

**GOVERNANCE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Committee Present:	Mayor Ron Nirenberg, <i>Chair</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember Ana Sandoval, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i>
Staff Present:	Councilmember Treviño, <i>District 1</i> ; Erik Walsh, <i>City Manager</i> ; Andy Segovia, <i>City Attorney</i> ; Leticia Vacek, <i>City Clerk</i> ; Kevin Barthold, <i>City Auditor</i> ; Lori Houston, <i>Asst. City Manager</i> ; Tony Felts & Phil Laney, <i>Development Services Dept.</i> ; Shreya Shah, Camila Kunau, & Ed Guzman, <i>City Attorney's Office</i> ; Caitlin Krobot, <i>City Manager's Office</i> ; Jim Greenwood, <i>Mayor's Chief of Staff</i> ; Lina Rodriguez, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Iris Dimmick, <i>Rivard Report</i> ; Paul Furukawa, Geraldine Garcia, Marc Ross, Ashley Longoria, Luke Griego, Amelia Adams, Graciela Sanchez, Linda Ortega, Irma Hoffman, Cynthia Spielman, Courtney Gill, Mark Hutchison, Jessica Guerrero, & Rich Acosta, <i>Citizens</i>

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Nirenberg called the meeting to order.

**1. Approval of the Minutes from the Governance Council Committee Meeting of December 12, 2019.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the Minutes from the December 12, 2019 Governance Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. A briefing and discussion on a Council Consideration Request (CCR) from Councilmember Trevino for the establishment of a Renters' Commission. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica R. Soto, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) Director].**

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston briefed the Committee on the CCR brought forth by Councilmember Treviño requesting a discussion and potential creation of a Renters' Commission. She stated that the proposed Commission would be comprised solely of residential renters from different backgrounds. She added that the proposed commission advise City Council on matters related to: affordable housing; accessibility; transportation; green spaces; public spaces; land use; renter laws/rights; public health; safety; education; and economic growth.

Mrs. Houston stated that the CCR cited the following from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey:

1. Renters occupy approximately 46% of the housing units in San Antonio.
2. The median rent for San Antonio has increased by nearly 18% since 2010.
3. The median household income for renters is \$33,690 compared to \$63,719 for owners.
4. Nearly 50% of renters in San Antonio spend more than 30% of their gross income on rent.

Mrs. Houston noted that the Housing Commission (HC) was reconstituted in January 2019 to oversee implementation of San Antonio's Housing Policy Framework. She stated that the HC's charge did not focus specifically on either renters or homeowners, but rather the housing needs of San Antonio. However, the past six months, the HC had been involved in a wide variety of issues including the Risk Mitigation Fund used primarily to assist renters at risk of displacement and evictions.

Mrs. Houston noted that the NHSD and the HC are currently developing an Implementation Plan that would identify roles and responsibilities of housing partners to include, San Antonio Housing Trust, San Antonio Housing Authority, Housing Commission, and other partners. She noted that the Implementation Plan would include the needs and opportunities not being addressed and would provide further recommendations for action.

Mrs. Houston noted that staff recommended enveloping the renter's commission into the Implementation Plan. She stated staff would present recommendations to Council Committee in summer 2020.

Mayor Nirenberg called upon Councilmember Treviño regarding the CCR he submitted for consideration. Councilmember Treviño stated that he submitted the CCR to be inclusive of renters' voices, to assist in transparency, and receive public input. He disagreed with the staff recommendation and requested the CCR be forwarded to a Council Committee to allow policy discussion to commence immediately.

Mayor Nirenberg requested clarification regarding one of the recommendations given by the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force (MHPTF) to streamline the different Housing Boards, Committees, and Commissions. Ms. Veronica Soto stated that the main issue was coordination among all entities having a clear and defined charge for each housing entity. Mrs. Houston added that during the comprehensive implementation plan development process, staff would be looking at the different Boards/Commissions that pertain to housing.

Mayor Nirenberg requested information regarding peer cities' renters' commissions. He called upon Paul Furukawa to address the Committee. Mr. Furukawa stated that among the current composition of the Housing Commission, there are members who were renters both past and present. He stated that as a Member of the HC, he wore several hats such as, homeowner, resident of Council District 9, Person of Color, and Military Veteran. He noted that the HC is tackling renters' issues and expressed his willingness to tackle renters' issues.

Mayor Nirenberg called upon individuals to speak. After public comment concluded, he thanked those that spoke and provided input. Mayor Nirenberg noted that the HC was working diligently to create a comprehensive compassionate housing policy that was not layered in bureaucracy. He noted his agreement with goals of the CCR.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that she was in favor of further discussion at the Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee. She noted concerns regarding how policy discussions would flow from one housing entity to another. She mentioned the need to hear the voice of renters and added that the proposed commission could be an appropriate forum.

Councilmember Courage stated the importance of this discussion and noted that 43% of the residential units in his district are rental units. He stated that when the Council Committee addresses this topic, that they take into consideration the creation of a sub-committee within the HC to lessen the workload of the HC. He suggested that the make-up of the commission or sub-committee include HC members, renters, veteran community, LGBTQ community, property management companies, owners of apartment buildings, and owners of single-family homes for rent.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia expressed her agreement with exploring the CCR's recommendations and looked forward to further discussion at a Council Committee. She noted her own experience with renters' issues and evictions and thanked the entities that had reached out to her office. She requested a public survey be conducted regarding renters' issues and the need for a renters' commission.

Councilmember Gonzales inquired if the HC has discussed the proposed creation of the renters' commission. Ms. Soto stated that they had discussed it briefly but no recommendations had been decided. Councilmember Gonzales inquired if Councilmember Treviño was open to integrating the proposed commission with the HC. Councilmember Treviño stated that he wanted robust discussion regarding this topic. He noted that members were not appointed by each Council District.

Councilmember Gonzales inquired of the issue of homelessness and if it would be included. Mrs. Houston stated that the Chief Housing Officer would oversee the Housing Implementation Plan and the Homeless Strategic Plan. Councilmember Gonzales noted her support but mentioned her concern regarding duplication of services that could delay implementation.

Mayor Nirenberg requested that the HC continue to discuss this issue and have renters to provide input.

Councilmember Sandoval moved to forward the CCR to the Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee for discussion. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**3. A briefing and discussion on a Council Consideration Request (CCR) from Councilmember Roberto Treviño and Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia on the Ethics Code Amendments. [Andrew Segovia, City Attorney].**

City Attorney Andy Segovia briefed the Committee on the CCR brought forth by Councilmembers Treviño and Rocha Garcia seeking changes to the Ethics Review Board (ERB). He stated that the CCR seeks to change composition, appointment, and authority of the ERB:

1. The selection and appointment of the City's Compliance Auditor by the ERB only
2. Outside third party nomination of ERB candidates for consideration and appointment by the City Council, rather than current application and selection process
3. Ethics training and education to be conducted solely by the Compliance Auditor, with help from other City employees and the City Attorney's Office as determined by the Compliance Auditor
4. The staffing and budgeting of support staff and legal counsel for the Compliance Auditor
5. Setting and maintaining annual budget for an Ethics Office

Mr. Segovia stated that the City Charter would have to be amended to change the composition, appointment, and authority of the ERB along with subsequent changes to the City's Ethics Code. He noted that the Ethics Code would also need to be amended for any changes to the Compliance Auditor position. He stated that collaboration would be necessary between the ERB, the Charter Review Commission and the City Council.

City Auditor Kevin Barthold stated that he had discussed this with the Chair of the ERB Patrick Lang whom was committed to robust discussion and review of the CCR.

Mayor Nirenberg called upon Councilmember Treviño to discuss the CCR he submitted regarding Ethics Code Amendments. Councilmember Treviño stated that this was an introduction to the idea of independence from city staff and City Council regarding ethics. He noted that he does not believe the CCR as written required a City Charter Amendment but welcomed further discussion.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that she supported further discussion among the ERB regarding the CCR. She noted her personal experience as the former Chair of the ERB and noted her new perspective as a Councilmember. She inquired of the proposed Charter Amendment that might need to be made. Mr. Segovia stated that the CCR was interpreted as wanting to create a body that had more than discretionary power, which could require a Charter Amendment. He recommended that the CCR be forwarded to the ERB for discussion.

Mayor Nirenberg noted his years-long support of an independent ERB and independent Ethics Review Officer that had sanction authority. He noted his work with Common Cause whom he enlisted to review this topic. He noted his office was beginning the process of creating a new charge for the Charter Review Commission.

Councilmember Courage stated his support of the proposed changes and noted that they would improve the transparency and trust among citizens.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to forward the CCR to the ERB for discussion. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 12:07 pm.

**ATTEST:**

  
for Leticia M. Vacek, TRMC/CMC/MMC  
City Clerk

  
Ron Nirenberg, Mayor