

# Council avoids repair shop fight

Car dealer drops proposal shortly before scheduled vote.



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A showdown between development and environmental interests over building on the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone was averted Thursday when an auto dealership withdrew its request before City Council to open a repair shop in the sensitive area.

Ken Brown, a lobbyist representing Gunn Honda, pulled the item before the council could consider it after learning there were enough votes to reject the proposal because of concerns that paint and other hazardous materials at the facility could jeopardize the area's drinking water supply.

Earlier Thursday, Mayor Ed Garza named two task forces to address other major issues facing the city.

The task forces will be charged with looking for ways to pull the San Antonio Symphony out of its financial tailspin and to address the city's problems with hunger and homelessness.

Mike De La Garza of MDLG & Associates was named chairman of the symphony task force, which will look for short-term and long-term financial remedies. Unable to meet its payroll for almost a month and more than \$1.4 million in debt, the symphony's board voted to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection this week.

The homelessness task force will be co-chaired by Councilman Julián Castro and Councilwoman Patti Randle and will be asked to develop a five-year plan to combat hunger and homelessness in the city. It is being commis-

sioned less than two months after a series of stories in the San Antonio Express-News highlighted how little the city is spending on programs affecting the homeless in comparison to other major cities.

Meanwhile, the Gunn Honda issue tested the commitment of council members to protect the recharge zone.

Brown was prepared to argue that the planned facility at Loop 1604 and Hausman Road would have included enough safeguards to protect the environmentally sensitive recharge zone, despite concerns to the contrary.

But opponents of the Hausman relocation, which include city staff, San Antonio Water System officials and a member of the Edwards Aquifer Authority, argued that the aquifer's safety could not be guaranteed.

The proposed repair facility would involve the storage and use of hazardous materials over the recharge zone and as a result would increase the possibility that the aquifer could be contaminated.

Councilman Art Hall, whose Northwest Side District would have included the proposed facility, issued a statement before Thursday's council meeting saying that he could not support the project. He noted that auto dealerships were not by definition a threat to the aquifer but that service facilities attached to those dealerships pose a risk.

At least eight council members supported Hall's position, he said, which means Gunn's proposal would have failed had it gotten to a vote.

Brown said Gunn will attempt to locate the proposed dealership and repair facility to another site that could be over the recharge zone but outside of the city's jurisdiction.

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