

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING NOTES

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2021, 10:30 AM
VIDEO CONFERENCE

Members Present: Robert Abraham, Member
Pedro Alanis, Member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Chair
Taneka Nikki Johnson, Member
Ed Hinojosa, Member
Sarah Sanchez, Member

Members Absent: Jeff Arndt, Member
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member
Susan Richardson, Member

Staff Present: Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Juan Valdez, *Mayor's Office*;
Jameene Williams, *City Attorney's Office*;
Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Edward Gonzales, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Irma Duran, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Allison Beaver, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Rachel Smith, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Colton Powell, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sharon Chan, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*

-
- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Jessica O. Guerrero at 10:34 AM.
 - **Roll Call** – Irma Duran called the roll. At the time when roll call was conducted, five (5) members were present representing a quorum. *Commissioner Sanchez entered at 10:41 AM AM.*
 - **Public Comments** – Duran announced there was one (1) resident signed up to speak for public comment.
 1. Lorena Ortega, resident at Westover Crossings, spoke regarding general comment. She stated her concerns regarding a large number of pests in her neighborhood and requested to know how the City handles these types of issues. Ortega stated that in her previous state of Illinois, they would fumigate once every six months. She noted due to the intense summer heat, the pests would increase and expressed concern regarding the environment for her child with disabilities. She expressed to have this concern guided to the correct agency for a quick resolution.

Staff note: The Housing Commission deadline for comment is 4 pm the day before the meeting. The reason for this is because it takes 24 hours for comments received in a language other than English to be translated. Speakers who call past the deadline are given

the opportunity to submit a written comment to be included in the minutes but not read during the meeting, and to sign up in advance for the following meeting.

1. Item #1: Update on the San Antonio Housing Trust (SAHT) Joint Transition Committee (JTC) Recommendations.

Guerrero requested Commissioner Pedro Alanis to present.

Alanis stated the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) recommended strategic re-alignments of the four SAHT Boards to better balance collective skills and promote unified policy development. These changes were necessary as there was a real and perceived imbalance of authority and lack of coordination between the Boards. From the recommendation, the JTC was established in September 2020 to oversee the change. During the course of several sessions, many changes were decided upon including:

- Unified Board governing structures
- Staggered appointment terms
- For Public Facilities Corporation (PFC) and Finance Corporation (FC), Community Advisors that are elected to Officer positions can have voting rights
- Revision for the Statement of Purpose
- Process development to select Community Board Members
- Establishing consistency between all entities' bylaws

Alanis noted that due to statutory rights (ex. Texas Local Government Code Chapter 394) in the FC and PFC, a director must be “a member of the governing body, an officer, or an employee of the local government.” As such, Community Board Members are allowed access to confidential/sensitive documents along with their committee rights, but only individuals that are elected to an Officer position may be able to vote on board actions.

Alanis highlighted the former Statement of Purpose and noted that it concentrated on inner city and downtown neighborhoods. He stated the JTC conveyed that the SAHT should be able to assist all residents of San Antonio and specific needs can be address in the policy making level. He read the revised Statement as follows:

The SAHT will be committed to creating and preserving housing that is primarily affordable, accessible, attainable, and/or sustainable to residents within the City of San Antonio; and to support community development efforts that build and sustain neighborhoods, empower residents, and provide for positive equitable outcomes.

Alanis stated the proposed changes to the governing structure would ensure unity across each Board. Structures would have 5 Council members, 6 Community members (an even amount of Housing Experts and Community Representatives), and 1 City member. He noted the structure would also provide consistent transparency in each Board. The Mayor would nominate Council appointments and the SAHT Governance Committee would coordinate recommendations for the Community appointments for Council approval. Board members would have 4-year staggering terms and have the potential for an additional 4-year renewal. Each Board would have officer positions consisting of President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Alanis stated that the benefit of having a 4-year term would be having continuity during times of municipal elections and potentially new council members. He added members do have an option to resign during their term if needed.

Board Presidents would be able to create ad-hoc committees for specific tasks. However, the Governance and Policy Committee along with the Finance and Audit Committee would be standing as they oversee evaluations and audits. Each standing committee must have at least 1 Council and 1 Community Director. Alanis detailed that the three Community Representative should have prior experience in housing advocacy, non-profit fundraising, policy making, community engagement, or reside in an affordable housing unit. The three Housing Industry Experts should have experience in real estate, financial underwriting, property development, or other relevant housing industry experience.

Alanis stipulated that the Community Board selection process would begin after Council approved the re-alignment. An education and application campaign would be undertaken by the SAHT. The City Clerk would forward accepted applications to the City Attorney for vetting and the vetted applications would be provided to the JTC for selection recommendations to Council. Upon Council approval of the new members, organizational documents will be filed with the State and the JTC would be disbanded. Timeline for the re-alignment approval by Council is June 10, 2021. Board member application and selection processes would commence in July and Council consideration and approval should be in August 2021.

Guerrero stated that Commissioner Richardson was not able to attend the session but sent the following comments and questions:

- Four years as a Community Director is a considerable amount of time to commit to as a volunteer.
- I believe all Community Advisers should be able to vote whether or not they are an officer - especially if requiring them to have housing background.
- Without voting capabilities, what exactly would be the role of a Community Adviser be?
- How long would the terms be for Community Trustees and Community Advisers?

Alanis responded that initially the JTC recommended a standard 2-year term. After discussions, the JTC expressed a need for more continual presence for the opportunity to have lasting impact. As Council appointments could revolve every two years, the six Community members would be more significant to discussions and views. He noted that the term is longer but hoped that members would be passionate to make changes, support leadership through advisement, and build trust with transparency. Ian Benavidez, Assistant Director, also noted that the consistency of community presence across the structures aid in transparency by having the ability to discuss and coordinate efforts for more effectiveness.

Commissioner Sanchez exited at 11:17 AM.

Commissioner Johnson expressed that Community Members serving should have capacity to vote as they are giving equal time and effort. She requested clarity of the scope of duties for Community Members. Alanis stated the main difficulty for voting was due to the state statute designating only certain members voting ability (ex. a member of the governing body, an officer, or an employee of the local government). He stated that the primary duty for members is to inform the process and contribute toward the direction of the board. He noted the boards must remain true to the statute as the elected officials have been charged with authority for city resources from the residents. However, Community Members can view important, sensitive documents and bring up concerns or issues. As such, the role of

advisor is crucial and influential. Johnson expressed that as the Community Members are crucial for the process, the process should consider encompassing voting as it would assist in the members impactfulness.

Guerrero appreciated the intention to merge community expertise and council consideration. She inquired if there were any alternatives proposed for voting rights, could be a position that carried weight like voting power, and active methods to support Community Members' participation in the process. Alanis stated that during the third JTC meeting, the proposal for all Community Members to have voting rights were proposed. After researching the statute and discovering the confines, a workaround was proposed for members to have the ability to become officers and vote. Council members would still have the majority influence as they are tasked with the authority by residents. But Community members would be able to review SAHT information and guide Council in their discussions, creating an opportunity for transparency, inclusivity, and influence.

Guerrero asked if there was an obligation for a Community Member hold an officer position. Alanis noted that there was not an obligation that the Board members elect a Community Member to an officer position. The Board can establish a subcommittee with a different composition (but having at least one Council and one Community member each) to recommend items for full Board consideration. Benavidez clarified that state statute defines voting and non-voting members, ensuring elected officials that are ultimately responsible should vote. But Community members can be elected to an officer role by the Board, creating a balance for continuity, transparency, and bringing concerns and knowledge to the table. Guerrero asked for clarification that within the four boards, Community Members were able to vote (ex. Trust Board), but others had a limitation from the statute (ex. Finance Corp.) so there was a balancing act to establish consistency throughout all boards. Alanis agreed.

Guerrero stated with her personal experience as a community advocate and volunteer, she understands there is price for her labor of love. As there are varying burdens from each stakeholder, there should be support for equitable participation. Alanis noted and agreed there is time and effort requirement for a labor of love. He commented though a person's time is not able to be paid, reasonable costs of participation have been built in by the SAHT and can be reimbursed. Guerrero noted a distinction between participation of members as a privilege and as a right. She stated that many participate to change their own housing rights.

Guerrero inquired if there were guiding principles for the Mayor to consider regarding council member appointments. She noted that previous appointments were from the inner city and currently includes inner-city and District 9. Alanis stated that NALCAB's recommendation noted to not have only inner-city appointments but citywide, specifically appointments that would be active and contribute. Verónica R. Soto, Director, also noted that inclusion of other districts has never been prohibited, but the practice of designating council members in certain districts was normalized. Mayor Nirenberg addressed this normalization and noted that all of San Antonio has housing affordability needs.

Guerrero asked regarding the "and/or sustainable" attribute in the Statement of Purpose. Alanis noted that the inclusion of sustainability is a goal for all projects. Program sustainability is considered along with affordability, accessibility, and attainability but the final decision will come down the current need in San Antonio. SAHT will have leeway focus on items such as senior living or single-family residences. Guerrero asked for

clarification if sustainability was centered around financial stability or environmental sustainability. Alanis stated the term could be used in both ways.

Commissioner Abraham commented regarding the revised Statement of Purpose. He noted that the inclusion all of San Antonio not just the inner city and downtown neighborhoods was a good revision as all of San Antonio needs affordable housing.

Guerrero asked Alanis' preference of how to gather and present Commissioner feedback. Alanis stated that city staff could review and notate session feedback for the Planning and Land Development Committee (PLDC) meeting on Tuesday. Benavidez confirmed that staff would be able to collect comments and give to Alanis to present during PLDC.

Johnson requested a compilation of the Commissioner comments and suggestions. Benavidez stated that staff would compile and send them out to all the Commissioners.

Duran noted that the meeting details and public commenting sign up for the May 26th meeting has been posted and to please check the Housing Commission page on the NHSD website for details.

Closing-

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 11:55 AM.