



La Voz de Esperanza

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• Opinions expressed in La Voz are not
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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements

* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive,
instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be
literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic,
violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

* All letters in response to Esperanza activities
or articles in La Voz will be considered for
publication. Letters with intent to slander
individuals or groups will not be published.

Puente para la Gente

Texas Supreme Court to hear Hays St. Bridge Case

On Friday, June 8, 2018 the Texas Supreme Court granted the Hays St. Bridge Restoration Group's Petition for Review

agreeing to review the court of appeals' 2017 decision that **dismissed** the Group's breach of contract claim against the City of San Antonio. Even though a jury decided that the City's attempt to transfer ownership of 803 N. Cherry to Eugene Simor violated its contract with the Restoration Group, the court of appeals stated that the City had **"governmental immunity,"** and therefore could not be held responsible for the breach of contract.

The Restoration Group's efforts in restoring Hays St. Bridge ultimately led to its historic designation and the donation of land at 803 N. Cherry to the Hays Street Bridge Hike and Bike Project—a community and visitor center that would house educational exhibits about the historic bridge and the eastside railroad workers who helped build San Antonio. The land was to be used for parking facilities, restrooms and amenities needed for the center. Without these, the Historic Hays Street Bridge remains unfinished and not fully accessible.

The City had promised to **hold** the land at 803 N. Cherry in trust for the Hike and Bike project, until funding for it was complete. When the Bridge was reopened in 2010, the Restoration Group turned its focus to raising funds. However, 803 N. Cherry, became a point of contention when Eugene Simor, a close friend of former Mayor Hardberger sought ownership of the land for his Alamo Beer Co. in a series of backroom meetings, Despite initial approval of Alamo Beer Package in 2012 (including 803 N. Cherry, some additional land, a skywalk to the Bridge and use of the Bridge for a private restaurant), transfer of the land was delayed and Alamo Beer Brewery and Beer Hall was built at 415 Burnet St., instead.

In September 2012, the Federal Dept. of Transportation that granted \$2.9 million to the Bridge's renovation, informed the City that if it did allow Alamo Beer to use the Bridge for a restaurant, the City would have to return the \$2.9 million.

In December 2014, Lori Houston, then Director of the Center City Development & Operations Dept. and now an Asst. City Manager, told City Council that Alamo Beer still needed the land at 803 N. Cherry for "the restaurant and parking facilities" and the Council voted to reaffirm the Alamo Beer Package, including transfer of 803 N. Cherry to the Alamo Beer Co. Later that day, Asst. City Attorney Carlos Contreras signed a deed transferring the land to the Simor Texas Land Co., not to the Alamo Beer Co. as Council had been told.

The Hays St. Bridge Restoration Group and their many supporters, including the 19,000 signors to a petition, look forward to the Texas Supreme Court's review of the case and an eventual ruling in the people's favor following oral argument this fall. The Group expects the District Court will find that the City did violate its Judgment and will invalidate the transfer, returning ownership of the land to the City, to hold in trust for the Hays Street Bridge community and visitor center. See: esperanzacenter.org/esperanza-projects/hays-street-bridge-restoration-group/

While San Antonio's progressive activists battle many fronts to validate our very existence and insure a **good** quality of life for all—we often find ourselves at the losing end of these struggles. We have lost historic and culturally significant structures like La Gloria and the UNIVISION building to demolition and our efforts to stave off gentrification in San Antonio has resulted in the tragic displacement of families as in the case of the Mission Trails Mobile Home community. Once in a long while there are victories—the recent win for Mexican American Studies is a case in point. A victory for the Hays St. Restoration Group could be another beacon of hope. In the meantime, resistance and struggle remain essential.

—Gloria A. Ramirez, editor

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VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.