

Ortega Park Mural Community

Unidentified Speaker: Hello, hello. Good afternoon, SB. So happy to be here. My name is Deanna. I traveled over here from San Fernando Valley. But we both, well actually he lives in Simi Valley. But I'm giving him a few seconds to catch his breath. Just an FYI, we're 49 and 48, so there's no excuse. If ever you wanted to dance Folklórico, do it. There's no age limit. Anyone is welcome to learn for the Folklórico. It's for the community and [Paqua] and I love to do it. So anyways, I grew up here in Santa Barbara on the Eastside. That's right. So Santa Barbara is and always will be in my heart. Class of 90 SBHS, SBCC, and very proud to say my uncle, Manuel Unzueta, is who painted some of these murals here and we all helped him a little bit when we were kids. So this has a lot of meaning for me today. Thank you so much for being here. One more song. The name of our group is [Grupo Folklorico Whetelene]. I also teach California State University Northridge. One more for you. [SPANISH: El Son De La Negra].

MUSIC

Unidentified Speaker: Round of applause for [SPANISH: Diana Paco, cultura, cultura (culture, culture)]. All right. Carlos, go ahead.

Carlos: Good afternoon, again. I'm going to make another bilingual announcement for those of us who would like to hear this event's proceedings in Spanish. Just come over here. We're going to provide you with earphones so that you can hear simultaneously the whole proceedings in Spanish. [SPANISH: Aquellos que quieran escuchar en español pro favor vengan que le vamos a entregar un par de audifonos para escuchar toda la interpretación simultánea de los eventos en español. Muchas gracias.] Thank you very much.

(Carlos translated this portion)

Mark Alvarado: So good afternoon. My name is Mark Alvarado, and I am the founder and director of the One Community Bridge Project. It's a brand-new cultural arts and performing arts organization here on Santa Barbara's Eastside and also work out of the West Side and [Viana Corral] is one of our teaching artists so if you want your son or daughter to learn how to dance this style, come talk to us. We'll definitely make it happen for you. Okay.

And I'm also the leader of the Ortega Park Mural Rescue Project and that's why we're here. Most of my life, my professional life and in my personal life, a lot of people have always told me, they said, Mark, why do you rock the boat? Why do you want to rock the boat? And that creates a little anxiety especially in the workplace, even at home. Why do you want to rock the boat? Well, when I understood that these murals were in danger, they needed protection. And so I had to rock the boat in order to get us here today. So I want to thank everybody for coming out today and representing yourself, representing the community, and representing these murals because that's why we're here. We're here to talk about the murals. You're here to reflect. Everybody's going to be invited to come up to this microphone. You'll have two to three minutes to talk, and you'll be able to express yourself how you feel. And we'll have some other speakers that are going to come and give you a little bit more of an idea or as a guide of some talking points.

So it's really, really important that we recognize the artists that are here. Mr. Manuel Unzueta, Alvaro Suman, Carlos Cuellar, Armando Vallejo, they're here with us today.

Alvaro, would you please just stand up and just raise your hand, so the folks know who you are. Manuel, please stand up. And Carlos and Armando are over on the far side over there. If you have any questions, you can go and talk to them.

So as you know, we have the placards that the city provided that show the design of the park so if you have any questions about that you can talk to them. Also too, you see some QR codes for a feedback form. There are feedback forms over here on this table. The gentleman with the green sweater. If you don't want to come up and speak, you would be able to speak through the cards. And Alejandra, I lost that phone number that I'm supposed to give out. And so there's also a phone number where you can call and express yourself as well. It always happens, right? Yes, please.

So while she's bringing up the number, we do have some dignitaries that I'd like to recognize. We have our mayor, Cathy Murillo is here. District 3 representative is here, Mr. Oscar Gutierrez. And where is Representative Kristin Sneddon? She is in the back there. And I've got to give a lot of props to Kristin. You know, she jumped into this thing when we weren't too sure where we were going with all of this work. Her voice at City Hall was one of the main reasons why we were able to come together like this. So if you go over to that young lady, you can shake her hand and thank her because she's really one of the people that are responsible. But the person who's really responsible for pulling this together is going to speak next. But before I introduce her, I need to read this number, so it is 805-897-2565. That number will also be available at this table. It's a hotline. You can call 24/7 English and Spanish.

So at this time, I'd like to introduce to you our district representative here in District 1, here on the Eastside, a local girl, Santa Barbara Junior High, Santa Barbara High School, and now she's representing us here in the community. Put your hands together for Ms. Alejandra Gutierrez. Thank you.

Alejandra Gutierrez:

Good afternoon. [SPANISH: Buenas tardes] Thank you everyone for showing up. [SPANISH: Muchísimas gracias a la comunidad por venir hoy] Today is a big day. Today is a new beginning for the city and for the community. The reason that we are here is we want to hear the community's voice. The renovation of this park means a lot to the community, but these murals mean a lot more. These murals talk about our history and with these murals a lot of local families share a lot of memories with our families. I grew up, my father immigrated here, and my mother, and their first job was working at the Casa de la Raza along with Manuel Unzueta and Armando Vallejo who later on when I started going into school, Armando Vallejo and Manuel Unzueta were my teachers. So growing up, I understood the meaning of murals in the city, and the murals in general in different places in the world, they talk about history. And history can't just get destroyed with the renovation of a park. Being a district representative and city council has been a challenge but the reason that I ran for this position was to give my community a voice. I grew up here. I grew up knowing that I was a part of my neighborhood, but not always knowing that I was part of the larger city. What I'm here today to do is to bring community together and the city staff to work together to find a solution for these murals, and I think that working together as a community and united, we can move forward for a change. I do want to acknowledge Ms. Sneddon because I am very new to this position and to have colleague support especially with a little bit more experience really meant a lot, so thank you, Ms. Sneddon, for supporting not only me but the entire community.

I want to acknowledge the youth. If any of the youth is here that helped with passing out fliers and going door-to-door, can you guys stand up please? I want everybody to clap for the youth. They really made it happen. [SPANISH: *Muchísimas gracias*. (Thank you very much)]. And I want to tell the youth that this is your home, this is your community, and you belong here, and your voice is very important because you are the future of the city. I also want to thank a young girl, Valerie Jimenez. If you're in the crowd, can you please stand up as well? She really helped with the social media and getting the word out. I also want to thank, again, Mark Alvarado, One Community Bridge. Allie Cortez, thank you so much. She's been a huge angel and Bien Estar Latinx help heal and help empower the Latino community here. I also want to acknowledge Esmerelda who works for the office's county supervisor Das Williams. She was actually a student that I worked closely at Santa Barbara High School, and to see her grow into this position has meant a lot.

So we're here to learn about the murals and we're here to learn about how to preserve the murals. We all are very aware that most of the murals are probably not going to be able to be saved, but we're really lucky that the muralists are still alive, and they still live in the city and we can probably recreate a lot of them. But we do want to save as many as we can, but we have to come together in finding a solution because we want to move forward with the grant. But today is a huge day. It's a historical day because from now on, the way that the city communicates with the city will change. I do want to apologize on behalf of the city for not doing the proper outreach, and I say it very sincerely. We're going to do better, but we have to work together, and we have to hold each other accountable. And that's how we become this changing process and we've also begun to heal. So by holding each other accountable, it's working together. So thank you so much for being here. [SPANISH: *Muchísimas gracias* (Thank you very much)].

Mark Alvarado:

So this effort to preserve the murals, protect the murals, it wasn't a one-man show, I'll tell you that much. There's a lot of people that came onboard to this and so I want to recognize a few of them right now. Barbara Parmet, Barb Parmet, where's she at? She called me that first week we found out, and she called me. She didn't know me from Adam, and she goes, "Mark, I'm with you. I'm going to help you." She's a photojournalist. She came out and she took pictures of the murals as they stand today and now those murals are going to live in City Hall on display for a while and we're going to find a permanent home for the murals. Even though we might not be able to rescue all of them, they'll live through Barbara's effort of preserving them in image.

We also have Kai Tepper here from the Arts Advisory Committee. Thank you, Kai. Michael Imwalle from the Trust for Historic Preservation is also another individual. Chuck Flacks is another individual that's been helping behind the scenes. Also too, who's that? Freddy. No, I'm not going to forget about Freddy. Anna Pilhoefer from Cleveland Elementary School. She did the t-shirts. Also too, again, I've got to thank Manuel Unzueta. Manuel, he's not the most astute with the technology, getting on Zoom and all these things, and so it's kind of like a student, the roles reversed. He was my teacher, but we work together on this thing and so, Manuel, you've been a big, big help with me on this. And then also lastly, I don't want to forget Ignacio Moreno who's filming the documentary. Some of you saw those film clips that he did. Marcus Lopez also is another individual that helped a lot with this effort. And as well as Alejandra Cortez who I we wouldn't be here also because she did a lot of the heavy lifting for this. And I'd be

remiss if I didn't recognize the Funds for Santa Barbara for funding this project, the Ortega Park Mural Rescue Project because it's through their generous funding that we are able to do the outreach and film a documentary and put a little food in peoples' mouths, so thank you so much. And I don't know if I forgot, but I'll mention her name again, but I have to mention Sarah York Ruben from the County Art's Office.

But last, but definitely not least, is the revolutionary spirit in this effort. This person, this young man, and he's young because when he told me when he was at the junior high, I think I was already needing braces for my knees by the time that he was there. But anyways, Freddy Janka also sits on the Arts Advisory Committee and he has been the voice of reason for centering the work and why we're here today and so I've asked Freddy to come up and talk a little bit about the expectations of why we're here and some things that we want out of all of this effort because the beginning is now. The beginning is today. What happened in the past is in the past. We need to move forward on this effort. So Freddy, are you here? Come on up. Freddy Janka.

Freddy Janka:

I'll be quick. Hi. Hello, everyone. Welcome. It's a pleasure to be here and that was a very undeserving introduction by Mark. Thank you, Mark. Yeah. So what are our expectations? I think so much of this conversation from the get-go has been about individual murals, what can we save, what can't we save. I mean, at least we got to that point because there was a moment where there was a world where there was no murals. And as we can see on Quarantina Street, we've already lost a major mural that Manuel Unzueta was a part of and it's very sad to go over there. And I encourage you to walk around the corner here. You'll see a blank wall and you'll see a beautiful bronze plaque from May 5th, 1975 and speaking to the reasoning behind the creation of that mural and what it meant to the community. So that should be for us a benchmark of where we don't want to go. And so I think just seeing so many of you here today ensures that that won't be the future here with the future of Ortega Park. And I think so much of what we need to continue to do in terms of, and thank you, Alejandra, for that wonderful apology which I think was really a long time coming and just so meaningful in really moving forward with this project. We have to acknowledge the loss, the potential loss, as well as the very real loss that we will not be able to keep every single mural. But that really defeats the whole conversation. It's really about a site. It's a cluster. It's an interconnectiveness. Each one relies on the other and so we all really need to be again holding the city accountable as well as each other that it's one site moving forward. We need to think holistically and celebrate the history holistically and that when it comes down to it, every mural here will continue to live in some form whether it's recreated, whether it's through some sort of memorial or otherwise.

But we have to continue to imagine and envision collectively an Ortega Park in our future that again centers the murals and maybe we're going to be renaming the park. Maybe we're going to be building more walls for more murals. Maybe we're going to be creating a space where artists and youth can come together on a regular basis to talk about art, to learn about the history, to have the unique opportunity to work with somebody like Manuel Unzueta and other talented artists. So again, to echo Mark's point, this is really just the beginning. The future is ours. I think it will include this space for the future and I think that is again one of the biggest expectations that we have is how do we continue to visit the park, to celebrate community in the park with our ancestors essentially. So I think

without further ado, I'll let it continue on with the program, but thank you all for coming and again we need to imagine and envision a future with these murals all together regardless of what physical manifestation they may hold. Thank you.

Mark Alvarado:

You know, as I look around the crowd, there's a lot of important people here today. So I want to mention a few names and if I don't mention you, it's just because I just don't see that well. The young man over there with his hands up, Michael Montenegro from Chicano Culture SB. Another player behind the scenes. How many of you guys saw the low riders come through the neighborhood right here? That was because of that young man. There over there parked over there if you want to check them out. More art. More culture. Also too, Ricardo Venegas who is responsible for the last 20 years of maintaining and ensuring that artwork was in the park is here, so I want to recognize Ricardo. Crucito Cruz who is also a player behind the scenes. He's our local neighborhood Chicano historian as well. And there's a very special guest here that I didn't even think he was going to show up. I know he's around and when I just saw him right now, I was just like wow, wow. He's from Kingston, Jamaica. He's a big heavyweight in the reggae recording industry. He keeps gates here in Santa Barbara. And for the last, what do you say, Scott, maybe the last 40 years he's been the road manager for Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers, Jr. Gong, Sky High. Say hi to the people there, man. That's diversity right there, folks.

Okay, so this is what's going to happen. We have one more speaker and then I'm going to ask for everybody who wants to speak, everybody gets to speak. You'll have two to three minutes. I want you to start lining up right over here and then take the line out towards the restroom. So if you want to speak, go ahead and start lining up. But right now, we're just going to hear some final remarks from Manuel Unzueta, the veteran artist here in the park. Manuel.

Manuel Unzueta:

Gracias. Thank you very much. Órale No, no, no, you guys. Please. There is a lot of people in here that I owe him so much. Look at you guys. Look at it. Here you are in front of a park, and the reason we're getting together is because the concept of art. You don't see this in too many towns in this country that people should come together because the issue is art. A-R-T. Only in Santa Barbara, my friends. So let's say whatever we have even a little drawing by a little girl. Even a mural by children in Franklin School or a song by any kid or the dancers in Santa Barbara. And children behind us. Little kids playing over there. Kids playing over there. I mean, look at the weather. Are you glad you're not in Wisconsin? Are you glad you're not in Tucson, Arizona? Therefore, our park. Listen, we are still in the community that the park is not just for brown people or people of the Aztec background. No. What we are saying, this place is historical. This place, it's part of the history of this part of the city and the county. I don't know if you know that. This used to be a swamp way back. When they took over Santa Barbara way back in 1848, some kids stole a cannon from the American forces, Fremont, and other guys, and they brought the cannon, and they just threw it here in the swamp. That's why we have Canon Perdido Street because nobody knew what happened to the canon perdido. By the way, the city was punished that they had to pay I don't know, two pennies, so that they could recuperate the cannon. Then it became a place where they used to drop all the refuse in here, and then eventually in the 1950s they decided to turn it into a park. There used to be a lot of beautiful trees. It was a beautiful thing to see

especially those of us that grew up in the desert. We appreciate it. I went to that school over there, Santa Barbara Junior High, and I'm sure, how many Junior High guys in here? Come on. Raise your hands.

Art. The concept of art. I don't even know why I became an artist. I just wanted to have a job, and that's it. But we used to come through here. We got out of school and then people that live in those areas. So when we say our park, please understand that if it's a park with a Mexican Chicano Latino background, it's because this is where it is. Look at the name of the streets. Salsipuedes. Come on. Cota. Ortega. Come on. You cannot be more historical than that. Okay, so that's the history part. We are not trying to say to our non-Latino people that this is going to be our park. No. We welcome with the city and the county personally that they want to beautify this park because it looks very sad lately. Thanks to the efforts of many people, this park has been trying to come back and different things. In 1976 I went to Puerto Vallarta to paint a mural sponsored by the Sister Cities Committee and when I finished the mural, they told me Puerto Vallarta, okay, now it's our turn to send some artists from Puerto Vallarta back to Santa Barbara. So they came in '79 thanks to the Sister City committee, and I want to remember a man that was very instrumental, Dr. Michael [Limas] and another man, Richard [Idalgo], Mr. Molina. So I was not living in Santa Barbara at the time, but thanks to La Casa de la Raza, Armando Vallejo, the funding was given to welcome some artists from Puerto Vallarta, and they chose Ortega Park. Ortega Park was the one where some murals were going to be painted.

Therefore, these artists from Puerto Vallarta came and this project came to fruition. Armando Vallejo, he signed and painted that mural even though it was destroyed through the times. And I retouched it, so I make sure that it stays alive, but you say, well, what is the importance of something like that? Well, the important thing is that it's art. And a lot of our neighbors in this area, they are campesinos. You know, they work in the fields. There's nothing wrong with it. And you say, well, we want other parks with different cultures. Hey, we've got plenty of parks in Santa Barbara to paint up on other cultures. Just make sure that you give us a chance to talk about our history and that's what we are trying to say here. To me, I don't want to deal with the politics of it, the economics of it. To me, all I am talking about is that art moves people. The emotional part of the people. Art in itself, whatever the discipline is.

I got to bring an apology by one of the leaders of Santa Barbara, an African American, Cliff Lambert. He was one of the leaders we donated the [indiscernible] are gone for this park and he says, please tell them that I'm sorry, I cannot be there. Cliff Lambert, one of the leaders here in Santa Barbara. He has led so many organizations. So let's give a hand to Cliff Lambert. He grew up a block away from here and he was a basketball hero at Santa Barbara High School because our African American friends we used to walk with them to school all the time. So we grew up a multicultural city and we really love one another, and this park was the meeting place for a lot of happenings including the welcome house. All I know is that October the 30th, 1965 many of you were going to a party. It's called Halloween. What the hell is that? So we had a dance here about Halloween and that's how I got into this whole American culture.

Therefore, what we are saying, our murals, the city can save some murals by very well-known artists and by very historical situations where hundreds of thousands of dollars

have been spent. In Santa Barbara, we have some very important murals. Why couldn't we give importance to our mural painted by children? I don't see the difference between a brush by a little child or a brush by Diego Rivera who painted some paintings here in Santa Barbara or Freda Kahlo. I don't care. A child needs to paint. My nephews Arturo and Paul, they help me to paint the mural on the other side when they were like 10. So what I am saying, please, I'm not trying to be apologetic about things. I'm not trying to say that this is right, and this is wrong. But I think in the project of the city, there is room to make sure that the historical expression of art that has been done in here by adults and children and junior high, thanks to many organizations that I won't have no time to mention all of them. Let me finish saying that I am very thankful that you've been mentioning my name. I never knew that Unzueta could be synonymous with art but it is I guess. But it has been a long ride. I live only four blocks from here and I just want to make sure that our city gets better and better and this time it's going to be art. My teachers at Santa Barbara City College and UCSB have given a lot of fruit to people that have discovered their culture thanks to the concept of art.

One final thought before my partners come and speak. There's a saying in Africa in the time of Mandela and it goes like this. If a city, if the village does not include the youth, the youth will burn that city just to feel its warmth. Thank you very much.

Mark Alvarado:

I'd like to invite another original artist from Ortega Park to come up and talk about the history and share his thoughts and that would be Mr. Armando Vallejo. He doesn't want to speak. Okay. I'm a little confused about that, but that's okay. So do we have any individuals that want to come up and speak individually? Not as a group. Craig, come on up then. No, hold on. We'll let you come next. Come on, Craig.

Craig:

Hello all my brothers and sisters and children. I just want to say a couple things. I really don't know what's going on with the murals, but I look at it a different way. They need to put more. And you know, I've been coming to this park since 1968, you know what I'm saying? This is more my home than my home is because if anybody want to find me, I'm sitting right there. And I look at the murals every day and I look at all the murals and it seems like something's calling me to come here. You know what I'm saying? That spirit is here. I mean, it's like this is history, you know what I'm saying? Ortega Park is history. I've been to a lot of parks in my life, but this is the only park I love, you know what I'm saying? I love this park and I love people. And like I said, I was born and raised on [Barn] Avenue, right around the corner. Santa Barbara Junior High. Santa Barbara High School. Santa Barbara City College Arts. University of New Mexico. I don't know if you guys know about my history. I [indiscernible] history and I got caught up in a scandal you know what I'm saying. But I came right back home. I came right back home. And I love this park and I love the murals. And they shouldn't touch none of this. None of this because you don't mess with history. You know what I'm saying? Just don't mess with history. And the last thing I want to say is life is real simple. Love God and love people, and that's it. That's all I've got to say.

Ken [Reves]:

Thank you, Craig, for coming up and speaking. I remember a lot of families, myself, growing up on the Eastside and the cross-ethnicity games going on like there was the [Boldens] from Santa Barbara, the Gilberts, the Garrots. I can go on and on. But we shared the courts with them playing basketball and it was a good thing. It was good to see. Down at Franklin School primarily but over here too. And he's right. He sits where I

used to sit years ago. And I recognize the cars because we used to have car shows here. And a good friend of mine that went to Santa Barbara Junior High with me, Augie Trail, he's here today and he brought the car club, Night Life. So thank you for being here, Night Life. And the rest of the community that's here. I can go on and on and say all your names, but I would be here for a while and I'm told I'm only going to get two or three minutes. But anyhow, myself, my name is Ken Reves, and I'm a long-time advocate, activist, growing up born and raised in Santa Barbara and there is so much going on. But when I was young, there was the Vietnam War. There was the Chicano movement. The Brown Berets used to have their meetings here. I remember when I had a family member who was in the Brown Berets and they didn't know if I should even be in the march because tensions were high. Tensions were high back in the '60s. Some of you remember that or read about it or saw it on the history channel. But anyhow, I happened to grow up through that time.

But mostly what I'm here today about is the art and Ortega Park and I've been involved with the community, the Franklin Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Now Neighborhood Advisory Council. But I was part of that group and thank you. And one of my things that I advocated for was the art. The Youth Art Alliance. And I have a young lady here today. She'll talk to you for a moment and hopefully she gets a separate two minutes to speak. But anyhow, we have a slogan. We're a very new committee and we're all about the art and the murals here. And I'm just going to read to you, one of our slogans is, honor our past, acknowledge our present, and support our future. That's our slogan.

And I'll read for you a little bit. I'm going to try to read fast because again time is short on me. So anyhow, the Save Ortega Park Art Committee formally announces its support for the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department Ortega Park Renewal Project. This comprehensive renewal of Ortega Park is long overdue. The proposed construction of modern recreational amenities and the continued inclusion of Chicana / Chicano themed murals will finally turn Ortega Park into the preferred recreational and cultural arts destination for our neighborhood, our youth, and our families. The Ortega Park Renewal Project is a well-thought-out project that was developed with neighborhood input that we feel will effectively resolve many of our neighbors' and families' current safety concerns about the park. The Save the Park Art Committee is comprised of members representing the grassroots multigenerational cross-section of local artists, muralists, and long-time activists who live in our community with many of them living within blocks of Ortega Park. Four of our committee members are original artists from the 1979 Ortega Park Mural Project including Armando Vallejo, former executive director of La Casa de la Raza who was the overall supervisor of the 1979 Ortega Park Mural Project as well as Alvaro Suman, Javier Nino, and I believe Alvaro is here too, right? And Armando Rascon who was also part of the 1979 Mural Project. Other artists include Fatima Herrera, Roselia Rodriguez, Mariano Rodriguez, Veronica Sanchez, and local master artist muralist Carlos Cuellar, Miguel Rodriguez, Danny Masa, and who also is on part of this committee is Rosalina Palacios, Arnoldo Gonzales, Tere Jurado, Gloria Preton, and myself, Ken Reves. That completes our membership of the Ortega Park Art Committee.

To say the Art Committee supports and prefers that all existing murals be recreated painted on the new buildings by the original artists following the traditional Chicana /

Chicano muralism as well as the ongoing inclusion of young inspiring artists. Our recommendation and preference is to instead invest funds that would have been spent on costly relocation of murals into the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department's Santa Barbara Arts Alliance Program so that new generations of local youth are provided with art training and mentoring. The Office will continue the tradition of providing local youth with the opportunity to learn about the history of Chicana / Chicano muralism through on-hand training from the master artists / muralists under the umbrella of and support of our future by joining our local artists in solidarity with you, your support, and the city of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department, Ortega Park Renewal Project. Let our voices be heard by contacting your elected leaders at City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts Advisory Committee, and the Historic Landmarks Commission. [SPANISH: Si se puede (Yes we can)] Just a short note.

And while I was on the advisory committee at the Franklin Center, I worked directly with Ricardo Venegas and he supported my advocacy and the committees. It wasn't just mine. It was the committee, like there was Anna Soto at the time. There was Rosa, Rosalinda Palatis. There was Carrie [Teresa]. I'm trying to think of her name. It's alluding me. But anyhow, I'm getting old too. But the thing is, I want to mention that we need to keep the art going. We need to keep it alive. We have murals. We don't have to dig up the muralists that painted these. They're here. Some of them are here. A lot of them are here. We don't have to dig them up and move them. They're here. They can repaint the art. We want to see those moneys diverted to the youth and keep it going. Keep the youth energized, keep them involved. Keep them participating all over Santa Barbara. We need to bring them together. There's too much division. We need to bring them together. And just like we all came here together. We all came here for a common goal. So I'm going to let our youth speak who is on our committee, Maria. She's going to tell us about here experience.

Maria:

Hello. I'm sorry. My time with the Arts Alliance has really given me the opportunity to make friends that I would honestly never have thought I would make. And then also through the Arts Alliance, I've been fortunate enough to save up money since it is a paid program or was a paid program. I've been able to save up and pay for amazing opportunities that have been provided through education. And I just want everybody in the community at least the youth to have the opportunity same as I did to participate and be part of it as it grows our love for the community. I'm not sure if I'm expressing myself right, but that is what was on my mind.

Ken:

Here's now is Ricardo Venegas to say a couple words on behalf of our committee.

Ricardo Venegas:

[SPANISH: Muy buenas tardes a todos ustedes. Mi nombre es Ricardo Venegas. Los últimos 20 años es sido el director del programa del Santa Barbara Arts Alliance atreves de la ciudad de Santa Barbara. Una de las cosas que quiero decir antes que nada es darle las gracias al señor Armando Gallejo, director de Casa de la Raza pro mucho tiempo y a nuestro gran amigo querido profesor Manuel Unzueta. Gracias a ellos. (Good afternoon to all of you. My name is Ricardo Venegas. For the past 20 years I have been the program director for the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance from the City of Santa Barbara. One of the things I want to say first of all is to give thanks to Mr. Armando Vallejo, director of Casa de la Raza for a long time now and our dear friend, Professor Manuel Unzueta. Thanks to them) Thanks to Manuel Unzueta, thanks to Armando Vallejo, we have this

park. Thanks to them for starting that tradition. Thanks to them for doing what needed to be done back in the '70s. You guys know the '70s. It was very difficult for Chicana / Chicano, people of color, to have a sacred space, an important space. These two individuals as young men made that happen for us. Thank you. [SPANISH: *Muchísimas gracias, Lo siento me voy a quitar la máscara me van a desenmascarar. Voy a invitar ahorita a otros colegas, al señor Armando pero quiero también decirles que tenemos a la señora Marina Martínez que también está con el comité y está aquí con nosotros para decirles unas palabras so quiero invitar a Armando. ¿Quieres decir unas palabras?*] (Thank you very much, I apologize I am going to remove my mask. I will now invite some other colleagues, Mr. Armando but I would also like to tell you that we have Ms. Marina Martínez who is also in the committee and is here with us and would like to say a few words. So I would like to invite Armando; would you like to say a few words?)

Armando Vallejo:

[SPANISH: *Ok, buenas tardes* (Good afternoon) One thing that Manuel forgot is that UCSB also destroyed one of his murals the 1970s, the riots, they painted a beautiful mural there and they took it away to make a youth center [SPANISH: *Donde estas Manuel, es cierto o no es cierto* (Where are you, Manuel? Is this true or not true?). So he is really nice. Manuel is really nice, but [SPANISH: *se queda callado* (he stays quiet)] when stuff happens to him. [SPANISH: *Para mí fue un gran placer trabajar con los muchachos aquí del parque. Avía muchas muchas cosas pasando en acá entonces y obviamente yo crecí en la Casa de la Raza si puedo decirlo así.* (For me it was a great pleasure working with the youth here in the park. There were many, many things happening back in those days, and obviously I grew up in Casa de la Raza if I may say so.) Then we came over here and before I forget, one of the kids that painted with us was Alejandra's father, I call him [indiscernible] and Alejandra used to go to the youth center. Am I right? Where is Alejandra? She don't know. As a [SPANISH: *de chiquita, de niña* (as a little child)] she used to come and swim over here in the swimming pool so that's [indiscernible] besides we did a lot of stuff. And obviously you know the Calle Cesar Chavez was thanks to la Casa de la Raza [SPANISH: *y aquí avía como quince murales, los de Puerto Vallarta y unos míos y de Manuel* (There were like 15 murals here, from Puerto Vallarta, and some of mine and Manuel)] and they are all gone. And what really hurts me is, you guys remember the trees we used to climb as little kids, little Mexicanito kids. We used to go way up there and then to come down [SPANISH: *que dios nos ayude* (may god help us)]. But, they got sick. They got sick and they took them away and [indiscernible] at that time. We used to play soccer here. So it is a home, a hometown for us. So [SPANISH: *Muchas gracias, gracias al comité, gracias a todos Y como dicen por ahí si se puede* (Thank you very much, thank you to the committee, thank you all, and as they say, yes we can!)]].

Ricardo Venegas:

[SPANISH: *Permitanme un segundito*] Give me a little more time please. It is very important that I highlight the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance and the cofounder of the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance. And I know he had to get some water. I want to start with Miguel and hopefully he will join us. Where's Miguel? This young man came to us when, what were you, seventh grade? Eighth grade? Eighth grade. And the last 10 years, [Juntacon] was a mass artists together with the rest of the artists, this young man has been responsible for the artistic preservation of the murals here at Ortega Park, at Bohnett Park, Sunflower Park, Eastside Park, and if you guys have an opportunity to go to the Junior High School, you will find a mural inside the building that's about 200 feet long

and 15 feet high that pays honor, it pays tribute to our indigenous mothers and sisters. It's called Earth Mother. We also pay tribute based to this young man and all the rest of the Arts Alliance youth who have come through the program Rainbow Bridge. You need to see that mural as well. But if it wasn't for his commitment and if it wasn't for Carlos Cuellar, again, cofounder of the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance, there would be no murals. And I hope that all of you will support these young people and the next generation as we move forward in developing the new Chicano / Chicana muralism of the future. The redevelopment project or renovation of the murals is going to happen when we fix these walls. The walls are falling apart. The plaster is falling apart. Yeah, [basta], give us the opportunity and the support that we need to double the space so that a new generation of young artists can come in and paint something that's relevant to them with the blessing of many of the original artists from 1979. I want to invite Marina who experienced the work and painting, and she can talk about that and I want you to give testimony and whatever else you need to say. Speak your truth, Marina.

Marina Martinez:

Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Marina Martinez. I am here today because I felt the need to come. I saw this post from my comadre's brother who I hope is around here somewhere and I'll get a chance to talk to. [SPANISH: [Mi nombre es Marina Martinez y sentí que tenía que venir a habar un poco hoy para darles me perspectiva con respeto a lo que está pasando esta controversia pues a lo que veo que se ha convertido a una controversia.](#) (My name is Marina Martinez and I felt the need to come her today to speak about my perspective with respect to what is happening with this controversy, from what I see has become a controversy.)] I wanted to speak about the Ortega Park Murals and my perspective, my feeling with regards to it with all due respect. I see a lot of people here that I've known for a long time. I was here in Santa Barbara for about 13 years. I was the director of the lower west side center for about five or six years. So part of my work was to come to Ortega Park, bring kids, and bring [congrsistas] from UC Santa Barbara to help restore the murals. I worked with Ricardo and I worked with Antonio [Velasquez] and I took classes from Manuel Unzueta [SPANISH: [Señor lo respeto mucho ya sabe](#) (Sir, I have a lot of respect for you, you know)] and Armando I kind of grew up with. He used to be the director of the La Casa de la Raza so I used to go and do a lot of work with him there too. But trying to set aside my feelings because this place means so much to me as well as La Casa. And I'll give you my perspective with regards to all of this. When I was working on these murals in 2001, 2002, 2003, et cetera, it was very, very difficult to restore them because of the walls because they were deteriorating. They were falling apart and so it was really difficult. I am an artist. I don't like to call myself an artist. I've always been the kind of person that's behind the scenes and don't like to do what I'm doing right now, but I felt the need to. But a lot of emotion, a lot of feeling goes into my artwork and I assume the same. I'm happy that most of the people that worked on these murals are here supporting what the city is trying to do to bring this space and make it new. We used to have a lot of community meetings here and it really always needed a lot of work. It still needs a lot of work and it will continue to deteriorate as time passes, and so I'm happy to see that they're going to do something about that.

As Ricardo mentioned, to give our youth a space, a voice to be able to do what many of these people did. Art is a form of expression so I'm also responsible for the murals, the mural project up at UC Santa Barbara in El Centro. Many people do not know that because I've never really spoken about it, so I understand when somebody wants to

change something that you've done and how that feels. I understand all of those emotions and all of those feelings. But unfortunately, times change. Things happen. And again, it's important to give other people an opportunity to renew a space that is for the community and will remain for the community. And thanks to Armando and to Manuel, this space is here. I haven't had a chance to talk to Manuel about what's going on at all and I'll give myself some time to do that, but I wanted to make sure to convey this message from a little bit of a different perspective because I'm looking at it structurally. I'm trying to remove the emotions of all of my time that I spent renovating these murals, the beautiful murals with children, with youth, with a lot of at-risk youth keeping them out of trouble. I understand that a lot of the funding is going to go to pay the same people that participated in creating these beautiful works of art and potentially pay some of our youth to be able to do some of the work, so I see all of that as a positive and I am here to support the mural project, the Ortega Park Restoration Project. I respect everybody involved and I'm happy to see so many people here that care about the space and hopefully we can come to some consensus with regards to what we're going to do here. Thank you.

Ken Reves: So we're going to close and give the mic to be open, and I thank you for this opportunity. Thank you for this platform provided by the Ortega Park Rescue Committee. Did I get that right? Yeah. So for that, we thank the Committee for coming out and having this open space. Again, this neighborhood is long time needs the change we deserve, this community, our people, our youth, we deserve to have a nice multicomplex facility park. We deserve that. We deserve that in this community so let's see it happen. Let's continue to support the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation. Make this happen for us. Make this happen for our children. Make this happen for future families to come.

Alvaro Angeles Suman: [SPANISH: Hola buenas tardes. Mi nombre es Alvaro Ángeles Suman. Soy artista de los fundadores de los murales en 1979 junto con artistas se Puerto Vallarta y locales y pues veo las diferencias que existen entre dos bandas o bandos y me gustaría que nos unificáramos los dos lados y se pueda lograr un buen estar para los dos lados y que puedan hacer nuevos murales las nuevas generaciones especialmente que participen las mujeres. Yo una cosa que me voy a atrever a decir, me gustaría que existiera un cambio en el nombre de Ortega al nombre de Cesar Chavez Park. Gracias. (Hello, good afternoon. My name is Alvaro Angeles Suman. I'm an artist and one of the founders of the 1979 murals along with artist from Puerto Vallarta, and local ones. And well, I see the differences that exist between the two bands or camps and I would like that our two sides unify and achieve a good standing on both sides, and for the new generations to create new murals especially for woman to participate. One thing that I will dare to say is that I would like to see a change in the name of Ortega to the name of Cesar Chavez Park. Thank you)]

Mark Alvarado: And also, I want to say that for all the artists that are coming out today, that the City of Santa Barbara is going to pay them for their time for being here today to express themselves. So do we have some more speakers to come on up? Come on up single file. You have about two to three minutes. And thank you folks for hanging in there. We're just going to let people speak until there's nobody else that wants to speak.

Liliana Hymus: Hello. My name is [Liliana Hymus]. I'm president of the Ethnic Studies Club here at Santa Barbara High School.

Blanca Juan Gonzalez: Hi, my name is Blanca [Juan Gonzalez] and I'm the vice president of the Ethnic Studies Club here at Santa Barbara High School.

Liliana Hymus: We came up here to tell the city to listen to our community and the youth voices here. No matter what ends up happening, whatever the city chooses to do will show where you stand with our community. If you are truly doing this for the community, then listen to us and to please do all that you can for the people who live and grow up here and not for the people who vacation here for a weekend. When I look at the design for the park, I see a tourist attraction, not something for the community.

Blanca: These murals have an importance to us and significance. It doesn't matter what background you're from. If you look at these murals, you will find something of yourself in here. I know that for a fact because when I come here, I see myself here. My parents, my family, everyone is represented in those murals. So like Lilli said, we need these murals, and we need the community to listen to us and realize that this is our connection, this is who we are, this is where we're from.

Liliana Hymus: Thank you.

Ed Daris: Good afternoon. My name is Ed Daris, born and raised locally here. In fact, some of you might remember the green house across the street with the concrete rocky driveway and whatnot. Well, that was the first home I came home to out of the hospital. That was grandma's house. It's kind of ironic because my parents met at this park, so I've been associated with this park for most of my life. And the one thing that we know about this neighborhood is that it's a very densely populated area, and when the murals first went up, it was such a boon for everybody because everybody around this area wanted to go over there to Quarantina Street and see what's happening, right, Craig? From here to there. I mean, my first job over there trying to get involved was cleaning paintbrushes and I thought that was the best job in the world. I'd come home with paint on my shirt and they'd go, hey, where you been? I've been on the corner at Quarantina Street watching the murals go up. And that became a prideful thing for this community. And this area around the park, as you well know, some of these are one, two, maybe a three-bedroom house with eight people living in it, so the park became the outlet and kind of like the counseling area for people to go ahead and say, you know what, son, let's go to the park and walk a little bit. You come down here and you start looking at all the artwork. You start looking at all the different things around and you say, hey, what does that mean? Hey, what does that mean to us now? Why is it there? And so you kind of work through all of your family things. You go back to your crib and the house don't seem so small anymore. But that was the way it was back then and it's nice to see that there's that type of interest in bringing it back to that, to the community.

The one thing that I'd like to suggest is that if there's not enough vertical space to replicate some of these different pieces of artwork around here, I might want to suggest that we do the same thing the City of Santa Barbara has done to their building department. They've went ahead and produced those on tiles and put them down on the walking surfaces. That's a little bit easier for some of the young kids to see and whatnot and some of these pieces of artwork look fantastic. They've done it over there at the Building Department. They've done it at the 154 Interchange. And they've done it down at the beach. So there is a precedent for something like that to be done. I just think that

you need to preserve all of this work in some fashion, and I understand that there may not be enough surfaces available all the time. Well, then there has to be another solution. You can't just drop it and say, okay, well then, we won't use this one and we won't do that one, because they're all important to the community just like everybody here and everybody who wanted to be here. It's just as important to the community. Thanks for showing up. Appreciate it.

Jose Arturo Gallegos:

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Jose Arturo Gallegos. I was born here in Santa Barbara. My mom came from the state of Durango in Mexico in 1952 at the age of 19. She was a live-in housekeeper, nanny, on Sheffield Drive. And when I was born in 1956, I spent about three-and-a-half, maybe almost four years living in Montecito. After Sheffield Drive, she was a live-in housekeeper on Miramar Lane for the maternal grandmother of the two boys that she helped raise on Sheffield Drive. I miss that house. I have fond memories. When the lady passed away, Mrs. Walker, about maybe somewhere mid-1960 or 1961 is when we moved here to the Eastside and we were living for about a year or so on the 300 block of North Voluntario and then we moved to the 400 block of North Voluntario. And then when I was a teen, we moved to [indiscernible] Lane. And we lived in that neighborhood up until 1988. So I do have my biggest fond memories of Ortega Park, especially when I was going to Santa Barbara Junior High School. And I went to Franklin School as well and Craig Gilbert and I, we were old Eastside kids. We've known each other for, well, he remembers me from Franklin, but then I remember him from Santa Barbara Junior High and Santa Barbara High School. We never hung out, but we always showed respect for one another.

One thing. I'm all for preserving these murals, but I'm going to ask one question and I want people to raise their hands. How many Asians do we have here in this group? Okay. And how many blacks do we have? Raise your hands. Black people, including you, Greg. How many Italianos do we have here? Any Italianos? None. Oh, I'm surprised. Oh, there we go. We've got some Italianos. Because the one thing that I learned growing up in the Eastside, we had a black community, we had Asian community, we had the Italianos. And if you see those old, old homes throughout the Eastside that are architecturally designed Mediterranean style, those were built by Italian stone masons. Now, what I'm saying is, yes, preserve these murals, but why not have murals paying homage and tribute to the Asians, to the blacks, the Italians. Why not? I'm for diversity. That's how I grew up. You see this hat? This is an authentic Australian hat from Australia. My low rider in the late '70s until about mid-'80s was the 1960 MGA Roadster, 1600 ccs, or new carb, new SU carbs, and that car was a nightmare. If you're familiar with the Lucas electronics of British sportscars, it's a pain. My mechanic was here on East Cota Precision Automotive. If you remember Precision Automotive, many of you. The mechanic, Chuck, he told me one time when I used to take my car there for him to work on it, he goes, you know what, if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be able to make my house payments.

But anyways, but the one thing that I do remember distinctively coming here when I was going to Junior High School, living on [indiscernible] Lane, I heard bagpipe music. Bagpipes. Where is that coming from? So either I walked or rode my bike, I don't remember which, but when I got here, there was a group of guys playing the pipes. They were from British, Irish, Scottish background, and I really, really, because not only do I

have Spanish- Mexican blood in me running through my veins, I have Celtic blood and I also have Moorish blood, and I am proud of being not only Spanish and Mexican, but I'm very proud of being of Celtic and Moorish descent. So please, let's not only preserve these murals, but let's have murals that will pay tribute to the Asians, to the blacks, to the Italians. And I do remember Chinatown in Santa Barbara when I was a kid. Thank you.

David:

Hello everyone and good afternoon and thank you for showing up, men, women, children, everyone. For some of you that don't know me, my given name is David, but most of you around here know me as Snoo. So first of all, I'd like to thank you some of the dignitaries first of all, Mark Alvarado, for some of the city councilmen, the mayor, Ms. Alejandra, and anybody else that I may have missed. I'm really not used to speaking in front of a crowd and it took me a couple days to try to figure out what I was going to say here tonight or today, but I think I've just narrowed it down to one thing and the whole thing is, the reason we're all here is to try to preserve these murals. And in all essence then, we have to sort of look back and thank all the people that were a part of it. Mr. Unzueta, Manuel Unzueta. And I think people mentioned a couple people, Cliff Lambert from the Boys Club, Donny Ye, George Chilini, David Jackson, Craig Gilbert. Where's Eddie at? Oh, there. We played football together. We played football together. Just a brief history because I know you're running out of time. Anyway, I went to Franklin School. After that I went to Santa Barbara Junior High. Then after that I went to Santa Barbara High. And after that I went to Santa Barbara City College. So I've been here. I mean, this is my home. This is my home, the city of Santa Barbara. And I really have to give Mr. Unzueta a big round of applause for the effort that he's done in painting these murals. And like I said, I wanted to keep it brief. I didn't really know what I was going to say. I didn't want to get all deep. But I just said, I'm going to let everything come up from my heart and that's really about it. Okay. Anyway, thank you for your time.

Victoria:

Hello. [SPANISH: Hola soy Victoria voy a hablarles en español no puedo hablar sin leer. Han dicho mucho sobre el parque Ortega en el periódico y en otros lugares todo en inglés así que les quería hablar en español. Eh vivido aquí en Santa Barbara por 30 años fui maestra en Cleveland School. Soy madre de dos niños adultos. Me importan los murales reflejan nuestra comunidad la cultura y la gente. Me importan los niños y su futuro. Todos queremos lo mejor para nuestros niños queremos que crezcan sanos y que toman buenas decisiones y que no se metan en problemas. Queremos que tengan las mejores oportunidades posibles. El futuro del parque Ortega juega un papel en esto en el futuro de nuestra comunidad. Mi opinión es que todo el mundo debería de tener la oportunidad de aprender a nadar y nadar bien. Este es un problema de salud y seguridad pública. También los nadadores fuertes tienen acceso a deportes acuáticos y acceso al océano [indiscernible] participar en natación competitiva puede brindar oportunidades educativas. Para hacer todo esto necesitamos mejores instalaciones acuáticas en el parque Ortega. Incluso una piscina de tamaño [indiscernible] Si están de acuerdo o si quieren saber más me gustaría hablar con ustedes. Gracias. (Hi I'm Victoria I'm going to speak to you in Spanish, I can't speak without reading. They talk a lot about Ortega Park in the paper and elsewhere all in English so I wanted to speak to you in Spanish. I have lived here in Santa Barbara for 30 years. I was a teacher at Cleveland School. I'm a mother of two adult children. I care about the murals, they reflect our community, the culture and the people. I care about children and their future. We all want what's best for our children we want them to grow up healthy and make good choices and not get in trouble. We want them to have

the best possible opportunities. The future of Ortega Park plays a role in this, in the future of our community. My opinion is that everyone should have the opportunity to learn to swim and swim well. This is a public health and safety issue. Also strong swimmers have access to water sports and access to the ocean [indiscernible] participating in competitive swimming can provide educational opportunities. To do all this we need better aquatic facilities in Ortega Park. Even a pool of [indiscernible] size. If you agree or if you want to know more I would like to speak with you. Thank you).

Mark Alvarado:

We wanted to wrap this up by 3:00 but we have speakers and we're going to allow everyone to speak. But we are going to have to stop at 3:15, okay? So it's just right before 3:00, so everybody who's going to speak, please be as brief as possible. But while I am up here, I do want to recognize somebody, an artist that didn't speak, and that's Manuel's daughter, Annette, who worked on these murals as well as a little girl and she's here now as an adult. Annette, just put your hand up so people know who you are.

John Huerta:

[SPANISH: Muy buenas tardes a todos soy John Huerta from Santa Barbara California. Quiero decirle a toda la gente aquí en este momento es muy importante, sabemos la importancia de estos murales culturales aquí en el parque Ortega. Yo soy de aquí yo soy Chicano no soy Mexicano pues Mexicano de corazón por seguro. Aquí estamos en la tierra diciendo la importancia otra vez a preservar estos murales con la mano de dios con la mano de la comunidad con los maestros con todos gracias a los artistas al departamento de Parques y Recreación. (Good afternoon everyone. I'm John Huerta from Santa Barbara, California. I want to say to all the people here today that this moment is very important. We all know the importance of these cultural murals here in Ortega Park. I'm from here, I am Chicano, I'm not Mexican, well at heart for sure. Here we are on this earth talking about the importance of the preservation of these murals with God at hand, with the community at hand, with the professors, with everyone. Thank you to all the artists and Parks and Recreation department.) Once again, John Michael Huerta from Santa Barbara, California, seventh generation Santa Barbara resident and grew up on the Eastside on 312 [indiscernible] 1116 Carpinteria Street. As a young child, I grew up on Voluntario in the heart of the Eastside. These murals are important to me as a person and as a member of the community because no matter what they depict, what is put upon these walls it's up to the interpretation of the viewer, the individual. If you cannot read or you're out of school on detention and you walk into this park, you're going to be magically transferred to another place where you're going to feel a sense of belonging and empowerment and motivation and purpose. If you're a young man, whether black, white, Chicano, Mexicano, [indiscernible], [indiscernible] you're going to be here. You're going to feel like you belong. Because when you look at this art, it touches your heart and soul. The murals to me represent a window into the past that can allow me to exist as I am today in the present, and for that I'm very thankful to Manuel Unzueta as well as all the community as a whole because for many years I was doing things that were not productive for this community. Now I'm here allowing myself to take part in the Eastside community as a resident, giving back rather than taking away, inspiring and guiding like a light in a dark tunnel for the youth of this future generation. It's important to preserve these not just for Mexicanos y Chicanos, once again, but for our community as a whole. We need this as a cultural hub so people can be here to have a place to meet without worrying about permits and other places. We can have our Cinco de Mayos here. We could have car shows here. We can have workshops to benefit single mothers. Young

children who want to make money, they could have art and workshops here. They could be stewards of this. Long story short because I know we don't have much time; this is important for our community as a whole. It is the center of the community and we did not have a volley of criticism during the meeting. What we had was concerns which were well-founded because as residents, and myself in recovery, we have a sense of ownership, stewardship, and empowerment and we've got to pass that torch along and all are invited to come on this journey. Thank you very much. God bless.

Dora Maria Perez:

[SPANISH: Hola buenas tardes mi nombre es Dora Maria Perez. Soy Mexicana llegue aquí a la edad de 19 años. Vengo en apoyo de preservar los murales de aquí del maestro Unzueta. Soy parte de la comunidad me creo realmente parte de esta comunidad de Santa Barbara. No solamente este parque pertenece a la comunidad chicana afro-americana sino a toda la comunidad en general yo creo que aquí tenemos una comunidad multicultural donde se aprendido, en especial yo aprendido mucho de toda esta comunidad no solamente de los Chicanos pero también de gente de otros países como Rusia, Asia, El Salvador, Sur América, y yo creo que eso nos hace especiales, mantener esa gran unión como gente latina como gente Chicana, como gente Mexicana y eh aprendido mucho atreves de ese tiempo. Yo curse en las clases de ESL como segunda lengua en el 1995. Y eh aprendido mucho de todo esto. Para mi este parque es muy importante porque me envuelto en cuestiones sociales y políticas aquí en la comunidad de Santa Barbara este era, es uno de los puntos muy importantes donde la comunidad se ha unido. Recuerdo el primer de Mayo del 2006 que toda la comunidad más de 15,000 personas se reunieron para pelear, no pelear pero advocar por los derechos de las personas por los derechos de igualdad no solamente de la comunidad latina o la comunidad chicana si no que la comunidad en general. Para mí esto es algo muy importante el estar aquí apoyando la preservación de los murales muchísimas gracias, y gracias por su tiempo a todos. (Hello, good afternoon. My name is Dora Maria Perez. I am Mexican, I came here at the age of 19. I'm here to support the preservation of Professor Unzueta's murals. I am part of the community, I truly feel part of this Santa Barbara community. This park does not only belong to the Chicano Afro-American community but to all the community in general. I believe what we have here is a multi-cultural community where we have learned, especially I have learned a lot about this community, not only of the Chicanos but also people of other countries like Russia, Asia, El Salvador, South America. And I believe this makes us special, maintain that great union as Latino people, Chicano people, Mexican people and I've learned a lot throughout this time. I attended ESL classes in 1995 as a second language and I learned a lot about all this. For me, this park is very important because I have been involved in social and political issues here in the community of Santa Barbara this era, it is one of the very important points where the community has come together. I remember on May 1, 2006, that the entire community more than 15,000 people came together to fight, not fight, but advocate for people's rights for equality rights not only of the Latino community or the Chicano community but of the community at large. For me this is a very important thing to be here supporting the preservation of the murals thank you very much, and thank you all for your time.)

Thomas Costello:

Hello. My name is Thomas Costello. I was born over here on Olive Street, two blocks away in the same house that my mother was born in in 1909. But we have a lot of history here with the facility. I remember my mom would tell me stories about why Olive Street

used to be called Canal Street because the water just rushed by there and the flood all the time. This place here used to be the city dump where they dropped a lot of the debris after the 1925 earthquake. Most of this [indiscernible] was recovered from the [slew] that used to be here. After many years, for example, the park was used as a facility for the local neighborhood. When I was 10 years old, I witnessed a fellow get stabbed in the bathrooms over here over a drug deal and it was kind of a rough place to grow up, but we stuck around and made sure that the park was properly used. More recently for example back in the 1970s, we even entertained the idea of renaming the park from Ortega Park to Ruben Salazar Park who was the news reporter that was killed in the Los Angeles riots. I see now that as the time goes by, our values change, and we have to keep history updated. The murals that we have here are very attractive to certain portions of the community that like their history. Other people like to look forward and try to make something different out of here. I know that the people in the sports community are very interested in preserving the use of the fields for athletic functions. And then as the community center here, the neighborhood house here has always been a good meeting place for the community groups, and we need to preserve these kinds of facilities in order to allow the future generations to share in the kind of experiences that we were able to enjoy here. And I hope that people will continue to support the facilities over at the Casa de la Raza. They're selling tamales today just trying to keep afloat and dealing with the hardships of the pandemic. We have to support each other and see if we can preserve as many of these facilities that we can for the future generation. So thank you for listening.

Unidentified Speaker:

We'd like to thank Tony, the technician here, for adjusting the mics to [SPANISH: A chaparrito Chicano from Santa Barbara (a Chicano shorty)]. Today we thank everybody here present and the creators' blessings. We thank [indiscernible]. We thank the four winds and perfect harmony. We thank everybody in the circle of life. We thank all the dignitaries and the political officials. But we also have a historical political consequence. What kind of park has basketball without rims? What kind of park has a park without benches and barbecue pits? What's a park without singers that used to play their cards here and there's kiosks? What is this center without a docent and no park monitor here for 30 years? Why are we here today? So we can discuss why we're changing it? I want to play basketball. I want to go swim. I have pictures of me swimming in this kiddie pool. I learned how to swim in this kiddie pool. And be friends with everybody. Why? This whole world on the Eastside, this District 1 with our representative, Alejandra, we thank Armando Vallejo for the political struggle in the '90s that ran [indiscernible] in '94 against Gilbert Garcia. Mark [indiscernible] ran in '94. He lost, but he planted a seed, a political seed. Armando Vallejo in the sense of developing a political consciousness of who we are, why we neglect it. We shouldn't be fighting. We shouldn't be resistant. But we thank them because we thank Manuel Unzueta. He was my first Chicano Chicana studies professor at Santa Barbara City College. [SPANISH: Si se puede (Yes we can!)] In '93 as students of [indiscernible], we helped restore in '93 and '94 and '96 Chicano history. In '93, we had Walter Capps and Lois Capps go to the mural and paint and recognize the history of the Eastside. Had large systems and political districts in Santa Barbara created marginalization and political racism. District-based elections created a representational government that now we have somebody that looks like us. In the '90s and the early 2000s, we have gang injunctions, we have gentrification. Now, let's not have part gentrification. It should be full preservation of all the murals. Our murals are our life. Our murals are our history. And our murals are our people. Once we forget that, we forget

who we are. So Coneso, I'd like to thank all the organizers [indiscernible] you were one of the founders of La Casa de la Raza. So all la chichinata, all the chichinismo is special in Santa Barbara. Why? In April 11th, 12th, and 13th of 1969, 300 individuals came from the southwest and met at UCSB and sparked El Plan de Santa Barbara, a Chicano plan for higher education. So what we're reflecting on like the professor said is our history. And like the word says, therefore we exist. We shouldn't be dis-historified when we're really here. To all the people here, to the elders and the students, thank you. To the creators, blessings.

Samuel Manuales:

[SPANISH: *Mi nombre es Samuel Manuales buenas tardes* (My name is Samuel Manuales, good afternoon.)] My name is Samuel Manuales and I think it's very important to give testimony to the kind of power that our community has because there's institutional racism, there's white supremacy, there's colonialism, and so I think that we have to make sure that we use our voice whenever possible. I grew up in the city two blocks near [indiscernible] and I've been gone for about 20 years. I took a [indiscernible] after I don't remember how long. I was part of the restoration of the mural on Quarantina. And then I left for professional opportunities. So being back, it's interesting to hear about the controversy. It's only been a couple of months because of the pandemic. And it just made me think about let me go back to this park and reflect. So I came one of the nights because it had been a while and I remember all the memories that started to come while being here. For example, going with my cousins or my siblings, friends to wait in line to go to the pool that opened up. And I remember we would stand by the wall waiting and waiting and we would play games or point to the artwork, make up stories, things that we would do as children. Now at the time, I probably didn't know what was going on just like many of you probably don't remember when you learned your ABCs. But I'm sure you're glad that you learned them. So in a similar way, I didn't realize that these images in a community that I grew up in would have an affirmative positive impact in my cultural memory because the fact that I can come back and think about all these things, how important the cultural arts and identity affirmation is for a community that has been historically marginalized. And I want to just put in the context why this matters because often we might think it's just one struggle but it's not. The 1960s and '70s were the moment globally in which social changes happened. In particular, a lot of the countries in Africa and in Asia were decolonizing from Europe and that inspired a movement of civil rights, black power, Chicano power, and a variety of other movements here against the war. It's the first time historically in which people then affirmed who they are. So people go from being Negroes to identifying as black, from being Orientals to being Asian Americans, from being Spicks to Chicanos. It's a moment in which we take back the colonial wounds that our communities have experienced. We're marginalized. We're neglected. And we're erased. And so I think people just think, oh, this is nice art. No, it's not. It's a way to restore our spirit. It's a way to give dignity. It's a way for us to come back to who we are.

And so I think that we have to see historically here the resistance efforts, this is one of the manifestations. Not the only one, but one of them in which art and people come together and put the writings on the wall literally. So if a city didn't even think about what this would mean just replicates this colonialist racist white supremacist logic that we're all under. And we really need to think about how to transform that. So to restore or to say

we're going to keep the murals is a way in affirming these marginalized communities. It's a way to also go beyond the rhetoric which we hear a lot about.

If we look to the '60s, there are so many parallels to what's happening right now. Our communities are still under attack. Black Lives Matter does not mean that other lives don't matter. It means that we have to call attention to the racist legacy of police terrorism in our communities. We have violence against the Asian community. We have a lot of other problems that existed in the '60s and are still existing now. So I think it's an opportunity. What we do here to affirm this space, but it doesn't have to end here. It can go beyond that, to have a lot of questions for us and for us to think about how the struggles are interconnected with so many other ones that exist. Does the city have a land acknowledgement for the Chumash people? We have to even start from that perspective. I'm glad [indiscernible] but then can we also talk about the caretakers for the land for time immemorial. I think that's something we need to think about for the city and land acknowledgement to acknowledge the Chumash people in all public events. That would be one of the ways in which we can start to decolonize.

Another thing to think about is like the gentrification. I've been gone for 20 years and now that I'm back, I can see it happening. And so is this park renovation, how is that going to impact the community that's here? The park will be more attractive. People are going to continue to be pushed out. It's very expensive. So there's so many issues for us to think about. And so I just invite us to think about how this can be a very healing moment. It can be a transformative moment. And hopefully a wakeup call to the city in terms of moving forward. We need more ethnic studies everywhere. There's so much that we have to do and growing up in this city is yes, the tourism, the beautiful, the weather and the trees and all this stuff, it's great. When you're marginalized in this community you often don't even see the aesthetics of the beauty because you're struggling and you're working a lot. A lot of undocumented people. So as we see the issues are a lot, but if we come together and see this as a moment to inspire us to continue to do this work, it does not have to end here. It's part of a process. Yes, we should have murals honoring the Asian American community and the black community too. Why does it mean that this park has to be the one that does everything? No. This is one park. There are many other parks and there are other ways in which we can come together to raise awareness to the critical issues that are at stake here. So I just invite us to think about that and how we can move forward with these very healing and very loving ways and I think that it's an opportunity to just think about how we can have a vision and a practice to align with that much like was enacted in the '60s and '70s here. So here for the new generation, how can we continue to do this as we move forward?

Mark Alvarado:

Our final speaker has been waiting patiently and then he had to go use the restroom. And so he's up. So he's going to have just a few minutes left here. Just want to say, if you can help us, stick around just to break down the tables and chairs, they're just going to go in this room if you want to help volunteer to do that at the end. But thank everybody for coming out. This was great really that we were able to do this. It was recorded and this will be on city television so if you didn't want to be on TV, nothing I can tell you about that now. But anyways, Mr. Ron Parish.

Ron Parish:

If everyone can't see this, I will stick around as long as I can. I'm kind of ill today for a whole lot of reasons but I'm here. I had to be here when Mark called me and said let's do

this. But first of all, I want to tell you that I'm Apache, white, and black. I don't tell many people that. So there seems to be a lot of people who want to say, 'Where's that?' Apache, white, and black. I'm all messed up. I'm also in charge and on the board of directors of the George Floyd mural. How many of you have seen it yet? And then Nelson Mandela, that represents all the people also. The [indiscernible] started over here. I've been here 20 years in Santa Barbara because I marched one time with white people, black people, [blew my mind]. Anapamu 1812. Some of you remember that people remember Marty Blum was the mayor. But the bottom line is that all the murals here including the one that [indiscernible] Cadillac green and EOS [indiscernible] it should remain because it's the same. [indiscernible] I've got. I'm not even a painter, but I'll be damned if I've been in awe of what just happened to me recently. I created this completely by hand and it represents the trees, represents mother earth, all those different beautiful birds represents all you folks right here. Everyone of you. The black, white, Indian, Asian, or whoever and so forth. And you see [indiscernible] and I'd like to think that the band members and music on the right [indiscernible], but that could be anybody. They're singing music with the birds. Birds getting along like that one. We say it's a hummingbird. I don't have anything left to say but keep all these murals here. Just space them all over the city. What the hell? I mean, excuse me. But anyway, let's space them all over the city and keep them all up. And we had one disrespectful person when we first put up Floyd about four or five days. We haven't had no trouble since then. Everything's fine. One more thing. I lecture at Ronald Regan University and I tell all the white students that they don't have to look like me to be related to me. Save all you all, my brothers or my brothers from another mother and the sisters or my sisters from another mother. I was born by the river and the river [indiscernible] whoa. Just like the river, I've been running [indiscernible] long time. A long time coming but I know with the help of everyone out there, change is going to come. Whoa. Yes, it will. Bye you all.