

# HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2019, 4:00 PM  
MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING, “B” ROOM,  
114 W. COMMERCE, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205

**Members Present:** Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Chair  
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member  
Robert Abraham, Member  
Jessica O. Guerrero, Member  
Marianne Kestenbaum, Member  
Keith Hom, Member  
Nicole Collazo, Member  
Richard Milk representing David Nisivoccia,  
Member

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**Members Absent:** David Nisivoccia, Member  
Sarah Sanchez, Member

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**Staff Present:** Lori Houston, *Assistant City Manager*; Irma Duran, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood and Housing Services Department*

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- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 4:06 P.M. by Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Chair, and the roll was called by the Administrative Assistant II.
- **Roll Call**
- **Citizens to be Heard** – Commission Member, Jessica O. Guerrero began by reading a statement sent from a San Antonio citizen, Molly, in regards to Mayor Ron Nirenberg’s public message to provide a safe public parking program to assist the displaced population. Staff will follow up with citizen on her statement with more information.

## 1. **Approval of Minutes for May 22, 2019 Meeting**

### **COMMISSION ACTION:**

Commission Member, Robert Abraham stated that “Dr.” should be removed from his name. The motion was made by Keith Hom to approve and the motion carried unanimously.

### **THE MOTION CARRIED**

## 2. **Director’s Report – Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, presented.**

It was announced that Michael Rodriguez, Assistant Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, left the City. Verónica Soto explained that answers to questions that could not be addressed during the May 22 meeting were sent via email to the Commission Members, and are now available in this meeting’s packet.

Commission Chair, Lourdes Castro Ramirez asks a question on the activity report for the Owner Occupied Rehab program status from October 2018.

Soto mentions that with the combination of federal and general fund money, we are supposed to do a total of 81 homes. The goal is to have 51 homes completed by the end of the fiscal year. This month we were supposed to have several homes completed so we exceeded the metric in terms of turning the key over to the owner of the home after rehabbing them. There are 30 homes out of 51 that will be completed by September 30. We are on schedule to meet our metric by the end of the fiscal year.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez clarifies that the metric is 51 homes by the end of the year. Verónica Soto confirmed that this is correct, and with the fiscal year money there will be 81 total.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asks what is the average subsidy of cost per home? Verónica Soto explains that she does not have the actual numbers, but there is a cap around \$90,000 on the actual contract. On a case by case basis, there is approval on exceeding that cap, and only about 6 approvals have been signed that exceed the cap.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asks in terms of the population served through this program, would you say they are primarily senior citizens, or do we have demographics? Soto states that we do have demographics that can be provided. All of these are supposed to be families that are at or below 80% AMI.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asks if we have tracked the impact in terms of property value. What is the impact to that homeowner, if any? Soto responded by saying that we have not tracked that information but this is something we can look into. Senior citizens over the age of 65 would not be impacted because their taxes would be frozen. Clients are informed of exemptions and tax free programs that are available.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asks if there is something else the City could be doing to ensure that the investment does not result in forcing a family out somewhere down the line. Soto explains that property owners can dispute at the Appraisal District that the home value cannot be increased because of the deed restriction and covenant.

Commission Member Marianne Kestenbaum asks if there is a way that we can codify it so they don't have to go their appraisal. Soto stated that Bexar County is not part of City government so we would need to look to the attorney's to help with that.

Commission Member Keith Hom asks if families are required to stay in the home for a period of time after. Soto explained yes, that is why we have a deed restriction. The benefit is for the family so if ownership changes, we ask that they pay some dues back.

Commission Member Jessica O. Guerrero requests an update on the Office of Equity's current work with NHSD. Soto mentioned that we can have them come and present on what they do as well.

Commission Member Marianne Kestenbaum stated the importance of the report of the Mayor's Policy Task Force and recommendation of focusing on 60% AMI is in San

Antonio only. Is there a way to synchronize, transition or set a standardization? Soto explains that because we are using federal money we have to follow the HUD MSA AMI. Because the MSA AMI is higher than the city limit AMI there are more families that qualify for these programs.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez follows up on Commissioner Kestenbaum's question and asks if we have the ability to set some targets and priorities within that 80% range? Soto confirmed that we do have the ability to do so. Chair Castro Ramirez explains that the AMI for the City of San Antonio is lower than the AMI that HUD reaches for the region.

Commissioner Hom asks how much of the \$1 million has been spent and is there a waiting list of families who are waiting to be helped? Soto mentioned that we have been updating those numbers. There is a waiting list of about 940 or more people, and money was utilized that was allocated for emergency assistance. Information on outreach and implementation plan will be sent along with how much money remains in balance.

Commission Member Jessica O. Guerrero asks what happens when the waiting list is closed and people call for assistance? Soto stated that we still take the information, we just do not do the intake. We work with our partners and refer families to other agencies. Commissioner Guerrero also mentioned that she is not sure where the evaluation plan is and expressed concern about the reallocation of funds within this first \$1 million. Soto explained that we are not moving a lot of money, but we will make sure we bring the evaluation plan moving forward. Mr. Ian Benavidez clarified that the goal right now is 200 and will probably expand as we allocate more money. We will go over survey questions and develop another opportunity to go out into the community and have them weigh in on some questions for feedback.

Commissioner Kestenbaum expressed interest in additional data being collected for applicants and who has to be turned away. Soto confirmed that we are collecting this data. Commissioner Kestenbaum asks about an external database for this information. Benavides stated that we will get community feedback and make adjustments so the policy reflects the reality.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez would like to track the outcomes of families that have been assisted. Is this resulting in a positive outcome for families?

**3. Presentation on the FY 2020 Affordable Housing Budget Policy Issues – Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager, presented.**

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston began by explaining meetings are taking place with City departments and non-profits to make sure we are coordinated and are looking at this as a community-wide challenge. Lori stated that we want to focus on how we are leveraging the \$26.1 million allocated for housing to get more. We have tracked about 38 rental projects and about 34 Owner Occupied projects in a pipeline review. The pipeline was adjusted and took 1/3 for each target level identified in the Housing Policy Framework. The 50% to 80% AMI targets are being taken care of by 4% and 9% tax credit deals and other resources that we have. We want to focus on the areas that we are not hitting. What was the intention of the task force when we talked about rehab preservation and production? Lori explains the funds used to go into these programs.

Commission Member Robert Abraham asks about the money in the chart. Lori stated that these are the funds that are necessary to make these projects happen that are coming online in 2019 to 2022.

Commissioner Keith Hom stated that he went on a tour of affordable housing on the East Side near WW White. Working for VIA, he thought about transit service and location.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez added that the City can set some policy priorities when looking for units. Houston confirmed that they are being proactive in looking for units close to transit and schools. She stated that in the next meeting we hope to bring the mapping exercise that breaks it down by the regional center. Chair Castro Ramirez asks that on the less than 30% AMI staff can look at that number closely and ensure the number accurately reflects the need.

Commissioner Guerrero asks if there is a priority on facilitating the production of more affordable housing, and can we look at the percentage for City and SAWS waivers? Houston responds that we can do that, but affordable housing has always been a priority for those fee waivers. There was consensus that we need to build a budget around \$26.1 million for FY 2020. We are working on how to identify the additional \$15 million. Two ways we are working on that are RFP's that will be issued for \$8 million in land values, and to solicit affordable housing in downtown and surrounding areas.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asks what percentage of the FY 2020 proposed budget is general fund versus federal dollars. Lori stated that the only federal dollars we have is the same amount we've had from last year which is \$7.75 million. We are leveraging other tools that we have because of the budget situation we are currently in.

Commissioner Guerrero asks about what was presented to Council. Houston explained that it was a budget work session and priorities discussion. She stated that her recommendation is that we need to focus on the 50% AMI or below, but we are open to feedback and recommendations. The budget is being worked on through July.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez recommends meeting as a body in July to primarily focus on the budget and get additional feedback from Council for support.

Commissioner Hom asks about where this takes you relative to the goals. Houston responded by saying that the \$26.1 million is adequate to keep us on track. Additional resource is going to be necessary to hit those deeper targets. Commissioner Hom then asks if we need the increase in the Gap financing to stay on track to hit the ten year targets. Houston mentioned that there needs to be an increase in the Gap financing to hit the targets at 50% AMI or below. Commissioner Hom mentioned displacement in the short term, and providing more funding. Lori stated that we will come back with more research on the need and where it needs to be placed.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez mentioned that another important piece is understating the plan for addressing homelessness. The number in our City appears like it is growing and the current approach is not creating enough units of housing. What is the plan and continuum and commitment from the City?

Commissioner Kestenbaum suggested that there should be a timeline to assure what we are

spending on production, rehab, etc. We can begin to draw down on the immediate emergency kinds of support and move to production. Ideally, we would be the City that comes up with a way to find additional sources of funding to become as independent of federal funding as possible because in the long-term that is the only way to sustain affordable housing.

Commission Member Dr. Paul Furukawa mentioned the need for safe parking for homeless. Input from places like Haven for Hope would help understand that end of the model. Commissioner Furukawa asked about where we are in the search for a Senior Executive, to which Houston replied that she cannot speak to that right now.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez asked about the dollar amount for Center City Development and how it compares to this budget to create more housing. Houston stated that the dollars for housing were tax rebates and not general fund dollars. These financing tools are available to the affordable housing community. Lourdes asked if there is a way to capture the value of incentives that the City is proposing to commit.

Commissioner Abraham mentioned the prices of the housing increasing and we don't know if that will work against us, or if money they generate will go into the budget to help us further.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez said that we will revisit the budget in the July meeting. The work that has been done has provided more clarity. During the Special Meeting there was discussion about the importance of the City providing a community policy. She also asked for an update on the housing trust assessment. Houston stated that we are going through several meetings for feedback on recommendations. There should be a RFP that goes out for projects, and there needs to be a procurement process. The focus is on the Affordable Housing policy. A meeting with the Public Facilities Corporation Board will take place in July. Houston mentioned that the full report will be shared after it is received and reviewed.

#### **4. Presentation on the Affordable Housing Dashboard – Ian Benavidez, presented.**

Benavidez began by stating that one of the main components of the Mayor's Policy Task Force is to be clear and transparent, and one of the things is the accountability dashboard. A link will be sent so you can sit down and mention any comments or suggestions. Phase one is accountability dashboard that we believe will be easy for neighborhood associations, citizens, council members and council staff to navigate and understand what is in their pipeline. The platform being used is Microsoft BI which can be updated on our end through ITSD. This allows you to find all affordable housing within San Antonio and can be broken down in several ways.

Commissioner Guerrero asked if we can access archives for different years. Ian confirmed that this is something we are able to do.

Commissioner Hom asked if the dashboard will be focused on affordable housing units and if there are any other parts for the dashboard. Ian stated the focus is on production, the pipeline and rehabilitation, but we can consider adding. Houston added that we should consider who is using this and what information they are looking for. Commission Chair Castro Ramirez mentioned that looking at this data from a policy perspective leads to better

understanding the goal of the equity office and we can get to a better level of figuring out where we need to be investing to address issues.

Benavidez spoke about the partnership with Rise and that they will help us create an affordable housing locator. This will assist in suggesting complexes and affordable housing communities that fit your needs.

Commissioner Furukawa asked about the anticipation for the one-stop housing center concept. Benavidez answered that we are leveraging all of this information so that it is all in one place. Commissioner Furukawa asked about crossover down the line with other departments.

Commissioner Kestenbaum asked about affordable housing communities and affordable homes in other places that are not in a listed development. Benavidez stated that those will be harder to track, but we will see what we can do and possibly leverage other resources and filter through certain thresholds.

#### **5. Presentation on the Anti Displacement Strategy – Ian Benavidez, presented.**

Ian Benavidez spoke about NHSD being one of the first to be selected for the anti-displacement grant. We leveraged \$75,000 from the City for \$150,000 grant match from the Ford Foundation. The Grounded Solutions Network will produce a needs assessment for the City and help create an anti-displacement agenda. They will also help us as a City to implement our top priority. Some things we can do now on anti-displacement is analysis on the UTSA downtown area and analyze existing anti-displacement reports. A critically important piece is the update to the vulnerable communities assessment data. Drafts are done with almost all of these and now we need feedback from the Housing Commission, other stakeholders and the Comprehensive Planning Community to be sure we are headed in the right direction.

We are looking at current trends in the UTSA downtown area and put it into a report to compare in the future for anti-displacement. Two indicators are the map and city-wide census blocks that have been changing the most rapidly over the past two years.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez suggested looking at the model that was used by USC for the UTSA analysis. We need to look at the benefits to the community that we should be planning for to mitigate or prevent displacement and create economic opportunities to families in that area.

Commissioner Guerrero asked about the timeline for action terms for anti-displacement strategy. Benavidez stated that the For Everyone Home Grant is the umbrella for all of this. The final piece will be the implementation of the anti-displacement agenda. Commissioner Guerrero suggested opening up meetings more to the community.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez stated that it would be helpful to schedule meetings with Council Members to talk about the work of the Housing Commission.

Commission Chair Castro Ramirez suggested the meeting take place on Wednesday, July 31. Commission would like to see an update on the Removing Barriers committee meeting.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action on future agenda items.**

**Adjournment – 6:11 P.M.**

**Adjournment**

**There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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*Sarah Perez, NHSD*