

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING  
OCTOBER 22, 2020 2:00PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Dr. Colleen Bridger, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Durime Elmazi, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; David Newman, <i>Director, Solid Waste Management Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Dr. Barbara S. Taylor, <i>Co-Chair, COVID-19 Community Response Coalition, Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases and Associate Dean, UT Health</i>

**Call to order**

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

Public Comments have been submitted through the Comment system and are attached to the minutes.

**LIVE TESTIMONY**

None.

**1. Approval of the meeting minutes for the September 24, 2020 Community Health and Equity Committee Meeting.**

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to approve the minutes for the September 24, 2020 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Treviño seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. A briefing to update the progress made by the five work groups as a part of the COVID-19 Community Response Coalition set up by the Health Transition Team’s Implementation Plan.** [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager, Interim Director, Health]

Dr. Bridger reported that the COVID-19 Testing Task Force first convened on March 18, 2020 to bring stakeholders together to assess local testing capacity. She noted that the Task Force was comprised of 16 healthcare sector organizations conducting COVID-19 specimen collection and 16 laboratories conducting COVID-19 testing. She stated that on June 1, 2020, the COVID-19 Testing Task Force changed its name to Community Response Coalition (CRC) and broadened its role to provide oversight

through the establishment of a Steering Committee, five working groups, and a Pre-K-12 Consultation Group.

Dr. Bridger reported that the Co-Chairs for each of the five workgroups met with her and Dr. Taylor as part of the steering committee for the CRC. She noted that the Testing and Lab Reporting Workgroup (TLR) consisted of approximately 80 members who were experts in the fields of epidemiology, policy, and public health. She stated that the TLR currently focused on best practices for testing, monitor testing capacity, and development of educational tools for medical providers and the community. She noted that over 16,000 individuals had been tested for COVID-19 at the free testing sites throughout the City in September, 2020.

Dr. Bridger reported that the Indicator Monitoring Workgroup (IM) worked collaboratively with the Data Team to communicate different data points, had the unique ability to replicate fairly complicated analyses from the Centers for Diseases and Prevention Control (CDC), and developed Warning Indicator Reports.

Dr. Taylor reported that the Contact Tracing Workgroup (CT) was focused on case identification and contact tracing. She stated that CT faced challenges conducting investigations and empowering residents to communicate with ease about their activities and contacts. She noted that the CT implemented informational graphics to help the public gain a better understanding of how and why contract tracing was performed. She noted that the CT recently recommended key changes to case investigations and contact tracing protocols which resulted in an update to Metro Health and UT School of Public Health which required both asymptomatic and symptomatic antigen positive test cases to be counted as probable cases. She added that the CT incorporated input from Community Health Workers with a goal of identifying ways to increase community participation.

Dr. Taylor reported that the Policy and Work Alerts WorkGroup (PW) had a diverse and somewhat immense role and provided given recommendations about different policy and health alerts. She noted that the PW was in the process of crafting a recommendation on reopening bars that was both data informed and community informed. She added that the PW convened policy initiative meetings with cross sector stakeholders with the goal of being proactive about State and Federal Policy and its impact on the local community, with a focus on equity.

Dr. Taylor reported that the Health Alerts Workgroup (HA) created an Exposure Level Matrix that provided the public with concrete examples of high versus lower risk exposures for informed decision making on activities and prevention tactics during COVID-19.

Dr. Taylor reported that the Enforcement and Education Workgroup (E&E) was currently focused on outreach efforts in targeted areas of Council Districts 1 – 5, where the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths had occurred. She stated that the E&E had 12 Community Health Educators working in the areas with a plan to add eight more in the next few weeks. She noted that Community health Educators had made contact with approximately 1,400 residents since October 1, 2020 and distributed handouts on flu prevention and flu vaccine promotion, and resource handouts for rent, mortgage, utility, and food assistance. She added that care packages would be provided to food pantries in Council Districts 1 – 5 for distribution to residents and included thermometers, face masks, sanitizer, COVID-19 and flu prevention handouts, and instructions on how to use a box fan to improve indoor air quality.

Dr. Taylor reported that the Pre-K through 12 Consultation Group was an ad hoc working group within the CRC that convened as needed and enabled Dr. Junda Woo to issue a health directive for the upcoming school year on August 7, 2020 that provided guidance for phase restarting of in-person schooling that applied to all public and private schools from grades K – 12. She noted that the Group hosted a virtual Town Hall meeting on August 5, 2020 to discuss concerns and safety measures for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Taylor reported that the CRC met with each of the working groups over the past six weeks to review, reset and re-establish priorities, responsibilities and commitments. She stated that the CRC would continue to identify new priorities as they arose and strived to ensure that equity was the foundation and core value for all of the working groups. She noted that funding to support the CRC was available through June 2021.

Councilmember Treviño asked of the decision-making process regarding COVID-19 safety protocols for Halloween. Dr. Bridger reported that the CRC worked in conjunction with guidance from the CDC and provided safer Halloween practices that encouraged indoor events with the use of masks and social distancing. She confirmed that there was no enforcement mechanism in place for Halloween and added that the CRC was currently working on strategic plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Dr. Bridger reported that the Governor's Order allowed for an unlimited number of people to meet indoors, but capped the number of people to meet outdoors at 10. She noted that the Order gave authority to the Mayor to issue waivers for outdoor events greater than 10. She explained that the City Attorney's Office and Metro Health would review all applications for outdoor events and forward their recommendation to the City Manager who would forward his recommendation to the Mayor.

Councilmember Viagran stated that the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee recommended the formation of a Small Business Advisory Commission (SBAC) and noted that the SBAC could work in conjunction with the Policy and Alert Workgroup on policy initiatives. She asked of the approval process for Council District Offices and all City Departments for hosting community events. Dr. Bridger stated that Metro Health would develop a modified application process for Council District Offices. She noted that there was a moratorium on all 5K running events and it would be possible to lift the moratorium at a time in the future when the City achieved Green Level status which was the lowest exposure level on the Exposure Level Matrix.

Councilmember Gonzales stated that her greatest concern was for the Edgewood Independent School District where 30% of the children were being raised by grandparents and requested the status on school re-openings. Dr. Bridger noted that only two outbreaks were associated with local schools since the re-opening of in-person learning and she attributed that to the good job schools were doing implementing safe practices.

Chairwoman Sandoval informed the Committee that she met yesterday with City Staff, Metro Health, and the Office of Equity to discuss the formation of a potential Health Equity Task Force that would focus on the Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and would compliment the work of the CRC. She asked Dr. Bridger and Dr. Taylor to collaborate with the Office of Equity for the next iteration of the CRC.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of reported cases of COVID-19 reinfection. Dr. Bridger stated that there were no reported cases of COVID-19 reinfection. She reported that a more common scenario was that of patients who never completely cleared the virus from their system with subsequent positive tests results which were positive due to the initial infection, not a reinfection. She noted that the COVID-19 virus did not mutate very much and a sign of reinfection would be indicated by comparing subtle differences in genetic sequencing.

**3. A briefing on the current state of recycling and future recycling contracts, recycling goals and potential program changes.** [David W. McCary, CPM, Assistant City Manager; David Newman, Director, Solid Waste Management Department]

David Newman reported that the City's recycle rate was 7% ten years ago, which was very low compared to other peer cities. He stated that the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) created the Recycling and Resource Recovery Plan which was adopted by City Council in December 2010 with three goals, as follows:

- Easy access to recycling for multi-family (apartment) dwellings: Completed - Ordinance adopted in December 2010
- Improved recycling for local businesses: Completed – ReWorksSA launched in February 2018
- Achieve a 60% recycling rate by 2025: Ongoing – Currently at 36%

Mr. Newman cited implemented strategies, as follows:

- Education and Outreach: Ongoing
- Brush and Bulky Collection: Separated into two separate programs so that brush could be mulched and diverted from the landfill
- Organics Program: Organic material placed in the green carts could be composted and diverted from the landfill
- Variable Pricing (PAYT): Implemented a Pay-As-You-Throw pricing system wherein customers could request smaller carts, pay a smaller fee, and using a smaller cart encouraged more recycling

Mr. Newman reported that the current recycling rate was 36% and the 60% recycling goal for 2025 was difficult to achieve due to changes in recyclable materials. He noted that coffee cans were once made out of aluminum and had progressed to plastic materials, coffee now came in foiled pouches which were not recyclable, and packaging material used to be made up of newspaper and was now lighter. He added that the recyclable market was now more selective and items that were originally accepted were now more difficult to sell, such as plastic bags, plastic film, and mixed plastics (including Styrofoam). He stated that China was the largest global buyer of recyclables and adopted a national cleanliness standard in 2017 which caused a drop in revenue from \$100 per ton to \$60-\$65. He noted that the revenue helped to offset \$49 in processing cost per ton and the City's current net revenue from recycling was \$13 per ton.

Mr. Newman reported that the current contract would expire in 2024 and a decision would be required in Spring 2021 to extend the contract with the current vendor; issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new long term contract; or, build a City facility that would be operated with City resources and operated by

an outside contractor. He noted that the SWMD was working with a consultant to further evaluate options. He asked the Committee to consider recycling as more than just a disposal option that contributed to sustainability goals and the more products purchased with recyclable content would reduce the landfills while supporting the City's climate strategies.

Councilmember Gonzales noted that due to COVID-19, many restaurants did not allow customers to reuse their drink cups and asked if non-disposable utensils could be used again to reduce waste. Mr. Newman reported that the SWMD experienced a 12% increase in tons of garbage associated with an increase in containers and food products generated by more residents staying home during COVID-19. Dr. Bridger stated that the most likely way to catch COVID-19 was through face-to-face contact and the CRC recommended disposable utensils when someone was in isolation in a home with others.

Councilmember Viagran requested that all City facilities be provided with recycling receptacles. Assistant City Manager McCary reported that all City facilities were required by Ordinance to offer recyclable receptacles and any violations should be reported to the Department.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if there were industries in San Antonio that would accept recyclable items as an alternative to shipping recyclables overseas. Mr. Newman reported that the current contract does not allow for the City to take ownership of the recyclables and the City's recyclables were shipped to the Republic of China where they are recycled and sold on the open market.

Chairwoman Sandoval observed that plastic bags were embodied with energy and produced from water, greenhouse gases and were petroleum based and to not recycle them or reuse them would be in conflict with the City's climate action goals. She asked if the SWMD could collaborate with the newly formed Climate Action Committees for further collaboration. Assistant City Manager McCary acknowledged that plastic bag recycling was an industry challenge in itself and further evaluation would be needed to determine what the return on investment would be. He added that the SWMD had periodic meetings with the Office of Sustainability and Climate Action Committees and were collaborating efforts on several items.

Chairwoman Sandoval recommended that recyclable options be added to the City's Legislative Agenda. Mr. Newman suggested the following topics to be added to the Legislative Agenda: More incentives for better sorting technology, and mandating higher recycled content and products. Assistant City Manager McCary suggested that the Committee review and prioritize the waste and environmental Legislative recommendations to be agendaized at a future meeting.

#### **4. Briefing on the Community Health & Equity Committee's plan to review policing practices and policies as they relate to racial and gender equity and mental health de-escalation, as per the Mayor's charge.**

Chairwoman Sandoval reported that on June 11, 2020, Mayor Nirenberg charged the Committee to evaluate best policing practices to promote race and gender equity in the community and review mental health de-escalation techniques. She recommended that the Committee bring forward subject matter experts from various backgrounds on both topics to address the Committee; thereafter, the Committee would host a community dialogue to receive public input, author recommendations, and forward recommendations to the City Manager to incorporate into his input process.

Dr. Bridger reported that she would facilitate the process by identifying experts in mental health de-escalation techniques, and the Office of Equity could identify experts on equity issues and domestic violence.

Chairwoman Sandoval made the following suggestions:

- Recommendations ready in February 2020 or March 2020
- Host community dialogues and panel sessions in January 2020
- Panels to be open to all Councilmembers and a subcommittee formed, if necessary
- Summary of findings submitted to City Council
- Work jointly with City Staff on integrated recommendations
- Present recommendations to City Attorney's Office for assessment and alignment with City Charter guidelines, Ordinances, and SAPD Training Manual Policies and Procedures

Councilmember Viagran suggested that Racism as a Public Health Issue should be the overarching theme of the Committee recommendations. She stated that any funding appropriation measures should also be factored into the timeline. She added that systemic equity strongholds needed to be broken down and incorporated in all departments, not only with de-escalation policing techniques.

Councilmember Gonzales proposed that the Committee perform its evaluation on best policing practices and mental health de-escalation measures independently of the Committee's regular work and independent of City Staff to achieve a different perspective.

Chairwoman Sandoval read a comment from Councilmember Treviño that asked, "What can we as policymakers do on the front end to ensure the community's feedback is explicitly stated in the final policy, and how do we ensure voices of the marginalized don't get drowned out by other stakeholders?" She stated that the Committee would design a community dialogue to optimize and incorporate community feedback; thereafter, the Committee would be prepared to explain how the policy was different or modified as a result of their input. She added that special effort would be made to targeted areas of the community to ensure that they were heard. Dr. Bridger cautioned that the loudest voice should not be the only voice heard by the Committee and make sure that all voices were weighed equally in an active engagement process.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Presentation of Waste and Environmental recommendations from the Solid Waste Management Department for the City's Legislative Agenda

Committee review and approval of prioritized waste and environmental recommendations for the City's Legislative Agenda

## **Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

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*Ana Sandoval, Chair*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk*