

**CULTURE & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021
2:00 PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
Staff Present:	Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Jameene Williams, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Scott Zimmerer, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Venessa Rodriguez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Veronica Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Melody Woosley, <i>Director, Human Services Department</i> ; Edward Gonzales, <i>Interim Assistant Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Patrick Steck, <i>Interim Assistant Director, Human Services Department</i> ; Sara Wamsley, <i>Housing Policy Manager, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Barbara Ankamah, <i>Neighborhood Housing Administrator, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Neighborhood Housing Administrator, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Patricia Santa Cruz, <i>Grants Manager, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Ana Bradshaw, <i>Assistant to the Director, Human Resources Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	None

Call to Order

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

Point of Personal Privilege

Councilmember Treviño requested a moment of reflection on the events that transpired at the Capital in Washington DC yesterday. He noted that all Councilmembers made a choice to serve and were fortunate to have been elected by the people, to serve the people of San Antonio whether or not all were in agreement. He stated that the Committee provided a direct connection to neighborhoods and neighborhood leadership was the first building block of our local government. He added that it was a privilege to facilitate the voices of the residents and respectful public input was integral to the democratic process that was alive and well in the City.

Public Comment

Written Testimony

Written public comments have been submitted and are attached to the minutes.

Live Testimony

Rose Hill, President, Government Hill Neighborhood Alliance, stated that having more than one neighborhood association (NA) created confusion and division and called for the City and the NAs to work together and not against each other. She stated that the Neighborhood Engagement Officer (NEO) position with a salary range of \$54,000 to \$71,000 was a waste of taxpayer money and neighborhood associations knew best about what was happening in their neighborhoods.

Kayla Miranda stated that Westside residents struggled everyday as low-income renters in areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic and a 100% standalone Renter's Commission was needed. She noted that to include landlord counterparts in the Renter's Commission would be to say that renters' voices did not matter.

Councilmember Perry exited the meeting at this time.

Benjamin Vigil stated that it was ironic that a Renter's Commission did not already exist to support renters' voices and their specific situations. He added that when renters felt empowered, they would become a greater part of the community. He asked why the City could not push forward a novel solution so that renters could have a voice.

D'Ette Cole stated that she was a resident of the Government Hill neighborhood which had undergone four re-zoning cases for eight properties covering two blocks that were re-zoned for commercial development. She added that neighbors most impacted by the proposed rezoning lived within 200 feet of the proposed rezoning area and had to educate themselves on the re-zoning process. She noted that from their point of view, City staff were more engaged in helping and facilitating the Applicant and the commercial developers. She stated that ten affordable homes would be lost, all but one of the homes were lived in only seven months ago, and that the system had failed the neighbors whose voices should be heard equitably.

Terri Castillo stated that she was a member of the Tier 1 COVID-19 Steering Committee that was engaged in many complex neighborhood issues and frequently worked with City Departments. She noted that she was never introduced to, nor connected with, the NEOs. She requested that City Council ensure that such positions were administered and used appropriately. She added that she supported a standalone Renter's Commission comprised entirely of renters.

Aaron Arguello stated that he was a Council District 4 resident, a renter, and an advocacy organizer with MOVE Texas. He reported that MOVE Texas was in favor of a standalone Renter's Commission comprised entirely of renters. He added that before the COVID-19 Pandemic, on an average day 77 single families were evicted from their homes and court records showed that 1% of eviction cases were decided in favor of tenants. He noted that there was a housing and eviction crisis in San Antonio and a much larger crisis loomed and that renters needed to be centered in such conversations.

Graciela Sanchez, Director, Esperanza Peace & Justice Center (EPJC), reported that EPJC worked to keep residents in their homes, prevented demolition of their homes, assisted residents and NAs with compliance and rezoning matters. She stated that she had attended many meetings with various City Departments and staff, and no one had ever mentioned to her that there were NEOs on staff that could assist residents and NAs. She expressed concern for residents that were left out of the neighborhood engagement process during COVID-19, as they were unable to attend meetings, had no access to the internet, and their voices remained unheard.

Maureen Galindo stated that she was a housing justice advocate and community psychologist that focused on Risk Mitigation Policy (RMP). She added that she supported a 100% only Renter's Commission as the only equitable and democratic option. She noted that the goal of the RMP Stakeholder Group was to efficiently and equitably distribute taxpayer money back into the community through participatory democracy. She stated that there more efficient ways to spend \$3 million that was appropriated to Housing Development from the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP).

Mary Johnson stated that the NEO positions were specifically funded for neighborhood engagement that residents were desperately in need of. She noted that her neighborhood filed an appeal against an incompatible development three years ago against wealthy out of town developers and their attorneys and were told that City staff and Council District Offices could not offer guidance due to a conflict of interest. She stated the NEOs would be a win-win scenario for the City and for neighborhoods.

1. Approval of the minutes from the December 7, 2020 Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Courage moved to approve the Minutes from the December 7, 2020 Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Briefing and Possible Action on the Proposed Creation of a Renters' Commission. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Director]

Chairman Treviño stated that Item 2 would be tabled at this time.

3. Briefing on the Neighborhood Engagement Unit. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Director]

Verónica Soto reported that the Neighborhood Engagement Division (NED) was created as part of the FY 2018 Budget to hire four new positions for neighborhood engagement and included one Neighborhood Engagement Administrator, three NEOs, and all the positions were hired in 2018 and remained filled. She stated that the NED was established to strengthen relationships and communication with neighborhoods and to provide training and resources to NAs to build organizational capacity. She highlighted some of the teams accomplishments that included the City's Neighborhood Leadership Academy (NLA) which graduated 80 leaders citywide in the inaugural virtual program held in September 2020. She noted that the neighborhood engagement team had attended over 250 events since the unit was created. She explained that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, staff attended 22 community events in 2020, all in-person meetings were cancelled, all NED activities were placed on hold, and staff were redirected to assist the COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP).

Ms. Soto reported that the NED was responsible for the administration of the Neighborhood Registry (NR) which was comprised of over 403 NAs to date. She stated that the NR was a communication tool used by the Neighborhood Housing Development Services Department (NHSD) and other City Departments to communicate information regarding zoning cases, neighborhood plans, permit requests and public meetings. She stated that in December 2020, virtual community input sessions were held with 164 participants in conjunction with the distribution of a NR survey that received 197 responses. She provided NR Survey results, as follows:

- Most respondents lived in Council District 2 (34.5%) and Council District 7 (17.3%)

- 90% confirmed their NA was registered on the NR
- Top 3 cited sources for receiving information on zoning, improvements, and other City initiatives: NA meetings, City emails, and Councilmember emails
- 90% would sign up for email notifications related to projects and zoning cases in their area.
- 59% felt their voice was heard when speaking to Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, or City Council; 41% did not feel their voice was heard.
- Most respondents believed that communication could be improved with timeline notification, emphasis on zoning/development notices.
- Most respondents provided feedback regarding certain City projects and zoning cases by working with their NA (45%), talking to their Councilmember (35%), and signing up to speak (20%).
- 67% felt it was important that only one organization represented one geographic area.

Ms. Soto presented NR Preliminary Recommendations as follows:

- Policy language regarding overlapping boundaries in the NR Policy would remain unchanged.
- NAs and community groups would be educated on the purpose of the NR, the process to register as an NA, and the option to register as a community organization.
- Communication would be enhanced through diverse methods and strategies with residents, NAs, community organizations, city staff, development community, and other stakeholders.
- Technical assistance and workshops on topics like website development, planning, and zoning, and conflict resolution would be provided.

Ms. Soto added that additional neighborhood engagement would occur in January 2021 through March 2021 and an updated briefing with recommendations would be presented to the Committee in April 2021.

Councilmember Courage asked when the NED team would resume neighborhood engagement duties and asked if NEOs were assigned to specific Council Districts. He requested that every registered group, including more than one registered NA within a neighborhood, be included in the next step outreach efforts. Ms. Soto reported that the 3 NEOs had already transitioned back to their duties in November 2020, but the Neighborhood Engagement Administrator was still working in a lead supervisory role with EHAP. Ms. Soto stated that assigning specific Council District to the NEOs would be considered.

Councilmember Viagran read a letter from Terry Ybañez, President, Mission San Jose Neighborhood Association, which stated her NA was contacted by the NED three times by email with a reminder to update their information on the NR, and to attend the NED meetings held in January 2019 and February 2020. Ms. Ybañez added that the formation of a NED team was a good idea if the team consistently reached out to NAs with resources and opportunities that improved the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Councilmember Viagran reiterated that consistent communication was key and noted that each Aide in the Council District 3 Office was assigned to a NA. She encouraged NAs to promote and share best practices.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that the NED was the best way to empower constituents that had questions and to educate NAs to advocate for themselves. She stated she looked forward to roundtable discussions with development stakeholders to discuss the scope of development prior to zoning proposals.

Chairman Treviño stated that he wanted to address the concern of Cosima Colvin and asked if the NED would provide the neighborhoods with available resources, contact information, and education for the zoning and planning processes. He noted that the recently proposed Council Consideration Request (CCR) for Spanish translation was also key for neighborhood communications going forward. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston reported that two-way communication was part of the NED strategy to serve

as a conduit for roundtable discussions on topics of concern, zoning workshops, and discussions with Zoning and Planning Commission members.

4. Consideration of a recommendation for Substantial Amendment #2 to the FY 2021 HUD Action Plan and Budget to program \$10,249,127 in second round CDBG CARES Act funding and reprogram \$4,325,000 in CDBG funds. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Director]

Ana Bradshaw reported that City Council approved a \$22.4 Million FY 2021 HUD Action Plan including \$13.3 Million in Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG) on August 12, 2020. She stated on September 11, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the City an additional \$10.2 million in CDBG CARES Act funding which presented an opportunity for the City to continue to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic by focusing on housing services supporting response and housing development for faster recovery. She added that on September 17, 2020, City Council approved Substantial Amendment #1 to FY 2021 Action Plan and Budget that redirected \$4.8 million from CDBG and Homeownership Gap Funding to the COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP).

Ms. Bradshaw reported that staff recommended the programming of a second allocation of CDBG CARES Act funds (CDBG-CV) in the amount of \$10,249,127. She presented a summary of the proposed allocation for Substantial Amendment #2, as follows:

- \$2 Million Affordable Rental Housing Gap Funding
- \$1 Million Affordable Homeownership Development Gap Funding
- \$900,000 Owner Occupied Rehab
- \$900,000 Temporary Shelter for Homeless*
- \$425,000 Minor Home Repair
- \$159,000 Eviction Intervention*
- \$189,000 Housing Counseling and Foreclosure Prevention*

**Not included in original Affordable Housing Budget*

Ms. Bradshaw reported that with the additional \$4.6 million allocated from the CDBG CARES Act funds, the EHAP Phase 3 Budget would increase from \$5.8 million to \$28.9 million. She noted that the City's total investment in EHAP since April 2020 was \$81.4 million, allocated in 3 phases: Phase 1: \$25.6 million; Phase 2: \$26.9 million; and Phase 3: \$28.9 million.

Ms. Bradshaw reported on the impact of the additional \$4.6 million to the EHAP Budget:

- Provide support for approximately 1,800 families
- Provide additional staff support at eviction courts for 18 months
- Provide additional staff support for housing counseling and foreclosure prevention services for 18 months
- Support temporary shelter for homeless individuals for an additional 18 months
- Provide \$2 million in gap funding for affordable rental housing and \$1 million for affordable single-family housing
- Increase the Minor Repair Program Budget from \$500,000 to \$925,000, allowing for an additional 13 houses for a total of 53

- Increase the funding for owner occupied rehab by \$900,000 to \$2,699,226. Allows the City to rehab an additional 7 houses for a total of 67

Edward Gonzales reported the City received \$3.2 million in emergency rental assistance funding from the Texas Emergency Rental Assistance Program (TERAP) which would provide an additional six months of rental assistance. He stated that \$960,000 was received from the Texas Diversion Program (TEDP) which would be utilized for eviction court assistance. He added that \$717,000 would be allocated for emergency rental assistance for residents that lived outside of the City limits but within Bexar County. He noted that \$1.5 million in Federal funds allocated from the Bexar County General Fund would also support the EHAP.

Mr. Gonzales reported that as of December 31, 2020, a total of \$65.9 million was issued in EHAP to individual residents and their households and was distributed as follows: Rent or Mortgage: \$53.2 million; CPS Energy: \$4.9 million; SAWS: \$800,000; Internet: \$200,000; and Cash Assistance: \$6.8 million.

Ian Benavidez presented outcomes of Bexar County eviction filings for 2019 and 2020 and noted that the CARES Act eviction moratorium was in effect from March 2020 through June 2020; thereafter, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eviction moratorium took effect in September 2020 through December 2020. He reported that a new COVID-19 Relief Package was signed into law on December 27, 2020 that would extend the eviction moratorium through January 31, 2021, provided an additional \$25 billion in rental assistance to states of which \$1.9 billion was awarded to Texas, and included direct stimulus to individuals that earned less than \$25,000 in 2019, and an additional \$300 in weekly benefits to unemployed households.

Mr. Benavidez reported that court eviction filings would increase as the local courts resumed filing eviction cases. He reported that 1,088 cases were dismissed (24%), 1,094 cases were reset (24%), 1,577 resulted in Default Judgments (35%), and 785 resulted in judgments for Plaintiffs (17%). He noted that eviction cases would be reset after the moratorium ended; and in the interim, staff would provide rental and eviction assistance to dismiss cases, provide notice of tenant rights assistance, and conduct outreach and attend eviction hearings in support of residents.

Chairman Treviño requested that all final, updated data and presentation material be timely provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting so as to allow for adequate review; and that the final, updated data and presentation material reflect the identical data and presentation material that was initially posted to the meeting agenda. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston noted that the data and presentation materials reflected the posted information with one caveat, as to the addition of a one-line item of EHAP net funding.

Councilmember Courage stated that the best use of the \$3 million gap financing fund was to allocate it to EHAP to assist at least 1,000 families that faced eviction in two months when all eviction restraints would be removed. He noted that tax abatement programs, Federal program funds, and funding from the San Antonio Housing Authority and the San Antonio Housing Trust could be designated for gap funding when needed in the next few years for the development affordable housing units. Assistant City Manager Houston reported that 90% of renters were cost-burdened and gap financing was needed to develop more affordable housing to meet demand.

Chairman Treviño reported that 9,500 evictions were filed in 2020 and voiced his concern regarding how long the additional EHAP funds would last. He noted that restrictions were placed on the amount of disbursements individuals could receive and called for staff to provide the Committee with

recommended actions to revert disbursements back to the guidelines of the original Risk Mitigation Policy. He noted that eviction moratoriums would not erase rent owed in arrears, that he did not support the removal of funds from the EHAP, and the City could not wait for additional Federal relief to respond to the emergent need of residents for cash assistance.

Councilmember Courage concurred that the emergency housing assistance crisis called for more to be done to keep residents in their homes now instead of building homes two years from now.

Assistant City Manager Houston stated that CDBG funding would be reallocated at next week's Council Committee Agenda meeting and the Committee would be provided an update and EHAP disbursement recommendations thereafter.

Councilmember Viagran asked if the \$4.6 million in CDBG funding that was pending appropriation to EHAP could still be allocated and utilized without this Committee's recommendation. She noted that recommended policy changes to EHAP disbursements would need full City Council approval.

Ms. Bradshaw reiterated that \$4.6 million in additional EHAP funding could not be allocated from the CDBG Revised Budget without the approval of the total EHAP \$10.2 million appropriation by City Council.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve Item 4. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Chairman Treviño moved to retain \$3 million in EHAP in lieu of allocating the CDBG funds for future gap financing and for the approval of the remainder Affordable Housing Programs Revised Budgets (CDBG) recommendations as is. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion failed by the following vote:

AYE: Treviño, Courage

NAY: Andrews-Sullivan

ABSTAIN: Viagran

ABSENT: Perry

Chairman Treviño called for a re-vote. The motion failed by the following vote:

AYE: Treviño, Courage

NAY: Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran

ABSENT: Perry

Chairman Treviño requested that staff provide the Committee with an update regarding the approval of CDBG funding by City Council next week and EHAP disbursement recommendations thereafter.

Councilmember Courage requested that staff provide the Committee with proposed draft language for EHAP disbursement recommendations in advance of the next meeting to allow for timely review.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

Roberto Treviño, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk

DRAFT

Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee on 2021-01-07 2:00 PM

Meeting Time: 01-07-21 14:00

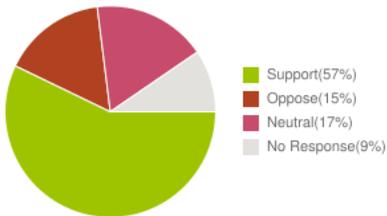
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee on 2021-01-07 2:00 PM	01-07-21 14:00	13	63	36	10	11

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee on 2021-01-07 2:00 PM

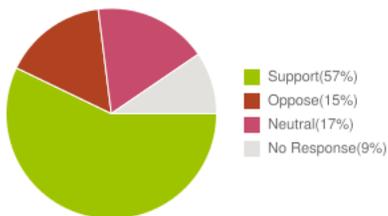
01-07-21 14:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
1 21-1000 Approval of the meeting minutes from the December 7, 2020 Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee Meeting.	1	0	1	0
Public Comment	1	1	0	0
2 20-7117 Briefing and Possible Action on the Proposed Creation of a Renters' Commission [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]	55	33	9	8
3 20-7496 Briefing on the Neighborhood Engagement Unit. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]	6	2	0	3

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

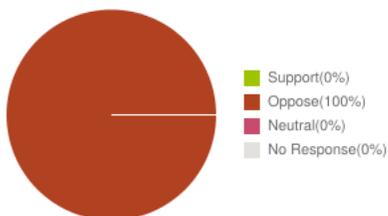
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for 1 21-1000 Approval of the meeting minutes from the December 7, 2020 Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee Meeting.

Overall Sentiment



Heaven Bustos

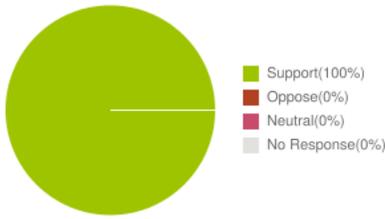
Location: 78228, San Antonio

Submitted At: 6:44pm 01-05-21

I oppose to non importance

Agenda Item: eComments for Public Comment

Overall Sentiment



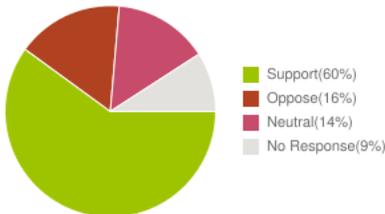
John Doski

Location: San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:25pm 01-05-21

"As president of the KWA, I have received tremendous help from Councilman Trevino's office/staff on a wide variety of issues and challenges, including neighborhood quality issues. Many thanks. In 2 1/2 years in my position, I never heard from, and didn't even know existed, a 'Neighborhood Engagement team.' So absent any demonstration of coordinated activity of such a group, I think it wholly appropriate and most timely with current downtown expansion pressures that the City of San Antonio create a Neighborhood Engagement team. Engage us. Please.

Agenda Item: eComments for 2 20-7117 Briefing and Possible Action on the Proposed Creation of a Renters' Commission [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Overall Sentiment



Katherine Hinebaugh

Location: 78215, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:42pm 01-07-21

I believe any committee of this type s/b a subcommittee under Housing Commission. I urge that it include renters and rental housing providers on formation of this subcommittee.

A Rental Housing Subcommittee will ensure a fair and balanced perspective. A balanced subcommittee can provide the education through dialogue, cooperation and, understanding from both sides to prevent discrimination, displacement, and ensure that renters are treated fairly. I urge this committee and City Council to support a subcommittee of the Housing Commission and include both renters and rental housing providers.

Alan Ross

Location: 78228, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:41pm 01-07-21

I am opposed to Option 2. The purpose of any commission or committee is to create a dialogue between all stakeholders. A renters only commission would undoubtedly shut down the necessary dialogue to create real

change. Any democratic process allows for representatives from both side of an issue to state their position and work towards solutions that truly has everyone's best interests in mind. I urge the committee and City Council to support the creation of a subcommittee of the Housing Commission to include both renters and rental housing providers to collaborate on rental housing issues.

Celine Williams

Location: 78250, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:36pm 01-07-21

We have seen what one sided thinking has done to tear down communities and divide us even more. The risk of developing a mob mentality to take actions that are irrational and overzealous is dangerous, as evidenced in our capitol yesterday. We must come together to help make educated, rational decisions that don't lead to unintended consequences. I support the creation of a diverse subcommittee of the Housing Commission that includes BOTH renters/homeowners AND rental housing providers/operators to work together on rental housing issues to ensure a fair and balanced perspective. Thank you

Patricia Garcia

Location: 78247, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:35pm 01-07-21

I support the creation of a Renters Commission if it will involve actual renters in the community. As stated in other comments rent and wages in this city are not compatible.

Krystina Guzman

Location: 78252, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:33pm 01-07-21

I am opposed to option 2. it is vital for both parties to be involved and have a voice so that fair decisions can be made

Teri Castillo

Location:
Submitted At: 1:30pm 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone Renters Commission composed entirely of renters. As San Antonio rents increase and wages remain stagnant, it is imperative renters have a commission to create and discuss recommendations to address the needs of renters as we move towards becoming a more equitable city.

Kelley Liserio

Location: 78216
Submitted At: 1:26pm 01-07-21

I am opposed to option 2. Option 1 allows for all stakeholders to be present finding the best options for BOTH renters and Property owners as both play a vital role in the economic and social well being of the community.

Jeanne Fuller

Location: 78248, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:25pm 01-07-21

I do not oppose a renter commission, AS LONG AS it consists of representation from all parties involved (renters, landlords, managers, area community single-family residents and area business owners). ALL of those entities are impacted. Only by hearing opinions and voices of all concerned can a committee make wise, and long-term reliable, decisions. When you have only one voice, such as renters only, landlords only, business owners only...you open the door for one-sided decisions that assuredly welcome and create conflict, anger, self-interests, ineffective decision-making and governance.

Jennifer Morales

Location:
Submitted At: 1:24pm 01-07-21

I am opposed to the creation of a stand alone renters commission. The San Antonio rental housing market and what it offers to renters requires a diverse group to bring all sides to the table to work on solutions that are fair and equitable. This will strengthen rental housing policies within the housing system. I feel that it only makes

sense for any committee of this type to report to the Housing Commission. It should be a subcommittee under the Housing Commission and I urge the recommendation to include a balance of renters and rental housing providers in the subcommittee.

Debbie Wiatrek

Location: 78229, san antonio
Submitted At: 1:15pm 01-07-21

We do see the value of an all-inclusive committee and not a stand-alone renters' commission, as we at Alpha Barnes, are at the forefront of supporting affordable housing in San Antonio, as the 16th largest manager of affordable properties in the country. This committee could be a committee that falls under the Housing Commission and is focused and created with a diverse group of individuals that bring all parties to the table for solutions. We feel all voices need to be heard so we can all come up with realistic solutions to help the renting community.

Marcos Antuna

Location: 78250, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:15pm 01-07-21

I strongly support the creation of an independent commission for renter issues. It should be filled only with renters. According to a January 2020 Texas Tribune article, rents in San Antonio have risen by 16.5% between 2008 and 2018, but wages have remained stagnant for that same period. All renters in the city need help now - and an independent commission made up of only renters can begin to help.

Alex Obregon

Location:
Submitted At: 1:09pm 01-07-21

I am in support of creating an independent commission comprised entirely of renters. Because of unequal power dynamics, it is not good enough that renters can be on the same commission as landlords. Especially given the events of 2020 that are still ongoing, it is important that renters have a space of their own to advocate for their needs and it is important for San Antonio as a whole that renters needs are met.

Renee Manes

Location: San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:09pm 01-07-21

There is no one more interested in issues regarding tenants than landlords. They are effected as directly as the tenant in all matters concerning rental tenancy. Excluding input from rental housing providers will not benefit the dialogue, nor lead to real solutions, and would result in flawed city policies. A balanced subcommittee can provide the much-needed education through dialogue, cooperation and, understanding from both sides to prevent discrimination, displacement, and ensure that renters are treated fairly.

Gary Greene

Location: 78249, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:07pm 01-07-21

I am opposed to Option 2 and I believe that any committee of this type only makes sense to report to the Housing Commission, thus it should be a subcommittee under the Housing Commission, and I urge the recommendation to include renters and rental housing providers when deciding on the formation of this subcommittee.

Excluding input from rental housing providers will not benefit the dialogue, nor lead to real solutions, and would result in flawed city policies.

Benjamin Vergil

Location:
Submitted At: 12:49pm 01-07-21

We need to push for a renter's only commission. Renters need a space that focuses on them, not serve as an afterthought on existing boards. This is not saying that it is either one or the other, all the recommendations we have heard, more tenant voices on existing boards, a renters commission, etc need to co exist together. What

needs to be the focal point, where all the others do not work unless the nucleus is established, concerns a resident-only renters commission. I hope San Antonio can be a city that proudly and unanimously votes to go ahead with a renters only commission.

Axel Anderson

Location: 78212, San Antonio
Submitted At: 12:46pm 01-07-21

I am in support of creating an independent commission comprised entirely of renters.

Nate Rodriguez

Location: 78245
Submitted At: 12:41pm 01-07-21

leave this: When the City first created the risk mitigation fund, they forced tenants to apply for assistance but required the landlords confirmation. SO MANY LANDLORDS, including my own, refused to accept the free money, instead choosing to evict their tenants. It wasn't about the rent for them, it was about something else. Luckily, I was able to get some assistance but to think that there are also apartment complexes like Brandon Oaks Apartments, Grand at the Dominion, NOAH Apartments filing evictions illegally.

Judit Vega

Location:
Submitted At: 12:27pm 01-07-21

I support the creation of a stand alone Renter's Commission composed entirely of renters. Renters deserve to represent their best interests without fear of retaliation and in confidence. A city that purports to value equity and compassion cannot continue to center the needs of the most vulnerable in name only, while truly favoring moneyed and powerful interests again and again in their actions and policy decisions.

Jordan Ghawi

Location: 78201
Submitted At: 12:24pm 01-07-21

I am vehemently opposed to Option 2, the creation of a standalone renter's commission. This would be a redundant commission with the current Housing Commission advisory board, of which, 1/3 of members are renters. More committees does not equate to better governance, but may in fact inhibit action.

Sarah Zimmerman

Location: 78212, SAN ANTONIO
Submitted At: 11:56am 01-07-21

Renters deserve to be represented by members of our own community. I support the creation of a standalone commission composed ENTIRELY of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, & NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. A commission composed ONLY of tenants will be able to fully voice concerns without fear of retaliation. To build an equitable community, we must acknowledge the power dynamic between renters and landlords and create spaces that actively work to make marginalized voices heard.

Marlon Davis

Location:
Submitted At: 11:53am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Tenant's were under-represented in the solutions proposed by the mayor's housing policy taskforce, and COSA's most recent poverty report indicates that 91% of renter's are cost-burdened. This is unacceptable. If we are to give tenants a fighting chance against impending mass evictions, a standalone commission composed solely of renters is the first step.

Marlene Hawkins

Location:
Submitted At: 11:43am 01-07-21

Government Hill Community Association. I support a commission made up of both renters and landlords (not

property managers) who would be able to bring proposals to the Council. One proposal might be that all rentals are done with written lease. This protects both the tenant and the landlord. In Government Hill when 7 tenants were forced out, we could not get them any city assistance because they did not have written leases. These tenants had great difficulty in finding rentals they could afford. Education of the rights and responsibilities of the tenants and landlords is a must.

Anna Ramos

Location: 78258, San Antonio
Submitted At: 11:34am 01-07-21

Balance and diversity will always be a great combination for growth. Having a mixed commission with landlords and renters will ensure all voices are heard and all parties win

Karen Munoz

Location: 78229, San Antonio
Submitted At: 11:32am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters.

Will Curtis

Location: 78230, SAN ANTONIO
Submitted At: 11:19am 01-07-21

I am in support of Option 3. When it comes to something as vitally important as housing that will affect all of San Antonio, we need to have all parties and experts at the table so that we can find the win-win for everyone. Finding a balance for all parties is what will help continue to make San Antonio a great place and continue its growth.

Mason Escamilla

Location: 78250, san antonio
Submitted At: 11:06am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, and NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation. This commission will help allow renters to have more say in decisions that affect the vast majority of San Antonians.

Brent Biglin

Location: 78207, San Antonio
Submitted At: 10:00am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters.

Edward Guzman

Location: 78260, San Antonio
Submitted At: 9:59am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters.

Hector Rodriguez

Location:
Submitted At: 9:58am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, and NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

Marty Hutchison

Location:
Submitted At: 9:47am 01-07-21

Education is beneficial to the growth of San Antonio. The best way to educate is to have equal participation for both sides; tenant and landlord, property managers and investors. By utilizing both sides of issues each side will improve in knowledge for the total benefit of our great city. To mention a few of the benefits will include equal opportunity, affordable housing and property rights.

Jan Hicinbothom

Location:

Submitted At: 9:40am 01-07-21

I highly support Option 3. There is a interest among tenants and property owners to have a fair and equal commission. To see that everyone has a voice, it requires all stakeholders have a seat at the table.

Katie Ross

Location: 78258, San Antonio

Submitted At: 9:25am 01-07-21

I believe tenants need a voice. I believe there are true affordable housing issues in our city. I believe a one sided committee (or sub committee) of any sort will only further create divide and ultimately less affordable housing. If landlords don't have a chance to be heard ultimately you will find landlords selling and less inventory thus driving prices up and creating additional issues not solving problems. You can't look at any issue with one side only and expect to not be caught missing important facts from the other party. Please consider a balanced voice for all housing participants.

Gina Cramer

Location: 78201, San Antonio

Submitted At: 9:24am 01-07-21

My name is Gina Cramer and I am resident of D1. There exists a stark imbalance of power between landlords and renters. Therefore, I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Landlords should not be exempt from accountability and tenants deserve to have their voices heard about the issues that most impact them. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

MarkJoseph Leon

Location: 78244, San Antonio

Submitted At: 9:21am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, and NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

Amador Salazar

Location:

Submitted At: 9:00am 01-07-21

I support a standalone commission made up entirely of tenants. Currently there is no such organization for the 46% of tenants in San Antonio. I would encourage this commission to include houseless individuals as they are often overlooked, and can likely speak to tenant issues that led to where they are today. It is desperately needed as there have been so many illegally filed evictions at many apartment complexes in the city during a pandemic. This commission would allow renters to be heard without fear of retaliation.

Brittany Sharp

Location: 78247, San Antonio

Submitted At: 8:58am 01-07-21

I support to creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Renters deserve and should have the same protections and rights afforded to landlords. In the midst of a pandemic we are seeing record evictions. This is inhumane and only serves to maximize profits for the landlords. A renters commission made entirely of renters will help cut evictions as well as make San Antonio a safer place to live for renters.

Anne Ferguson

Location: 78212, SAN ANTONIO
Submitted At: 8:57am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. As San Antonio moves forward in meeting the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force goals in increasing the amount of rental units, San Antonio's growing population calls for the establishment of a Renters Commission composed of renters.

Jalen McKeeRodriguez

Location: 78218, San Antonio
Submitted At: 8:52am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Renters deserve the same protections and rights afforded to landlords - to have a voice without fear of what happens when it's used.

Christopher Ochoa

Location: 78212, San Antonio
Submitted At: 8:46am 01-07-21

There needs to be a commission composed ENTIRELY of renters. Property companies and owners are not concerned with tenants well being and are more concerned with profits.

There's roughly 49k vacant structures in SA.

These complexes have been illegally filing evictions during a pandemic

- Brandon Oaks Apartments
- Salado Springs Apartments
- Stratton Park
- The Blair at Bitters
- Hilltop at Shavano Apartments
- Grand at the Dominion
- The Village of Hampton Cove
- Maxwell Townhomes
- Park West Apartments
- NOAH Apartments
- Parliament Bend Apartments
- Diamond Ridge
- Oak Terrace Apartments

Talia Chavez

Location: 78209, San Antonio
Submitted At: 8:43am 01-07-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters.

Phyllis Newman

Location:
Submitted At: 8:19am 01-07-21

At past meetings concerning the development of renters commission, I voiced my oppositional reasons to the "development of a renters commission". Opposition remarks received have been far greater than the support comments. At one meeting Councilman Trevino insisted on asking about how commission needed to be structured, instead of discussing the "need for developing this". Finally under frustration, Trevino blatantly stated that there is going to be a renters commission. Council is intent on regulating all landlords because of a few bad landlords and/or just carrying out his personal agenda.

Cynthia Spielman

Location:
Submitted At: 7:58am 01-07-21

I am a landlord of several properties and I have nothing to fear from tenants learning their rights. I applaud the city for taking the initiative in this difficult time. Part of the movement to help tenants is to also help small landlords like us to meet our obligations of mortgage payments, insurance, repair, rising taxes, etc. As a property owner, I have a clear understanding of my rights which are considerable. Large apartment investment firm-landlords have attorneys and the Apartment Association. I'd rather work with tenants than set myself up against them.

Deirdre Hendrick

Location: 78257, San Antonio
Submitted At: 11:59pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Landlords in Texas have an imbalance of power in both landlord tenant law (in which Texas is considered one of the most pro-landlord states in the country) and in housing policy where they hold the resources and influence to affect policy. Tenants are at a distinct disadvantage in all aspects of the relationship. A commission must be composed of renters in order to ensure that decisions are made using meaningful and substantial input from renters, not token input on a panel controlled by landlords.

Horton Myles

Location: 78204, San Antonio
Submitted At: 10:05pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Landlords and developers already wield an outsized influence over housing policy, which they have used to shore up their own advantages at the cost of the common good. Where the economic interests of landlords conflict with the humanity of renters, they consistently choose profit over people--as shown by their choices to illegally file evictions during a pandemic and refusing to accept money from the risk mitigation fund, preferring to evict and seek higher rents. Equity and ethics require a tenant only commission.

Ariel Alvarez

Location:
Submitted At: 9:54pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, and NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

Lexy Garcia

Location: 78216, San Antonio
Submitted At: 9:40pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. As San Antonio moves forward in meeting the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force goals in increasing the amount of rental units, San Antonio's growing population calls for the establishment of a Renters Commission composed of renters

Paul Wise

Location: 78247, San Antonio
Submitted At: 9:24pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a stand-alone commission made up of only renters to give power and protection from people who only care about making money.

Abigail Sulima

Location: 78204, San Antonio
Submitted At: 9:23pm 01-06-21

I support the creation of a standalone commission composed entirely of renters. Property investment organizations like SABOR, SAAA, RECSA, and NARPM-SAMAC mean to stack this commission with individuals sympathetic to their concerns. Only a commission composed solely of tenants will be able to fully voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

Lacy Hendricks

Location: 78230, San Antonio
Submitted At: 5:32pm 01-06-21

All sides of renter/landlord relationship need to be represented equally on this commission, which should be a subcommittee of the Housing Commission and not a standalone commission.

Carolina Canizales

Location: 78215, San Antonio
Submitted At: 4:02pm 01-06-21

My name is Carolina Canizales and I'm a resident of D2. In 2020 we saw too many failures of council taking into account input from directly impacted people, we need to stop this pattern. There are approximately 597,100 renters living in San Antonio, their voices must be centered in city's decisions on housing affordability and accessibility. Renters should also enjoy the same rights and protections such as landlords and homeowners when it comes to rent increase or evictions. I support the creation of this commission so that directly impacted people can be part of the policy-making solutions.

Kyle Hendricks

Location: 78230, San Antonio
Submitted At: 3:59pm 01-06-21

I do believe that renters voices need to be amplified so their struggles and concerns can be addressed but I do not believe the formation of new renters commission is the best way forward unless there is even representation. I think it will take an even number of tenants, landlords and/or housing professionals to come up with these complex solutions and I am in favor of the recommendation put forward by SABOR, NARPM, SAAA, and RECSA. Together we can do great things and try to create a model that other Cities can follow.

Susan Richardson

Location: 78210, San Antonio
Submitted At: 3:05pm 01-06-21

Need to question why of approximately 3,600 total respondents to a DIGITAL survey, less than half (approximately 1,700) were renters, when the percentage of renters in San Antonio far exceeds homeowners. I do see where several council members (Andrews-Sullivan, Courage, and Viagran) requested additional demographics on November 2, but did not see where these were provided in the draft copy of the December 7 minutes. I do believe more specific information is needed from the survey results before a decision that accurately reflects the needs/ wants of the citizenry can be made.

Evelyn Edwards

Location: 78163, Bulverde
Submitted At: 9:51am 01-06-21

I favor the recommendation put forth by SAAA, SABOR, RECSA & NARPM-SAMAC, which is very inclusive & representative of all parties associated with the full rental process. This gives an equal ratio of Renters to Landlords (property managers/owners) with independent Attorney representation to both sides which will deliver balance and objectivity to the issues and policies.

Courtney Rosen

Location: 78231, San Antonio
Submitted At: 9:20pm 01-05-21

I strongly believe that a diversity of voices - from landlord to renter to property manager - and inclusive of a range of socioeconomic levels, genders, racial identifications, etc. - is essential to make balanced policies to best improve but not totally disrupt the the complex dynamics of the rental housing market

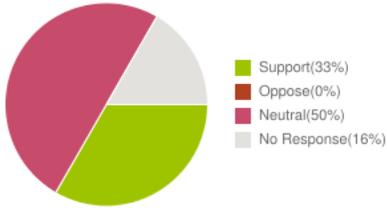
Adam Acord

Location: 78230, San Antonio
Submitted At: 1:46pm 01-05-21

Instead of creating an entirely new Commission, the City could focus its efforts on bolstering the Housing Commission as a public oversight board and making this body more representative of the Housing population for both renters and homeowners. Adding more renter representation on the Housing Commission will ensure a fair and balanced perspective as it relates to the coordinated housing system in San Antonio.

The survey had over 3,600 responses and nearly 70% of respondents preferred a mixture of renters, property owners and property managers.

Overall Sentiment



Neil Bresnahan

Location: 78254, San Antonio
Submitted At: 12:49pm 01-07-21

I had the distinct pleasure to be a part of the Neighborhood Leadership Academy in 2019. As a Volunteer HOA Board Member in San Antonio, I found this program to be incredibly educational with services and resources from the City of San Antonio, additionally, the network of other like-minded volunteers helped me not have to "recreate the wheel" with innovative and creative ideas with my HOA's limited resources. I can't state enough how committed the Team was to empowering San Antonians to take back to their communities an inspired approach to what being "neighbors" and "leaders" really means.

Jordan Ghawi

Location: 78201
Submitted At: 12:12pm 01-07-21

The agenda discusses the establishment of goals for the the Neighborhood Engagement Unit, which include hosting "city-wide, civic engagement classes through Neighborhood Leadership Academy, graduating 80 residents annually. The NHSD website's landing page for the Academy describes the Academy as being "designed to equip residents with the knowledge, network, and skills to be effective neighborhood leaders". As a 2019 "graduate" of the Academy, I will say that the Academy failed to equip the participants with any of the aforementioned and it should be re-evaluated in its entirety.

Marlene Hawkins

Location:
Submitted At: 11:11am 01-07-21

Government Hill Community Association. We have had positive interactions with the Neighborhood Engagement Team. Barbara has spoken to Government Hill residents 3 times in the year and a half prior to the pandemic. I have met with Barbara and her team at the Flores Street Office. The exchange was productive. I provided the department with information about how other cities have set up the registry. Using Austin as an example, the city uses the registry as a communication tool allowing all neighborhood associations and organizations to register. Barbara made two reports to this committee

Christina Wright

Location:
Submitted At: 7:21pm 01-06-21

Alta Vista Neighborhood Association, D1; 2nd yr president & 7 yrs board member or volunteer for the NA. Never had contact from the NEU & not aware these positions existed. Never has the NEU been suggested as a resource. NHSD commented in the community input sessions re the registry that they function as database management. Interests in resources like workshops only for the future. Asking for interval review of NEU positions, budget, & way ahead (NAs & orgs as assets; create interface w/ NEU), & add look at NLA as waste. BLUF: Neighborhood is missing from Neighborhood & Housing Services Dept.

Patty Gibbons

Location:

Submitted At: 11:28pm 01-05-21

We are voluntary in nature and anyone serving as a President in their neighborhood association is a pretty darn committed person. NEU can 1) work on keeping the registry up to date 2) give more tools to Presidents for outreach 3) leave the neighborhoods in our hands. The idea of introducing the possibility of dual associations within the same boundary creates the very problem in which 3 or 4 neighborhoods are having~ division. Give a larger feet of notice on zoning cases so associations are in them, 200' won't include a neighborhood if its a retail with a parking lot.

Stephen Versteeg

Location:

Submitted At: 10:20pm 01-05-21

comments submitted by email

Good evening Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee, Chair and Council,

I have submitted an e-comment for tomorrow's meeting; reference agenda item: 20-7496, "Briefing on the Neighborhood Engagement Unit". Also provided below this email. Due to the truncated nature of the comment, I am providing the full length copy here, for your consideration:

I am the president of Alta Vista Neighborhood Association in D1. This is my second year as president and have been an active member of the board or as a volunteer for the association for 7 years. We have never had contact from the Neighborhood Engagement Team and were not aware that these positions existed. It is perplexing that in all of my requests for help not once has the NEU been suggested as a resource. NHSD reiterated in the community input sessions regarding the registry that the only function they serve is as database management. They requested knowing whether we would be interested in additional resources, mostly educational workshops, in the future.

The two functions on the NHSD city website, Neighborhood Engagement page, are the registry and the Neighborhood Leadership Academy. Comments I have heard regarding the NLA is that it is mostly a how to for calling city departments or using 311. But, about the NEU specifically, there is no mention. There are no points of contact nor any information that tells me there are services for neighborhoods available. (There are no services available). Per the job description for these positions, neighborhood engagement should be a primary duty.

On the NHSD home page there are a few programs listed like the home repair and remediation and the down payment assistance. These, however, are housing services that individuals apply for. If I were to restate the entirety of this problem then it would be that "'neighborhood' is missing from the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department."

The Neighborhood Associations, the boards and the many volunteers, should be seen as assets. We are the eyes and ears on the ground. We can tell you exactly what is not working, where money is being wasted, what the community needs are, etc. Most importantly we advance culture and community. Where this might be the point that the conversation is directed to the Districts, this is where I would say that the NEU could be utilized. And where the Neighborhood Engagement services are needed. They could operate as an interface between the NAs/orgs and the Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee, and ultimately Council. Or rephrase that to, "should have been operating as an interface..."

AVNA is requesting that the Committee review the positions and budget. Should the Neighborhood Engagement Unit remain in place, then I hope that neighborhood leaders will have an opportunity to provide additional input. There is a lot of interest in what benefits can come out of this being corrected. There is serious concern for what appears to be a waste of city dollars if not corrected. But truly, this is coming from the heart and the belief that we're stronger together.

Thank you for your time and attention to this concern.

All the best,
Christina Wright
President
Alta Vista Neighborhood Association
210-865-7211

As President of Westwood Square Neighborhood Association in District 5, I did apply and attend the first Leadership Academy class of 2019. While I'm glad they offered the class, it didn't meet my expectations. The neighborhood engagement team has not served the neighborhood associations / community for what it was intended for as described in the original job description.

I am requesting for this committee to thoroughly investigate and audit the funds before any action is taken... you cannot continue to fully support this neighborhood engagement team until the committee has all the information to pursue on what the next step will be on the future of this team. Tax payers money should never be wasted on something that is not being provided. Councilman Trevino Please read into the record.

Respectfully,

Velma Pena , President
Westwood Square Neighborhood Association
Westside Neighborhood Associations Coalition (WNAC)

From: Pancho Valdez <mestizowarrior@gmail.com>

Date: Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 12:51 PM

To: "Justin Renteria (City Council)" <Justin.Renteria@sanantonio.gov>, "Mayor Ron Nirenberg (Mayor Office)" <MayorRonNirenberg@sanantonio.gov>, "Roberto C. Trevino (City Council)" <Roberto.Trevino@sanantonio.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Renters Commission

Dear Mayor, Councilman Treviño;

I am a senior citizen living downtown in a building owned by SAHA.

I communicate with you today as I am urging you to support the creation of a Renters Commission. Tenants have little if any power in San Antonio and the Commission would be a positive step to address this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Pancho Valdez

San Antonio Tenants Union/Coalition For Tenant Justice

210-799-1597

To: Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee members
Chair: D1 Roberto Trevino
D2 Jada Andrews-Sullivan
D3 Rebecca Viagran
D9 John Courage
D10 Clayton Perry

January 6, 2021

CC: Tobin Hill Community Association Board of Directors
Tier 1 Neighborhood Coalition

Subject: Neighborhood Engagement Team

Dear Committee members:

My name is Frederica Kushner; and live in Tobin Hill, District 1. I have been involved in my neighborhood organization for many years, and also with the Tier 1 Neighborhood Coalition.

Tier 1 worked with the City to create an office which would bridge the gap between the various city departments and the neighborhoods which must deal with them. I was cautiously optimistic when the Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) was created and a Neighborhood Engagement Team was added.

Then I waited – we all waited – to be “engaged.” Eventually we were asked to give an opinion on registration of neighborhood associations with the City. That is the only “engagement” that I am aware of.

Who are the Neighborhood Engagement Officers and what have they been doing all this time? We all struggle to understand the city ordinances, UDC, the various departments, and their policies and procedures. We need help to make our neighborhood organizations more responsive to their members. We want to work with the City, but it’s difficult.

It seems a waste to have a Neighborhood Engagement Team that doesn’t actively engage with the neighborhoods. Perhaps this review by the Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee will help put things back on track. My neighborhood certainly needs a committed and active liaison with the city government.

Sincerely,
Frederica Kushner
210-223-2814

Comments to Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee on Agenda item 3 for January 7th meeting:

Steve Versteeg
Resident of Government Hill

Equity is said to be a cornerstone of some of San Antonio's biggest initiatives such as SA Tomorrow and SA Climate Ready. If we don't look for inequity in all city processes things will not improve as they should.

Engagement is one of the best ways to fight inequity. Those who have suffered inequity are often rightfully untrusting. Neighborhood Associations, groups of neighbors, and individual neighborhood residents suffer with inequity. Website information, emails, and Robert's Rules of Order meetings is not engagement. Reaching out by phone and in person, when that is safe again, is engagement that can show people the city can help them.

Haven for Hope is a model program nationwide. Homeless people have surely suffered inequity.

SAFFE is a city program we can look at. Who is my SAFFE officer with SAPD?- it is Mary Morales. Who is my Neighborhood Engagement Officer?- I do not have one assigned.

Let's look at the approach for these two programs.

SAFFE approach is to *establish and maintain day-to-day interaction with residents and businesses [and] act as liaisons with other city agencies*

Haven for Hope approach is *person-centered.... [and] the goal is to meet individuals where they are and support them*

Let's remember that the real value in neighborhoods is the people not the buildings. Let's learn and improve on neighborhood engagement. Let's give the Neighborhood Engagement Team the resources and focused direction they need.



MONTE VISTA TERRACE
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

January 5th 2021

To: Council Members of Neighborhood Committee

RE: Neighborhood Engagement Officer

Dear Council Members,

As President of the Monte Vista Terrace Neighborhood Association and a member of the Tier 1 Steering Committee I was shocked to discover that in 2017 money was included in the budget and jobs were posted complete with job descriptions for a Neighborhood Services for Neighborhood Engagement Officers to be assigned to our various neighborhoods and that they would serve as liaisons to assist our community leaders and communities in all concerns within our neighborhoods. I was angry when it came to light that this department was never fully formed nor these positions filled, I had no clue that such a department had been included in the budget. We have never had a Neighborhood Engagement Officer.

The fact that there were job postings complete with job descriptions posted and never filled is truly unbelievable!

I can say that such a department would have been most helpful to our neighborhood when we filed an appeal against an incompatible development that had been permitted in our neighborhood. It was and is beyond socially unjust leaving it to regular citizens to navigate the UDC and to solely defend ourselves against out-of-town developers along with their land use attorneys and a well-heeled team and vast pools on money. As we are told it is a “conflict of interest” for city staff or the council staff to help us in such matters.

Yes, this department would have been extremely helpful. This department would not only help with incompatible development issues, the benefits of such a department and the enrichment it would bring to our city and communities are vast, an engaged citizenry is a healthy community, as I have come to learn as a neighborhood leader the more my neighbors understand zoning, UDC, and city code the easier it is to communicate with them over all issues that arise in our neighborhood and our city in its entirety. Engagement is a good thing and Engagement Officers would have been and will be good for our city especially given the rapid changes we are experiencing. It will be a win win. I strongly urge Council to fill these positions and have this department fully formed.

I am extremely concerned over where these allocated monies went, after all it is the taxpayer’s money, “our money” and it was a department and positions that were strongly fought for by our neighborhoods. In closing I would like to see this department fully created and these positions filled by qualified knowledgeable persons, if not than perhaps an audit should be done as to where the money went and where it currently is. I think we deserve an explanation.

Respectfully

Mary Johnson

Monte Vista Terrace NHA

To: Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee members

January 5, 2021

Chair: [D1 Roberto Trevino](#)

D2 Jada Andrews-Sullivan

D3 Rebecca Viagran

D9 John Courage

D10 Clayton Perry

CC: MPNA Board of Directors
Tier One Neighborhood Coalition

Subject: Neighborhood Engagement Team

Dear Committee members,

My name is Joan Brooks. I live in the Mahncke Park neighborhood in District 2. I was involved with reviews of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan as it was being formulated and implemented, and I was very pleased with the city when it committed to our neighborhoods by assigning Neighborhood Engagement Officers. I have had **NO** contact with the Neighborhood Engagement Team and do not know who Mahncke Park's Engagement officer is. It would have been very helpful for us to have had knowledge of this person during our efforts to block commercialization of property on Davis CT in November/December 2020 timeframe.

I do not understand how our tax dollars that are paying the salaries of the engagement team and the administrator (whose only responsibility, until recently, was to oversee this team) have been used or what have these engagement officers been doing (before COVID-19). Our community/neighborhood wants change in the future and for the City to fulfill its commitment to our neighborhoods. It is imperative this team commits to working with our neighborhood.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Joan Brooks
Mahncke Park, District 2
134 Davis CT
San Antonio, TX 78209

◇ TIER ONE NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION ◇

Tier One Neighborhood Coalition (T1NC) is a group of San Antonio downtown (inside Loop 410) neighborhoods organized to promote communication, cooperation, education, and support among neighborhoods as well as advocate for thoughtful policies. Contact t1nc.sat@gmail.com or visit T1nc.org

Neighborhoods are the Answer

Good Afternoon Council Members,

We often hear from city staff, particularly in Planning and DSD and sometimes from elected officials that neighborhoods are the problem, but we believe that neighborhoods are the answer.

The place where we live is the heart of our communities. Passion, love, dedication, loyalty and identity are what root us in our neighborhoods and why we work so hard for their betterment. Our neighborhoods are the places that support elders, local school children, and those who are vulnerable to our rising property taxes. Neighborhood Associations disseminate City information on a wide variety of programs, including those that address housing and food insecurity. We act as a conduit between city staff, elected officials and residents. “We are in this together” has been a neighborhood mantra throughout 2020 and we found ways to make that sentiment felt.

Neighborhoods are the places where people live, work (particularly now), worship, and learn. We believe the City should make supporting and nurturing San Antonio’s neighborhoods a priority. As with early education, it behooves us as a city to invest in our neighborhoods. We have learned that investment in early education results in a better future for our students, we believe that investment in neighborhoods would also provide a better future for San Antonio residents.

In Tier One Neighborhood Coalitions’ early days, we lobbied then Mayor Ivy Taylor and City Manager Sherryl Scully for a Neighborhood Commission in order to address the disenfranchisement that neighborhoods were feeling under the pressure of the SA Tomorrow Plan implementation. We also asked for an additional four city staff positions that would look at planning and development with a neighborhood lens and act as ombudsman or liaisons between neighborhoods and city staff and departments. The letter of request, which was submitted during a meeting with Taylor and Scully, was signed by representatives from 18 Neighborhood Associations and two Community Organizations representing Council Districts 1, 2, 3, 5 & 7.

Although we did not succeed in getting the Neighborhood Commission, City Manager Sculley did create four new positions within the Neighborhood Housing and Services Dept. During the 8-10-2017 "A" Session presentation of the proposed FY 2018 Budget, CM Sculley introduced the four new Neighborhood Engagement Team positions with a budget of \$255,000. Tier One was pleased by this announcement and proud of the achievement that we felt would help neighborhoods gain a more even footing, improve relations between the city’s planning and development departments and neighborhoods overall and provide a vital resource to neighborhood associations and community organizations.

Neighborhood leaders were gratified that the City was making a monetary commitment to neighborhood engagement, capacity building and access to an advocate within the city structure. Improved working partnership would lead to less controversy, less staff time spent on citizen discontent at commissions and council meetings, and a better outcome for everyone involved.

We need the promise of the Neighborhood Engagement Team to be honored by the city.

Thank you.

Tier One Neighborhood Coalition

Tier One Neighborhood Coalition Steering Committee

Cosima Colvin
Christine Drennon
Tony Garcia
Homer "Butch" Hayes
Cullen Jones
Ricki Kushner
Velma Pena
Cynthia Spielman
Amelia Valdez
Theresa Ybanez