use cultural hub. Proposed uses include exhibition space, artist studios, an artist-in-residence program, live music and performance space, and community educational programming. The concept also includes the possibility of a café or similar business to help activate the space and attract visitors. The project is inspired in part by San Benito EDC Board of Directors Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes | January 22, 2026

similar creative spaces connected to her father, artist Ray Smith, who maintains a large studio in Brooklyn, New York that hosts exhibitions and events. The San Benito location would aim to bring artists from across the region and internationally while supporting local artists and institutions.

Mrs. Aleida Garcia: stated that the total project cost is estimated between \$500,000 and \$700,000 for remodeling and build-out of the first floor. The request presented to the EDC would help support the initial activation of the building, including structural improvements and restoration of key features. **Ms. Mariana Smith:** answered questions regarding sustainability of the project, ongoing operational costs, potential revenue sources, and surrounding considerations such as parking and proximity to nearby businesses. The project would rely on a combination of art sales, events, partnerships, and potential business activity within the space, with long-term plans to establish a foundation to support operations.

Following discussion, the Board indicated that additional information and discussion would be beneficial before taking action. It was suggested that the matter be discussed further in executive session. The item was moved to executive session for further discussion, with the understanding that no formal action would likely be taken during this meeting.

No Action

14. Consideration and possible action on purchase and wrap of bus for events and downtown tourism (Executive Director)

Mr. Tom Goodman: motioned to approve up to \$14,000.00's . **Mr. Hector Gomez:** Seconded. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** All in favor: 6 (Morales, Galvan, Guerra, Gomez, Llanes, Goodman) All opposed: 1 (Cortez) Motion passes (7-1)

15. Consideration and possible action on on a workforce readiness program for city staff and eligible single-family residents (Executive Director)

No Action

16. Consideration and possible action on Robertson Street renovation project (Executive Director)

Mr. Fred Sandoval: We have to invest in downtown, we have budgeted for this project. We can take advantage of grants and public-private opportunities. This ties into that cultural gateway project. I would like to know what is the board's priority for downtown.. **Mr. Sandoval,** who is going to be assigned this event, is it the city or the EDC? The city is in charge of the vendors until we can decide who is going to take it over. How its going to function and who is going to run it. We are going to take it over, It could be the City or the EDC, or both. **Mrs. Ana Garza Llanes:** this is what I read on the paper. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** In order to support Market Days, Robertson Street has to be renovated, sidewalks, lighting, etc. Engineering studies on sidewalks, concrete stamping that's not real expensive. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** I like to announce that I have a conflict of interest with this item. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** Mr. Cortez does too, they own a business. **Mr. Michael Pruneda:** there is no conflict with any board member because this project is a benefit to the entire community. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** I want to know what is the boards interest, we would like to use this as a pilot, or you can pick somewhere else. I just need some consensus from this board. **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** will this expand to the Conjunto Museum. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** that's the most logical way to do it, not sure if we have the funds. Aestetically we can do lighting, seeding, we have a property where we can start. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** That's where we need to start. We need to meet with building owners and inform them that they need to bring their building up to building codes or we use city ordinances to force the owners to upkeep their buildings, if they don't, we need to use our ordinances that will remove ownership. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** I am ready to do what this board wants. I just want to ask if all the board is politically prepared to handle the issues that will arise from such recommended actions. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** Things that I have seen in cultural areas are for example cement trash can with a mosaic and/or art piece. At the San Antonio Airport, one was a menudo can, another was a corn can. It just brought brought back the Mexican vibe. Are our street curbs handicap accessible, I do not think they are, do we want nice bench or trees. Do you want brick pavers or cement. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** What good does it do to have a nice home and yard if my neighbor does not. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** I just want to understand what your questions was. The question is we have all of downtown we could be looking at and doing things with, do we just want to retain and make our focus at this point Robertson street and the funds we have allocated for downtown focused on that street? **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** Yes Sir. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** So all of the other stuff that we have discussed is moot at this point, until we decide whether that's going to be our focus at this point. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** Different commissions have tackled

downtown, we have a Downtown Revitalization Plan, the director was moved from that position to be public works director. We do not have a downtown coordinator, you need a specific downtown manager, main street manager. We have talked to Mr. Palomo and Fred when we went to conference TML about having a designated First Street Manager and develops to a Main Street Manager. There is a path you have to follow, it's a two year path, but it get us that designation. The THC Main Street program will assist with the process. The main street program will show you what other towns have done. Parking is not an issue you go to Federicksburg everone is walking for miles, there is no parking there.. You start small, so if you go all downtown, you saw one building go up to one million dollars, one point two, theres 50 buildings down there. Robertson Street is still a historical area, they have already started something there and the city has a building there. I would like to take to downtown, but you have an issue with parking. Are you going to angle it? Are you going to put meters? But then you have Tx DOT involvement and its another whole red tape. Where we can just start and start our program see if it works if it does not move on. Why Robertson Street, it connects to the Conjunto folks (Museum).

Mr. Tom Goodman: make a motion to focus our efforts on downtown revitalization on Robertson Street this year. **Mrs. Deberah Morales:** Seconded. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** whats going to be the start and end point? **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** Robertson from Sam Houston Boulevard west to the Conjunto Museum-Resaca. A discussion by board members ensued **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Mr. Sandoval, your going to bring us a plan. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** We will get it for you. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Motioned by Mr. Goodman, seconded by Mrs. Morales. All in favor: 7 Anybody opposed: 0 Motion passes unanimously (7-0).

17. Consideration and possible action on San Benito fairgrounds event schedule and budget (Executive Director)

No Action

18. Consideration and possible action on Hog Waddle event participation with City of San Benito (Executive Director)

Mr. Fred Sandoval: There was questions about the Hog Waddle event and the fact that we were participating with the city on that, this is our first musical event of the year... **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Isn't the Hog Waddle event a city event? **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** Yes but the EDC has always sponsored. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** Who is responsible for the event? **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** the city. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** So that's going to be our parks that's in charge of it? **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** Ahhhh, yeah but its both, Roy and parks. Were going to have a big musical event, that;s Roy. He has been handling our big events in conjunction with Parks. It's a city event, so its not a concert, so we have to worry about parking, traffic contral, use our PD for security, were going to use public works. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** Who is the coordinator for the event? **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** On our end it would be the city and we would be a sponsor. Were not carrying the whole event. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** Were going to split the expenses with the city. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** I want to move forward like everyone else, I want to see action because that's who I am. I want to see a plan, and we also have to consider that we have not seen our financials. Because if we need to pivot, were not pivoting on what we need to do, and that's has to happen. We have to see where we are at "financially". We do not know what we have here, we might have to table this. You give us the amount. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** I understand about the financials, quarter 4 has not been closed. I have not received them. finance is working on closing quarter 4, end of year, and getting ready for the audit. I just want to remind you that this was a budgeted item. Were not going to pay it all ourselves. This is the first event were having and were splitting it with the city, half and half. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** Its common to close two to three months after. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Where are we at budget wise. Do we have the money to do it? Where are we focused on what we need to do? **Mr. Tom Goodman:** What is budgeted right now for Hog Waddle? **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** We are using money from City events and from Fairgrounds. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** I just do not want to go past a certain amount. **Mrs. Deborah Morales:** We need to pinpoint one person who is in charge of it. **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** I like to answer that, but it's a personel issue. I you want we can discuss it in executive session. I would like to move this to executive session if you all would like to here the plan. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Were moving item number 18 into executive session. Were going into executive session, the time is 6:46.

Mr. Tom Goodman: motion to approve \$125,000.00 donation. **Mr. Pedro Galvan:** seconded. **Mrs. Ann Garza Llanes:** All in favor: 7 All opposed: 0 motion passes unanimously (7-0)

19. Consideration and possible action on San Bentio Chamber of Commerce annual Sponsorship (Executive Director):

Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes: Asked if anyone from the Chamber was going to speak on behalf of the Chamber? **Mr. Fred Sandoval:** stated that **Ms. Velma de los Santos**, Chamber Board President would speak on behalf of the Chamber: **Ms. Velma de los Santos:** Thank you for putting us on the agenda. Our vice-chair Mr. Luis Gonzales and board secretary Mr. Gilbert Galvan are in attendance. We met with City Manager Sandoval and Assistant City Manager Diana Garza and discussed ideas on what we needed to do to put a process in place that will allow Chamber to get things done in a timely manner and not be rushed and do things at the 11th hour. We want to inform you that we will hold three events: The Family Walk event will replace the bike tour. The bike tour logistics and safety concerns are the reason we are replacing this event with a more family friendly event that allows the children to participate. We will continue to hold the Taste of San Benito and the Casino Night. **Mr. Sandoval** asked that we bring a plan that contained the monetary needs and wants for the fiscal year. **Mr. Sandoval** stated this would eliminate the chamber from coming in during the year to ask for funding for events. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** suggested to table item for another time due to this being a presentation. A discussion among board members ensued on how to proceed with funding and housing the organization. Currently, we are spending \$1200.00 a month on housing the chamber. We are collaborating with the City and EDC to provide soft skill training. We will providing lunch and learn events. We also want to celebrate previous board members and the EDC. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** asked if the overhead cost had been discussed with the board. **Ms. Velma de los Santos:** not with the whole board, it was discussed with the previous president. The chambers wants to collaborate with the other organizations and support them, Boys & Girls Club, etc. We are open to any EDC recommendations. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** Its not only what we can offer but what you need to succeed. I would like know get an update after you meet with your board. After you meet, present that information in a formal format. **Ms. Velma de los Santos:** We did have a workshop to discuss a plan of action that might be helpful to the chamber. **Mr. Tom Goodman:** motion perhaps staff work with chamber of commerce to bring a presentation and dollar requirement. **Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes:** Mr. Goodman, do we have a second. **Mr. Daniel Cortez:** Seconds All in favor: 7 All against: 0 Motion passes unanously (7-0)

Closed Session: In Accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the Board of Directors hereby gives notice that it may meet in a closed, non-public session to discuss matters in accordance with the following:

Pursuant to §§551.071 and 551.129, the Board of Directors may convene in a closed, non-public meeting with its attorney and discuss any matters related to legal advice on pending or contemplated litigation, settlement offer, and/or on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with this chapter:

- a. Consult with attorney on:
 - (i) Professional Services Agreement with Carpe Nox Industries LLC (Llanes);

Pursuant to §§551.072, the Board of Directors may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matter related to real property and deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property as such would be detrimental to negotiations between the Board of Directors and a third party in an open meeting;

Pursuant to §§551.074, the Board of Directors may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matter related to appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties and discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee and to hear any complaints or charges against an officer or employee:

- (b). Consult with attorney and staff on:
 - (i) SBEDC job openings

Pursuant to §§551.087(1-2), the Board of Directors may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matters regarding economic development issues;

Entered Closed Session: 6:46 pm
Returned from Closed Session: 9:31 pm

Reconvene:

[Mrs. Anna Garza Llanes](#): Were going back to individual Item 7.

20. Consideration and possible action on professional Services Agreement with Carpe Nox IndustriesLLC

[Mr. Daniel Cortez](#): Motion to accept or to approve the contract for the year with quarterly reviews by the board. [Mrs. Deborah Morales](#): Seconded [Mrs. Ann Garza Llanes](#): All in favor : 7 All opposed: 0 motion passes unanimously (7-0)

21. Discussion on the status of job openings:

No Action

22. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Approved this 26th day of March 2026.

Anna Garza Llanes, President	Tom Goodman, Secretary/Treasurer