

**CULTURE & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020
10:00 AM
MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING**

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| Members Present: | Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i> |
| Staff Present: | Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Ed Guzman, <i>Deputy City Attorney</i> ; Verónica R. Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services</i> ; Barbara Ankamah Burford, <i>Neighborhood Engagement Administrator, Neighborhood & Housing Services</i> ; Michael Shannon, <i>Director, Development Services Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i> |
| Others Present: | Rich Acosta, <i>President, My City is My Home</i> ; Stella Ashley; Lorena Birdy, <i>Realtor</i> ; Gregg Birdy, <i>Realtor</i> ; Teresa Brown; Frank Burney, <i>Attorney, Martin & Drought, P.C.</i> ; Monique Bordelm, <i>Remax</i> ; John Butchkosky, <i>Texas Alliance for Human Rights</i> ; Edward Castor, <i>President, Camino Bandera Homeowners Association</i> ; Allison Chambers, <i>Architect, Ford, Powell & Carson</i> ; Millie Devno, <i>President, East Village Neighborhood Association</i> ; Ann Englertz; Brett Finley; Liz Franklin, <i>Resident</i> ; Courtney Gill, <i>Realtor, GSG</i> ; Gordon Grabill, <i>President, Camelot 1 Neighborhood Association</i> ; Nancy Halvorson, <i>iHeart Property Management</i> ; Marlene Hawkins, <i>Government Hill Community Association</i> ; Rose Hill; Lori Houg, <i>Vice President, East Village Neighborhood Association</i> ; Marty Hutchison, <i>Marketing Manager, Property Management Services of Texas</i> ; Joseph Johnson; Shelly Johnson, <i>Realtor, ReMax</i> ; Alonzo Jones, <i>Vice President, UHIA</i> ; Tami Kegley, <i>Vice President, AVNA</i> ; Pir Khokar, <i>Agent, Hall American Realty</i> ; Tuesdae Knight, <i>President/CEO, SAGE</i> ; John King, <i>Blue Fox Property Management</i> ; Ken Lowe, <i>Fortress Funding</i> ; Tony Martinez, <i>Agent, ReMax North San Antonio</i> ; Mari Mitchell, <i>Mitchell Realty</i> ; Ruby Montero, <i>Realtor, Vortex</i> ; Phyllis Newman; Debbie Proctor, <i>Realtor, iHeart Realty</i> ; Katie Ross, <i>ReMax Association</i> ; Courtney Rosen, <i>Realtor, MHN Property Management</i> ; Mark Ross; Dan Rossito, <i>President, Thunderbird Hills Neighborhood Association</i> ; Graciela Sanchez, <i>Esperanza Peace & Justice Center</i> ; Carmen Soto, <i>Landlord, SABOR</i> ; Cynthia Spielman; Marie Stout; Oscar Vicks, <i>President, UHIA</i> ; Ellis Washington, <i>Caltex Realty</i> ; Lisa Wong |

Call to Order

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

1. **Staff briefing on the Neighborhood Association & Community Organization Registration Policy.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Barbara Ankamah Burford explained that the Neighborhood Association (NA) Registry was established by Chapter 35-408 of the Unified Development Code (UDC) as a communication tool for the notification of property owners and registered neighborhood associations within 200 feet of any property pursuing any zoning change or development permit which would require a public hearing. She stated that the Registry was used by the Development Services Department (DSD), other City Department, Developers and various local organizations to inform the public of events, public input meetings and surveys in their areas. She cited the required detailed information neighborhood associations must provide in accordance with the UDC and Internal Administrative Policy (IAP) in order to become registered. She stated there were 362 neighborhood associations, and HOAs, and 40 Community Organizations registered to date.

Ms. Burford acknowledged the issue of overlapping boundaries with 17 of 362 registered neighborhood associations. She stated that current IAP allowed for boundary overlap with the consent from both associations. She noted that as a result of both associations being unable to agree to the overlap, only one neighborhood association was entered into the DSD Registry and received notifications. She added that the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) was currently working on an improved, user-friendly expanded notification system that would allow all associations to submit their registration and would allow anyone to receive notices. She stated that the Registry would also undergo a name change to better reflect its role as a communication tool for all. She cited next steps to host workshops with Department of Developmental Services (DSD, the Planning Department and the Historic & Design Review Commission to conduct community input sessions, small focus groups and one-on-one conversations with community and neighborhood groups.

Ms. Houston stated that the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department would continue to receive input from Council Members and stakeholder groups and submit all recommendations to the CNS.

Councilmember Treviño cited the charge of the reconstituted Culture & Neighborhood Services (CNS) Committee, He stated that the Committee would oversee San Antonio's unique artistic, cultural and historical heritage in addition to issues that serve to preserve the integrity of our City's neighborhoods. He emphasized that community input on this particular item was necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gordon Grabill voiced his opposition to overlapping boundaries and stated that only elected officials should represent the neighborhood.

Joseph Johnson stated that a democratic process should be used to vote people in and out to save time and money.

Rose Hill stated the registration policy did not allow for community input and was not properly enforced.

Marie Stout stated the neighborhood did not need division and that the other NA in her neighborhood was opposed to development of vacant lots which could raise more tax dollars for the community.

Phyllis Newman cited an example of a person who spoke against her request at a zoning hearing on behalf of another NA representing her community that she was unaware of and which did not appear in the Registry. She disagreed strongly with having more than one NA.

Stella Ashley stated that some members of another NA were disgruntled former members of the original NA that had been previously voted off and that the two groups worked against each other.

Millie Dubnow stated there was already division in the neighborhood as they worked to address all issues and that there was a shortage of City staff.

Cynthia Spielman stated that the issue was about zoning and development and that she hoped the Zoning Department would use best practices to create transparent, fair zoning decisions.

Ann Englertz stated that people had the right to organize or not organize and that the registry was flawed and not an effective tool of communication for residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Tami Kegley voiced concern of open boundaries that would create confusion and possibly open the door to special interests and questioned the need. She stated that NAs needed to hold themselves to a standard of transparent, updated communication and best practices.

Liz Franklin stated that the reality was that the Registry was a communication tool and a portal for zoning and stated that 26 people who voted on three zoning cases did not live within the 200 feet of the proposed development.

Edward Castor stated that his NA bylaws required members to be property owners residing within their boundaries and that maybe that should be the requirement for all NAs. He stated that there should only be one NA with no overlapping boundaries.

Oscar Vix stated that only one NA should represent a neighborhood and that the City should instruct all neighborhood residents to vote on who should represent them.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that unity was needed within each NA, with one voice speaking for each of the 31 organizations registered within Council District 2 and that overlapping was divisive and not beneficial. She noted that current communication tools were not always effective and cited an example of unsuccessful efforts to contact residents within a 200 foot radius of a development project where requested information was not received, not responded to, or not returned.

Councilmember Courage stated that the Registry should be used as a communication tool as was its original intent. He suggested that the Registry list should be expanded to include any and all persons who wanted to be included on any communications. He emphasized that the City was not taking away any license nor granting any license from any organization through the Registry, but only communicated information. He stated that overlapping boundary issues should be resolved within a neighborhood and there should be a residential requirement for offices held within a NA, otherwise an outsider could promote a personal agenda, not a community agenda.

Mr. Shannon reported that the DSD maintained a Constant Contact Database at: <https://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/About/Easy-Access>. He emphasized that anyone could sign up to receive weekly informational emails about upcoming zoning cases, permits applied for, etc.

Ms. Houston stated that a Constant Contact Database System would be refined and implemented that would take place of the current Registry and would include a filter to allow for quick access to tailored, specific information requests. She noted that the planned informative workshops would collect community input to best determine how to create a dynamic tool suitable for everyone to use. She added that after the priority Registry issue was resolved, a survey of all NAs would be conducted to help build a curriculum for the next 6 months in the form of quarterly meetings or lunch-and-learns and would be based on their specific needs.

Chairman Treviño recited a portion of a letter submitted from Councilmember Sandoval in absentia voicing her opposition to the proposed administrative policy changes, specifically the provision that allowed for new NAs to register where an NA already exists without requiring coordination with the existing NA.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested data on the percentage of registered NAs that pay zero dues and the percentage of NAs that had residency requirements. Ms. Burford stated she would provide the data. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked staff how the City could help promote participation in NAs and HOAs. Ms. Burford stated that Neighborhood Engagement Staff attended NA meetings to promote inclusivity, encourage mediation, and hosted symposiums to address concerns. She stated that new programs were being developed to build an NA toolkit for bylaw creation and updates, conflict resolution, and to promote better stewardship.

2. A briefing and discussion on a Council Consideration Request from Councilmember Treviño for the establishment of a Renters Commission. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, AICP, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Director]

Verónica Soto reported on the Renters Commission (RC) Council Consideration Request (CCR) which was requested in June 2019 by Chairman Treviño and heard by the Governance Committee in January 2020. She stated that the CCR acknowledged the following issues renters in our community faced:

- Renters occupy approximately 46% of the existing housing stock in the City
- Local median rent had increased significantly
- Renters reported a lower median income of approximately \$33,600, compared to the median income of approximately \$63,700 for homeowners
- Nearly half of local renters were identified as ‘cost-burdened’ where at least 30% of their monthly income contributed towards their housing expense

Ms. Soto cited examples of RCs in other cities. She identified local governing bodies that addressed housing issues:

- San Antonio Housing Commission (SAHC):
 - Reconstituted and established in February 2019 to address local housing issues with goals and accomplishments focused on equity and advocacy for affordable housing and renter-focused issues
 - Comprised of five at-large members with 2 held by renters and 4 ex-officio members
 - The Commission’s Risk Mitigation Fund and the Risk Mitigation Stakeholders Group included renters’ voices in its policy evaluation and outreach programs
- Removing Barriers Committee
- ForEveryoneHome Initiative
- OurSA & SAAH
- Neighborhood Improvements Advisory Committee

Ms. Soto reported that the City’s proposed Strategic Housing Implementation Plan would clearly outline the roles of all governing bodies and partners for housing issues and to provide better representation for renters with more ‘pro-renter’ policies. She added that the Housing Commissioners heard extensive public comment at their regular meeting on January 22, 2020 and that the Governance Committee recommended that the CNS create a RC and facilitate next steps.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marty Hutchison stated that rent increases were determined by annual property tax rates and if there was a delay in rent payments, a homeowner or investor would not be able to pay their mortgage.

Phyllis Newman spoke in opposition of a proposal of no background checks that would not protect her renters from potential child molesters and sex offenders.

Mark Ross stated that if an RC was formed that it should be comprised of an equal number of landlords and renters that would report to the Housing Commission. He stated that the landlords should be appointed by their representative organizations.

Theresa Brown stated that the proposed provision banning evictions during the winter months would create situations where evicted tenants would cause damage to rental units, cause eviction courts to be backed up and cause investors to leave the City.

Nancy Halverson stated that adding another committee for housing issues would be redundant, diluting and confusing and focus should be on bolstering the existing Housing Commission.

Cynthia Spielman stated that the RC should include renters only that would provide recommendations, not effectuate ordinances. She added that renters should only have to go before one commission to present their housing issues.

Rich Acosta stated that he supported an independent RC made up of renters only that would directly report to City leadership. He stated that each Councilmember should conduct outreach in their respective districts to recruit renter representatives for their input.

Ann Englertz stated that she was in support of a RC made up of renters only. She stated that renters need to be informed of their rights and that rights needed to be enforced for both for renters and landlords.

Brett Finley stated that the San Antonio Board of Realtors (SABOR) agreed that renters needed representation at the City level and requested SABOR representation on the RC. He stated that SABOR urged caution regarding eviction moratoriums and rent control as items that ran counter to the spirit of what the RC would seek to accomplish.

Graciela Sanchez stated that 1,200 tenants at the Alazan Courts were going to be evicted and did not have a voice within local governance. She requested that renters be respected.

Chairman Treviño emphasized that a RC was not a de facto housing court, but was a platform intended to engage a group that makes up almost half of the local population, who statistically earn less, who spend a greater proportion of their income on housing, and who had more barriers to civic engagement. He stated that he hoped that the discussions would result in the establishment of a tentative public engagement plan that would ensure that a RC was created by

the people it seeks to serve, and that discussions would address concerns regarding the creation of the RC and note other concerns for future discussion.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if mediation would be available through the RC for eviction resolutions. She requested a report of evictions by Council District.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the CNS was also working in collaboration with any other subcommittees. Ms. Houston replied that she was unaware of any but that joint subcommittee collaborations would be considered.

Councilmember Courage proposed that the RC be formed under the authority of SAHC Committee. He recommended the representation to be made up of six renters, two members appointed from SAHC, and one ombudsman with the remaining members appointed from diverse stakeholder groups. He added that this Committee should interview all applicants and forward their appointment recommendation to City Council for approval.

Councilmember Courage proposed that landlords should pay a monthly fee of \$1 per rental unit that would be applied to the Risk Management Fund. He stated he was opposed to tenants being evicted in freezing weather conditions.

Councilmember Courage moved to approve the establishment of a RC. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Items 5 and 6 were addressed at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 5. Staff briefing on a Development Agreement with Patio Delantero, Ltd, Houston Street TIRZ Board of Directors, and the City of San Antonio for eligible public improvements for up to \$225,000.00 for the Weston Urban Open Space/Pinkerton's Barbecue project located at 107 W. Houston Street. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; John Jacks, Director, Center City Development and Operations]**
- 6. Staff briefing on a Development Agreement between 114 Main Plaza, LLC, Houston Street TIRZ Board of Directors, and the City of San Antonio for eligible public improvements in an amount not to exceed \$1,132,912 for the redevelopment of 114 Main Plaza and a patio license agreement between 114 Main Plaza, LLC and the City of San Antonio. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; John Jacks, Director, Center City Development and Operations]**

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to approve Items 5 and 6. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Item 3 was considered at this time.

3. **Discussion facilitated by Chairman Roberto Treviño on the development of a monthly dashboard and calendar of events that tracks art and neighborhood issues that can be shared with Council Committee members at each meeting.**

Chairman Treviño referenced a sample 3-1-1 Dashboard Information Sheet to be customized for the Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee. He stated that the dashboard would include monthly statistics for the number of demolitions per district, number of roofs completed under the Under One Roof Program, amount of linear feet of sidewalk under construction or completed, number of residential and commercial permits filed per district, number of trees planted, number of meals provided to Senior Centers, number of SAWS and CPS disconnections, and the posting of Arts & Culture events and senior events. He requested that Committee Members submit their suggested items for the Dashboard.

4. **Discussion on future agenda items for the Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee.**

There were no future items discussed.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Roberto Treviño, Chairman

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano
Office of the City Clerk