

Closed Caption Log, Council Meeting, 06/28/11

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Would everyone please take their seats. Find a seat and then I would ask that you all stand and the procession will start.

March. [Drums] [bag pipes playing] ♪♪♪

Mayor Leffingwell: [Indiscernible] good evening, I'm austin mayor lee leffingwell, please remain standing and join me in the pledge of allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the united states of america, to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under god, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. I would like to introduce tye austin to sing our national anthem. Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light what so proudly we hailed, at the twilight's last gleaming? ♪♪♪ whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight o'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming and the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air gave proof through the night, that our flag was still there. ♪♪♪ o, say does that star-spangled banner yet .. O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. [Applause] ♪♪♪

please remain standing as the reverend paul escamilla of saint john's united methodist church delivers the invocation.

Please join me in prayer. [No microphone] which we who have gathered here feel to keenly a accepts of history and of hope. Lend an awareness of all that has been, all that yet may be. It is at such moments that we become aware much more of the weight that rests upon the shoulders of those who assume the mantle of civic leadershipship. The weight of expectation from the community that has entrusted them to lead, the weight of understanding, daunting, and complex nature of their tasks. The inevitable tension between one worthy cause and another, between wants and necessities, between the popular and the prudent, between immediate needs and the long-term good. May these who will stand before us tonight to accept the tremendous responsibility of their election to this work, as well as the colleagues who surround them, feel that weight so profoundly that as they pledge themselves to this high office, they may be utterly persuaded that they cannot possibly shoulder it alone. And then let them be so hardened and fortified by the many who stand with them, walk with them, labor with them, that they will rise to serve their city with honor, integrity and self sacrifice, even greater than they possess. Renewed daily in their vision of greater good. And their devotion to its fulfillment. May these who in their crowded hour know such weight of responsibility and be hold them, feel another weight as well, the weight of promise and possibility. Partnership and opportunity. Of joy and deep reward. In having served their community generously and well. We recall the words of jesus, he said that of those to whom much has been given, much is required. We trust it to be equally true, that to those of whom much has been required, much is given. May it be so. For we ask these things in your holy name, amen.

Mayor Leffingwell: Amen. Thank you, reverend. Please be seated. Before we begin, I would like to announce that city manager marc ott who would normally be seated is across the street dealing with the crisis of the falling glass that we've heard about the last few weeks. Again, it's ongoing. It's my privilege to introduce the honorable john dietz, the 250th judicial district civil court who will administer the oath of

office. Councilmembers elect and judge dietz, please take your place at the front of the dais.

Good evening, it is an honor to be a part of this ceremony and it is a celebration as these three councilmembers, two of whom have been laboring and one is a brand new ingenue as they begin their career, but they have a privilege and i know they are joyful in their privilege to serve the greatest city in texas and probably the united states. And a city is nothing without its citizens. And so I charge these three to remember that each day of their service, they are to recall and keep in mind the 800,000 plus citizens of the city of austin, each of whom has the confidence and belief that they can do your job better than you can. [Laughter] so if I may, if I could get y'all to raise your right hands for me, please. And then say, I and then repeat your name. Do solemnly swear.

Do solemnly swear.

That I will faithfully execute the duties.

That I will faithfully execute the duties.

Of the office of austin city council.

Of the office of austin city council

of the state of texas.

Of the state of texas.

And will to the best of my ability.

And will to the best of my ability.

Preserve, protect and defend.

Preserve, protect and defend.

The constitution and laws of the united states.

The constitution and laws of the united states.

And of this state.

And of this state.

So help me god.

So help me god.

Congratulations. [Applause]

congratulations, councilmembers, please take your seats on the dais. And honor guard, please repost the colors behind the dais.

Before we again want to congratulate kathie on her election and swearing in and chris and laura on their

reelection, I look forward to serving with each and every one of you. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge something that we all know here, we've been through a very difficult even divisive time. But now the election is over, a new council is seated and our responsibility is to come together for the betterment of this community that we all love and serve. The big challenges we face today are no different than the challenges of yesterday. Regardless of who occupies the seats up here on the dais, the consequences of the decisions that we make here have impact. The consequences are real. Lives are affected. And the future of our community is shaped by our actions. And can be shaped for the better. My job as mayor is to help make sure that happens. I am 100% committed to working with each of you, each and every member of this council and I believe that we will do what's best for our great city. With that, a quorum is present so I'll call this special called meeting of the austin city council to order. IT IS JUNE 28th, 2011, THE and we are meeting in the council chambers, austin city hall, 301 west second street, austin, texas. Our only item on the agenda tonight is the election of a mayor pro tem. Mayor pro tem presides at council meetings, among other things presides at council meetings and other functions of the city in the mayor's absence, in a moment we'll take nominations. But before I do that, i would like to recognize mayor pro tem mike martinez for a brief statement. [No microphone.

Councilmember morrison, riley and new councilmember kathie tovo. I look forward to working with all of you as well in the coming days and years ahead. As the mayor said, you know, I think it's clear that we've been going through a difficult time over the last several months here at city hall. And literally this election divided this council. But that time is over. And it's really time to move forward. Shortly after councilmember tovo's runoff election, i became aware through other councilmembers that my colleague and friend councilmember cole wants to serve as the mayor pro tem. And I confirmed it with her and she -- she expressed a desire to serve in that capacity. And also expressed somewhat of a community expectation. And I certainly won't stay in the way of that desire or that community expectation. As the mayor just said it's time to come together and work cooperatively and respectfully with each other. To do what's best for our entire community. Many of -- in our community have called for us to put our past issues aside and come together as a council. It is my firm belief that the only way for that to truly happen is for someone to actually take the first step and an action in that direction. So, therefore, I won't stand in the way of the motion to nominate councilmember cole as mayor pro tem. In fact I'll support the motion. And it's been an honor to serve as the mayor pro tem in austin, but the title won't change one thing about who I am or how I serve. I'll continue my efforts on the many initiatives that i have worked on for the past five years and will do it with the exact same passion and drive I've held the entire time. In the last -- you know, last week councilmember shade made some pretty powerful remarks from the dais, I won't repeat them. But what she reminded me of is that there are just some things in life that are more important than politics. I'll never, ever, be able to thank her enough for that wonderful reminder. The two most important things in my life are sitting right here in front of me. My son alejandro, my beautiful wife laura. They've been with me every day and night, never wavered in their support of me, never shirked the demands of being an elected official in austin, texas. We can't go anywhere without people asking us questions and wanting to know what my position was on their important issue. I thank them so much and love them both dearly. I always want to thank my staff who is also standing in the back, but they are always at the forefront of everything in this building and my office. They will continue along with me on the course that we have plotted and we will continue our efforts together. I thank my staff dearly for all of their hard work. I believe wholeheartedly that austin has a great destiny to fulfill. It's clear to me that we're on a road to becoming one of the world's truly great cities. And the leadership of this group of people over the next few years will potentially make a huge difference on our journey. That's all the more reason for us to find ways to better cooperate and work together and I look forward to doing just that. Thank you, mayor.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, mayor pro tem. [Applause]

Mayor Leffingwell: Council, first, we will take nominations. After all nominations are made, the floor will be open for a motion of the nominees in order of their being nominated. Are there any nominations for the position of mayor pro tem?

Spelman: Mayor.

Councilmember spelman.

Spelman: Before making a nomination, I would like to congratulate mayor pro tem mike martinez for his five years of service as a councilmember, his two years of service as mayor pro tem and in particular for the very, very statesman-like remarks that he just made. I think it bodes very well for our ability to work together as a unified council over the next year, particularly our ability to get good service done for the citizens of austin over the next year. Thank you, mike. Mayor, I'm honored and delighted to nominate councilmember sheryl cole to the office of mayor pro tem.

Mayor Leffingwell: Councilmember spelman no, ma'am nature councilmember sheryl cole as the nominee to be mayor pro tem. Nominates. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, we will now proceed to the leak. The -- proceed to the election. It's our customary practice to consider the nominations by motion. I would like to entertain a motion on the nomination of sheryl cole. The motion would be to -- to elect sheryl cole as the mayor pro tem. Motion by councilmember spelman. Seconded by councilmember morrison. All in favor of that motion say aye.

Aye.

Mayor Leffingwell: All opposed say no. That passes on a vote of 7-0. Congratulations, mayor pro tem cole. [Applause]

Cole: Thank you, mayor and thank you, colleagues, this is a position that is bestowed upon the councilmember because of tenured service and dedication. I am honored to receive it. I'm also proud that I was the one who made the motion for mayor pro tem mike martinez in 2006 and i respect his comments and i respect him. Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, mayor pro tem. I would like to also note that we have three people on the council of equal seniority, mayor pro tem cole, councilmember martinez and councilmember spelman all have equal seniority. So thank you, councilmembers, you're next. [Laughter]

Cole: I'll nominate you. [Laughter]

Mayor Leffingwell: All right. At this time, I would like to call on our most recently elected official to make brief remarks and first will be councilmember riley.

Riley:.

Riley: It has been just two years now since I was last year taking the oath of office, same oath that i just took. Can you believe it's been two years already? Time just flies when you're having fun. I remember two years ago feeling more than anything else humbled by the thought that the city that I grew up in was giving me this opportunity to serve. Now, after these two years, I find myself even more humbled by the thought that after those first two years that the city is willing to give me the opportunity to keep serving in this capacity for a while longer. I'm glad to say that with the help of my colleagues, my staff and others at the city, and a lot of committed citizens, that we have achieved some successes over the past couple of years. I have sponsored over 30 resolutions covering some exciting topics like parking lot medians, green roofs, construction equipment. The leadership of the mayor and the rest of the council, we have weathered the worst of the economic downturn than just about any other city in the country and we've avoided the layoffs and other problems that other cities have been through. We have had other challenges. And I think it's fair to say that not everyone was completely satisfied with how we handled every one of those challenges. In fact I'm not sure anyone was completely satisfied with how we handled every one. It's hard to get through any council agenda without disappointing some number of

people. We each have our own visions for the city. Austin is blessed with many people who care passionately about their vision. For me the most meaningful things that we work are often not the items that appear on each week's agenda. They are the longer term issues that join us together in striving for a better future. Bond elections also -- often serve that kind of purpose and the transportation bond election this past fall was no exception. I was proud to support that historic effort and I'm looking forward to the equally historic effort that we expect to undertake as we approach the next bond election next year. That election will offer even greater opportunities to come together as a community and decide how we want to take -- how we want our community to take shape. There are also ongoing efforts that directly address that basic question of how we grow. The comprehensive plan is giving us an opportunity to imagine austin in 20 or 30 years, when it may be twice the size it is today. And an ongoing project regarding airport boulevard is providing a basis for imagining how we could accommodate a significant part of that growth on our transportation corridors. Now, this is not about making everybody give up their cars and live in small apartments and ride bicycles. This is about providing everyone options. So live the lives that -- to live the lives that they choose. The new urbanists have a term called tran tech, that represents a spectrum of living choices in any city. You have urban options but you have also got rural options. Every city needs room for every part along that spectrum so that everyone can choose the living choices that best serve their needs. Austin has a wide spectrum of living situations, from suburban neighborhoods to very urban apartments. I grew up in a ranch house on a corner in tarrytown where my parents still live to this day. I want to recognize my parents who are here. Stand up. [Applause] I -- I now choose to live in a house downtown. We're seeing increasing demand for urban settings that are walkable. In the future I expect we will see an even greater demand for living situations with good access to transit. At the moment we're not very well set up to meet that demand. Not only do we lack a supply of walkable places, but our regulations often make good design unlawful or unworkable. But with the help of austinites like those who came out to task force and advisory group meetings, i know we can address those issues in a way that meet the needs and expectations of the whole community. Getting this right will help enable austinites to live in the settings they choose. And to age in place. It will also help enable all of us to enjoy the company of friends and family that much longer as the city adapts to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. I'm so glad to have the opportunity to experience that diversity on a daily basis as a councilmember. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with my colleagues, staff, folks like you, on making an austin -- austin an even better home for everyone. Not -- I just want to take just a minute to thank a few other folks who have helped me get here. I've already mentioned my parents over there. I also would want to recognize a few family members. My sister and her niece and my nephews, little christopher and charlie. Very importantly I want to recognize my long-time partner and girlfriend, denise [indiscernible], who is -- has put up with so much. Most of all, I want to thank all of y'all for helping -- for being here to celebrate this occasion and I want to thank all of the citizens of austin for giving me this opportunity to keep serving my hometown. I pledge to do the very best that I can, to meet everyone's needs. Thanks. [Applause]

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, chris. Councilmember tovo. And as you may have noticed, the timer is not active. [Laughter]

well, thank you, it is such a privilege to be here today. And to stand before you as your place 3 city council member. [Applause]

I came to city hall for the first time many years ago now to speak on a zoning case. I was very nervous. I had practiced all day long for my three minutes and when I got to the podium, i forgot most of my main points. So that was my first glimpse at local government. From then on I was really hooked. I thought not just that my neighbors and I had really influenced one project for the better, but really that the best decisions of city council were really made in dialogue with the community. A well-known writer once observed if we really listen to one another, even if we disagree, we would leave each conversation a different person than we were when we entered. At some point in the next three years, perhaps even tomorrow, some of you sitting he will disagree with a decision that I make. We are not always going to agree. But you can be sure that i won't forget the path that i took to this dais and i won't discount the role that the public must play in the decisions that we make here. Some austinites may come here only once and stumble nervously through their three minutes as I did. Others may come again and again to

share their suggestions for improving our city. I won't forget that everyone who comes here deserves an opportunity not just to speak, but to really be heard. And that each person who takes the time to do so contributes to the conversation about how best to move austin forward into the future. Just as important, I won't forget that for many austinites, they won't have the time or the resources necessary to participate in our public process. And they may never come into these chambers. But the decisions made here matter deeply to their lives. And that's why those of us elected to serve must go beyond these walls to listen and to learn and to hear their experiences, so that we can represent the public interest as fully as possible. We certainly have challenges ahead. The new census numbers show that poverty in our community is increasing, poverty among children is even higher, families with children continue to move out of our central city and families throughout austin are struggling right now. Austinites have said divisively that they want their leaders to put the needs of residents, neighborhoods, local businesses first. We need to make major decisions only after taking into account the impact on all of our citizens and i pledge to do that. [Applause] I'm very excited about opportunities ahead. I envision an austin that really works better for people at all stages of life. Where more austinites can access the basic services they need close to home, where more long-time members of community can stay in their neighborhoods aging in place and where more families can really find housing that meets their budget and their needs. I believe we can work harder to keep austin affordable. And to strengthen the community's safety net for our neediest neighbors. We can work harder as a city to support education in our school district. And I believe that we can grow as a city and welcome many new businesses and many more residents and still protect the quality of life in our existing neighborhoods. [Applause] to do this, to do this we'll need to work in partnership and I'll need your help. So I am so privileged to have this opportunity and I'm so very grateful to those of you who contributed and helped make it possible. I would like to offer a huge thank you to my campaign staff and to the hundreds of volunteers who worked tirelessly and passionately and of course to the voters of austin for your confidence in me to effect a change here at city hall. I'd like to especially thank my family, my husband tom hertz who is not just a talented architect, but also an amazing partner and father and who bore with very good graces and remarkably good cheer the challenges of our last three months. And I want to thank my daughters who are out there today and I know they will keep me connected with the very important work that our city does for families of all kind and who not incidentally believe that appears on channel 6 gives me something of the same stat as elmo. I would also like to pause and thank randi shade for her years of service to this community and I know you join me in wishing her the very best in her future endeavors [applause] and to my new colleagues, i am so proud to be standing here with you. I know that the last few months have been a turbulent -- have been turbulent ones in and out of city hall, I want you to know that I am eager to put those behind us and to work in partnership with each one of you for the betterment of our great city. [Applause] to the people of austin, we live in one of the truly wonderful cities in this country. And I believe we can make it even better and so please know that my door will always be open to you as we embark on this hard but very important work together. Thank you. [Applause]

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Councilmember morrison?

Morrison: Austin is a city that I love. Being on council is a job that I love. And I am delighted to be here standing in front of you to start my second term. I'm so grateful to the voters who have entrusted me with this responsibility. I pledge to everyone that mine will be another three years of service with integrity and commitment to each and every austinite. Now the campaign is an intense endeavor and I want to first thank my husband phil and all of my family for their unwavering support and encouragement through the past month. My gratitude also goes to my campaign team, that made it such a success. Jim wick and shaun who dedicated their expertise day in and day out along with our supporters and volunteers. And my terrific team of consultants, david butz, dean rendy and jeff smith. A very heartfelt thanks to my staff, barbara rush, grace applegate and bobby labinski, truly public servants and an inspiration to work with. [Applause] now the -- the delight over the success of our campaign has been tempered and bittersweet for me because my dad died four days after the election at the age of 84, his was a life well lived but these past weeks have of course been a time of mourning and grief. Also a time of introspection, for what my father brought me, who i am, how I see the world. My dad grew up in a family hard hit by the depression in the '30s, his father worked on occasion for the federal public works projects that were established as part of the roosevelt stimulus program. But that barely got them

through. Family lore has it that my dad and his siblings as kids each knew which cub boards they were responsible for packing when moving once again because they didn't have the money to pay their last month's rent. With dedication and hard work, he provided our family with a strong sense of security, a priority on education, and above all, a sense of principle and purpose. Tirelessly working to give those -- to give a voice to those who had none and for justice and social reform. So I learned a sense of principle and purpose as a fundamental of life. Through my father's actions and deeds. For example, his fighting for civil rights in the '60s in the south, spearheading national reform of his church and leading big brother big sisters of Cleveland. It's through this lens as his daughter I'm reminded of the gift my father gave to me and I am unfused with energy to work with my colleagues, city staff and the community to address the challenges we face in achieving a vision that I believe, despite vigorous disagreements on occasion, I believe we truly do share as a community. It's a vision of equity and opportunity for everyone. And despite being recognized on many top 10 lists for being a great place to live and it is, we must recognize the struggle that many in our community face. Did you know that in the past decade, while our county population grew by 26%, those living in low income households increased by 56%. That's just one of the challenges that we as a city government and as a community must address. We must invest in social services to support those who are struggling to transition out of poverty. In public health, to assist the growing number of children dealing with obesity. In affordable housing, in all parts of town. And in so many other facets take truly bring a prosperous quality of life. We need bold action to shift the trends. Action driven not only by compassion, but with the understanding that it is imperative for the economic sustainability of our region. We must be a city where everyone has an opportunity to share in our successes. There is a reason we're on all of those top 10 lists. It's the essence of Austin, a beautiful and amazing place to live, with cultural vitality and distinctive character that we love to call our own. Maintaining the essence of Austin, what makes us unique from other cities, is part of our shared vision as well as our challenge as we move into the future. But I know that it's a challenge that we're up to, to take the necessary steps to ensure that Austin stays Austin, to protect our unique natural resources, to keep our neighborhoods vibrant and safe, to nurture our local businesses, to truly embrace cultural diversity, all to preserve the essence of Austin. So it is with this renewed commitment that I begin my second term. Looking forward to partnering with the community and to collaborating with all of my colleagues on the dais and the 12,000 city employees who bring such dedication to our city. To achieve the vision that we share for our Austin. But before we get to work, let's take some time to party and I hope that you will join councilmember Riley, councilmember Tovo and myself at Antone's immediately following the reception here at City Hall where we will be hosting a celebration to kick off our next three years. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, councilmember. We have no additional items on the agenda tonight. Without objection, we stand adjourned at 6:40 p.m. We have a few more things to do, though, we're adjourned. Stay with us just a minute here. I would like to call the Austin back up to sing America the beautiful for us. Please rise. ♪♪♪♪ O beautiful for spacious skies for amber waves of grain for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain! America! America! God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea! ♪♪♪♪ [applause]

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Thank you, the. That was great. Now, we would like to hear a benediction from Albert Rodrig Saint John's Episcopal Church.

Mayor and councilmembers, I -- I was so enthused about being here that I almost voted with y'all. [Laughter] I refrained. Let us pray. Oh, God in the spiritual power of all peoples and races, we're thankful for this time that we have spent together. We thank you for the ability to renew ourselves and to experience fresh starts, such as these. My God give the city council the spiritual grace to accomplish much, by applying their considerable talents and experience to the challenges and the opportunities that confront us. And to the city council members, as you work together on behalf of all who live in this city, may you gain strength and sustenance from each other through reason, compassion and compromise. May all of us be reminded of that prayer which says God grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference. And now may God bless you and all of us and keep you, may God make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May God lift his countenance upon you and give you and all here present peace.

Amen.

Mayor Leffingwell: Amen. Before we leave, I want to thank judge dietz for coming down here and administering the oath and judge, with some trepidation, I want to comment on your remark that austin was the greatest city in the country. You did mean the world, didn't you? Greatest city in the world?

I did.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, sir. Thank you all for coming. And please join us in the atrium. We have milk and cookies and music by the matt wilson band. Thank you all very much. [Applause]