

**ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2018 at 2:00 PM
CITY HALL, MEDIA BRIEFING ROOM**

Committee Present:	Councilmember Roberto C. Treviño, <i>District 1, Chair</i> Councilmember William “Cruz” Shaw, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
Committee Absent:	Councilmember Greg Brockhouse, <i>District 6</i>
Staff Present:	Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Roderick Sanchez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Shanon Shea Miller, <i>Chief Preservation Officer & Director of Historic Preservation</i> ; Colleen Swain, <i>Director of World Heritage</i> ; Shannon Oster-Gabrielson, <i>Executive Management Assistant</i> ; Cecily Hope Pretty, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	William Brooks, <i>Brown & Ortiz</i> ; Graciela Sanchez, <i>Citizen</i> ; Amy Kastely, <i>Citizen</i> ; Kristel Orta-Puente, <i>Citizen</i>

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the minutes from the February 20, 2018 Arts, Culture & Heritage Committee meeting.

Councilmember Shaw moved to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2018 Arts, Culture & Heritage Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

2. Briefing regarding Office of Historic Preservation updates.

Shanon Shea Miller stated that the mission of the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) was to protect historical, cultural, architectural, and archaeological resources that make San Antonio unique. She noted that an economic impact study was commissioned in 2015 highlighting the important role of preservation in economic development and sustainability. She provided an overview of OHP’s history and stated that regulations were applied through the use of Overlay Zoning Districts. She noted that the primary distinction for historical designations from other zoning types was the ability to regulate demolition. She stated that San Antonio accounted for one third of all historic design review cases in Texas. She noted that the city had the ability to review demolition permits and implement controls in cases where the property may qualify for historic designation.

Mrs. Miller stated that OHP oversaw five major program areas: (1) Archaeological and Federal Review; (2) Cultural Initiatives, Survey, Designation (Scout SA); (3) Development Review, Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) and Enforcement; (4) Vacant Buildings Program; and (5) Education and Outreach. She provided an overview of the process for historic

designation and noted that buildings could be identified through various means such as Scout SA or a demolition request. She stated that once staff confirmed a property's eligibility it was referred to the HDRC. She noted that if HDRC issued a Finding of Historic Significance, cases where the owner agreed were referred to the Zoning Commission and cases where they disagreed were referred to City Council.

Mrs. Miller stated that staff typically reviewed 400 demolition permits annually and the historic designation process had to be resolved within 180 days. She noted the recent creation of new Historic Districts including Nathan and East French Place, as well as the pending Westfort Historic District and proposed districts of Greenlawn Estates and Woodlawn Place. She stated that the creation of Historic Districts relied heavily on public input and the support of residents within the proposed area. She noted that the department averaged 10 formal interactions with communities prior to final designation. She highlighted the first Living Heritage Symposium in 2017 and its emphasis on the importance of "intangible heritage." She acknowledged the efforts of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center to capture intangible heritage and gather history. She noted that staff had successfully written their own nomination for the Downtown National Register District and additional properties were eligible for Historic Tax Credits as a result.

Mrs. Miller stated that staff performed Design Review for 29 Local Historic Districts. She noted that the Design Review Team reviewed 2,000 Certificate of Appropriateness requests in 2017 and the amount of requests rose 8% annually. She stated that staff kept up with increasing demands but wanted to be mindful of the increased time requirement for volunteer HDRC Commissioners. She stated that the review process was streamlined in 2010 to expand the types of projects that can be approved administratively. She noted that two thirds of projects were reviewed administratively and one third were reviewed by the HDRC, with only two percent of those cases being denied. She stated that the HDRC reviewed high profile cases, new construction, alterations, and demolitions and many cases were approved with conditions. She added that they made recommendations for new landmarks, districts, and UDC amendments and reviewed National Register nominations. She stated that the HDRC process required action within 60 days of receiving an application and applicants were encouraged to take advantage of the Design Review Committee to reduce repeat visits to the HDRC. She noted that staff and Commissioners worked with Architectural Review Committees, the public, and the Development Services Department to ensure alignment with the rezoning process.

Mrs. Miller stated that staff took over administration of the Downtown Design Guide to work in conjunction with other types of overlays. She noted that they were in the process of updating procedures to align them with other department review timelines with a conceptual approval process to be proposed at a later date. She provided an overview of education and outreach activities including the Rehabber Club, Historic Run Crew, Students Together Achieving Revitalization (STAR), Historic Homeowner Fair, and San Antonio Preservation Month. She stated that the 2nd Annual Rehabarama would take place in District 3 on April 7, 2018 to work on 19 houses and a church in Highland Park. She noted that 50% of participating owners had served in the military with an average age of 64 and average homeownership for 25 years. She highlighted the Design Assistance Program for low-income homeowners in Historic Districts and the Legacy Business Registry hosted by OHP.

Councilmember Treviño called upon Graciela Sanchez to speak under Citizens to be Heard.

Ms. Sanchez spoke of collaboration between the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center and OHP. She noted the importance of the Hays Street Bridge to the heritage of San Antonio and expressed disappointment with the process that had led to potential development at the site against the HDRC's recommendations.

Councilmember Gonzales expressed concern that there were insufficient funds available to support historic preservation efforts and save buildings. Mrs. Miller stated that the majority of incentives available were offered through tax credits and additional funds were not available for private property owners to rehabilitate their homes. Councilmember Gonzales asked of the tax incentives offered to homeowners. Mrs. Miller replied that incentives stayed with the property for 10 years and owners could choose to freeze taxes on the pre-renovation value for all 10 years or pay no taxes for five years and 50% taxes on the post-renovation value for five years. Mrs. Houston added that the incentive only applied to City Taxes. Mrs. Miller stated that there was a new Historic District incentive to reduce City Taxes for 10 years with a possible five-year extension that applied to owner-occupied residences only and would not transfer to new ownership. Councilmember Gonzales asked that funds be directed to assist homeowners in performing rehabilitation and to incentivize developers to preserve existing buildings and requested a future presentation on existing incentives, waivers, abatements, and grants.

Councilmember Viagran expressed the importance of keeping property appraisals reasonable for legacy homeowners when rehabilitation and Historic Designation occur. Mrs. Miller stated that studies indicated Historic Designation had minimal impact on property values. Councilmember Viagran expressed support for data-sharing between stakeholder groups and for the preservation of skills and trade within the local community.

Councilmember Shaw asked that some Boards and Commissioners be modified so that their decisions would be final and expressed the importance of providing articulate reasoning when requests are denied.

Councilmember Treviño asked of staff capacity and if the growing workload required the addition of alternate HDRC members. Mrs. Miller replied that OHP would work with the City Manager's Office to assess workload and determine if an additional Preservation Specialist position was needed. She added that the staff involved with HDRC was working to streamline agendas but alternate Commissioners may be needed in the future.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing regarding potential amendments to the Unified Development Code relating to the establishment of Viewshed Protection Districts and public feedback regarding protection of views.

Mrs. Miller stated that OHP began working on Viewshed Protection earlier in the year as a result of a Council Consideration Request (CCR) from Councilmembers Shaw and Sandoval. She noted that Viewshed Protection Overlay Districts were part of the UDC but staff was considering updates to allow inclusion of other landmarks. She stated that existing overlay language was limiting because it only applied to landmarks with a physical front door. She noted that the CCR provided guidance to examine which views are unique to San Antonio and merited formal protection. She stated that Viewshed Protection utilized overlays to provide protective height

restrictions and each site would require its own ordinance. She noted that the only currently existing landmark with Viewshed Protection was the Alamo but 15 other landmarks were already eligible for consideration.

Mrs. Miller provided an overview of Viewshed Protection approaches utilized in other cities such as view cones, view corridors, and buffers. She noted that the purpose of Viewshed Protection was to shape development rather than prevent it. She outlined the following goals of the current Viewshed Protection initiative:

- Provide updates and clarifications to the original ordinance
- Identify additional views and methods through public input
- Provide City Council with appropriate tools for future decision-making

Mrs. Miller stated that the initiative would be a two-step process beginning with UDC amendments to allow additional sites and remove the front door limitation followed by design and adoption of individual zoning overlays at City Council's direction. She noted that appeals would be handled by the Board of Adjustment but the intent of the ordinances would be to allow a range of flexible standards between landmarks. She provided an overview of the consideration timeline with anticipated full City Council consideration in May 2018. She stated that Councilmembers would receive a list of prioritized sites based on community surveys that classified landmarks in terms of Iconic Snapshots, Cultural Ties, and Urban Planning. She recommended UDC amendments, additional analysis of the sites selected through public input, collaboration with the HDRC's Technical Committee and stakeholders, and presentation of recommendations of prioritized sites at the next Committee meeting.

Councilmember Treviño called upon the citizens registered to speak.

Graciela Sanchez stated that there was majority community support for Viewshed Protection of the Hays Street Bridge. She expressed opposition to the proposed development at the site.

Amy Kastely asked that a moratorium be placed on the approval of rights and issuance of permits for development around the Hays Street Bridge until the conclusion of the consideration process.

Kristel Orta-Puente expressed support for streamlining HDRC processes to improve the applicant experience and asked that more incentives be directed to residents than developers. She spoke of the importance of preserving iconic views and expressed disappointment with the process surrounding the Hays Street Bridge.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if there was a way to see how views would be changed if proposed developments were built. Mrs. Miller replied that mass models would be designed to show potential impact but they would not provide potential building designs.

Councilmember moved to proceed with the recommendations as stated. Councilmember Shaw seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

Councilmember Shaw asked that constituents be given opportunities to propose future Viewshed Protection sites.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:44 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roberto C. Treviño, Chairman

*Cecily Hope Pretty
Office of the City Clerk*