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Statement on behalf of Mayor Paulette Guajardo regarding the untrue and politically motivated allegations against her regarding the Hilton Homewood Suites Project

The Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation, the Type B Board, the City's Legal Department, the City Manager, Assistant City Managers, and the City's Economic Development Board all recommended a downtown hotel development to provide walkable retail and dining space and job creation. Subsequently, a rival hotel competitor filed a lawsuit against the City and the Mayor to claw back funding that was awarded to the hotel project.

Rather than advancing the public good, this action appears aimed at protecting the rival's hotel business at the expense of the people of Corpus Christi and the City's economic growth that benefits all residents.

As the Mayor's attorneys, please see this statement in response to your request for comment:

"At no point did City Manager Peter Zanoni inform Mayor Guajardo that the FEMA screenshot in question was a forged federal document. In fact, in public meetings he supported the passage of the ordinance.

City Manager Zanoni advised that he was reviewing the matter, and he had not reached a conclusion at the April 23, 2024 meeting. Both the Type B Board and the City Manager stated that the **approval and recommendation had "nothing to do with the FEMA floodplain."** City Manager Zanoni publicly stated that:

"On the merits of the two-million dollars, the City staff supports what the Type B recommended it for, which was for...ground floor activation. ...Without any doubt we support that."¹

The City Manager twice recommended the passage of the ordinance. Additionally, the document in question is not an official federal document, but rather a screenshot of a federal website regarding flood map information.

The ordinance and all documents underwent a rigorous vetting process by professional staff prior to placement on the Council agenda. It was carefully reviewed by the City's Legal Department, the Economic Development Department, and the City Manager to ensure compliance and integrity at every level.

Mayor Guajardo and the City Council relied appropriately on the City's established professional review process and acted in line with the City Manager and Type B Board's recommendation to advance the interests of Corpus Christi."

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DPj6TyvwDI&t=11504s> at 3:08:10-3:11:44.

Respectfully,

/s/ James McKibben

James McKibben