

**CULTURE & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020  
2:00 PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebeca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Andy Segovia, <i>City Attorney</i> ; Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Roderick Sanchez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Razi Hosseini, <i>Director, Public Works Department</i> ; Homer Garcia, <i>Director, Parks &amp; Recreation Department</i> ; Debbie Racca-Sittre, <i>Director, Department of Arts &amp; Culture</i> ; Verónica R. Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood &amp; Housing Services</i> ; Shanon Miller, <i>Director, Office of Historic Preservation</i> ; Cory Edwards, <i>Deputy Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Historic Preservation</i> ; Stephanie Phillips, <i>Senior Historic Preservation Specialist, Office of Historic Preservation</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Housing Administrator, Neighborhood &amp; Housing Services</i> ; Carlos Valenzuela, <i>Public Engagement Officer, Government &amp; Public Affairs Department</i> ; Tracy Talavera, <i>Public Affairs Coordinator, Government &amp; Public Affairs Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>

**Call to Order**

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

**1. Approval of the Minutes from the March 2, 2020 Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee Meeting.**

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee Meeting. Chairman Treviño seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. Briefing regarding the Deconstruction and Salvage Initiative and Associated Draft Policy Components.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Shanon Miller, Office of Historic Preservation]

Stephanie Phillips reported that Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste accounted for approximately 30% of the total waste stream and more than double the amount of household trash bins. She stated that an average of 450 demolitions occurred annually as of 2018. She noted that since mid-2018, the City partnered with a Deconstruction Advisory Committee to identify items to address as part of the City’s policy. She added that the City hosted a nationwide Deconstruction Think Tank in February 2020 and hosted a 3-day Deconstruction Contractor Training in October 2019 to train City licensed and general contractors in deconstructing a 1930s home. She stated that they anticipated funding from the Alamo Area Council of Government (AACOG) to conduct a longer workforce training program that would be open to the general public.

Ms. Phillips stated that the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) recommended the drafting of an Ordinance in three phases:

Phase I – Estimated 70-90 deconstructions per year:

- Residential single family and multifamily 4 units or less built in 1920 or earlier
- Residential single family and multifamily 4 units or less in Historic Districts, landmarks, or NCDs, regardless of age

Phase II (18-24 months after) - Estimated 120-140 deconstructions per year:

- Residential single family and multifamily 8 units or less built in 1945 or earlier
- Residential single family and multifamily 4 units or less in Historic Districts, landmarks, or NCDs, regardless of age

Possible Future Phases - Would require future Council Action

Ms. Phillips stated that the Deconstruction Policy was targeted for completion in the Fall 2020.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if engagement was established with affordable housing developers and asked of their feedback; she asked how many affordable housing Developers had taken advantage of the Deconstruction Policy. Ms. Phillips stated that OHP was working in collaboration with the Development Process Task Force and had a real estate presence on the OHP Advisory Committee. She noted Developer concerns were related to cost and time as deconstruction was labor intensive. She added that OHP would propose ways to incentivize structure or permit waivers that would help minimize the cost.

Councilmember Courage requested that future deconstruction meeting details be shared with this Committee and perhaps all Councilmembers in the future. He stated that he knew of several individuals that expressed an interest in attending the meetings and providing their input. Ms. Miller stated OHP would schedule more meetings.

Councilmember Perry noted that larger organizations such as the Greater San Antonio Builders Association (GSBA) and the Associated General Contractors (AGC) should have participated in the meetings. He added that GSBA and AGC would be among the largest organizations that would be implementing the Deconstruction Policy and their involvement and feedback was important.

Chairman Treviño requested engagement and outreach to large groups such as GSBA and AGC to ensure they are included in the process.

Councilmember Viagan asked how many demolition permits were for commercial properties, and voiced her support for the Deconstruction Policy. Ms. Phillips reported that there were approximately 15 or less demolition permits for commercial properties built in 1945 or earlier.

**3. Briefing and Possible Action on Arts & Culture Programs during and post COVID.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, Arts & Culture Director]

Debbie Racca-Sittre reported on the following seven Public Arts Projects currently underway:

<b>Project Name/Artist Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Project Location</b>
Bloom Series by Leticia Huerta	16' Native Flower Sculptures	Six locations within Citywide Howard Peak Greenway Trails

<b>Project Name/Artist Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Project Location</b>
Labor Plaza by Anne Wallace and Terra Design Group, featuring Poetry by Dr. Octavio Quintanilla	Riverwalk Public Art Garden	Market Street
Door of Equality by Sebastian	15' Gateway Sculpture	San Pedro Roundabout
Star of Texas by Sebastian	15' Guiding Star Sculpture	Airport Boulevard
Westside Gateway by San Antonio Cultural Arts by April Ceja, Jason Eric Gonzalez Martinez, and Crystal Tamez, San Anto Cultural Arts	Mural	San Pedro Creek to Zona Cultural, to the Westside
Viewing Blinds by Cade Bradshaw, Ashley Mireles, and Stephen Stimson Studio Landscape Architects	Wildlife Viewing Blinds	Hardberger Park Land Bridge
Paleo Etchings on Faux Stone by Carlos Cortez and Doroteo Garza	Native American etchings on faux stone	Comanche Lookout Park

Ms. Racca-Sittre announced that the Department of Arts & Culture launched a Donate to the Arts website. She noted many Arts & Culture online events and livestreaming events advertised at [www.sanantonio.gov/arts](http://www.sanantonio.gov/arts). She urged the public to support the Arts & Culture events online or in-person events in San Antonio noting that safe social distancing policies were in place.

Ms. Racca-Sittre announced that the SA Cares 4 Art Grant Program proposed \$2.6 million for local non-profit and individual artists. She stated that for-profit arts businesses would be eligible for funding as small businesses through LiftFund. She added that an implementation plan was forthcoming and would meet CARES Act funding guidelines. She noted that an implementation plan would be presented to this Committee at the next meeting.

### **Public Comments**

E. Loren Meeker, General & Artistic Director of OPERA San Antonio, submitted written testimony. She requested support for arts organization in the June 4, 2020 funding allocation vote. She offered to share more information about Opera San Antonio with Chairman Treviño if he had time to meet.

Ben Tremillo, Executive Director, San Anto Cultural Arts, submitted written testimony. He requested that this Committee move to restore funding to the Department of Arts & Culture for FY 2021.

Adela Flores, Director, Conjunto Heritage Taller, submitted written testimony. She urged City Council to consider contributions to local arts groups and delegate agencies when making decisions about CARES Act funding and the General Budget for FY 2021.

George Cisneros, URBAN-15, submitted written testimony. He stated that a combination of funds from both Federal and General Fund sources could provide the Department of Arts and Culture with sufficient resources to reopen.

Ramon Vasquez, Executive Director, American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Mission (AIT), submitted written testimony. He stated that during these 10 weeks, AIT and other art organizations have not ignored the needs of their audiences and students. In limited fashions we have continued to provide online performances, classes and discussions. Some art organizations have provided curbside art supplies and books.

Patricia Ruiz-Healy, Chair, Artpace Board of Directors, submitted written testimony. She kindly asked that the administration act swiftly to provide relief to non-profit organizations to survive and provide crucial services now and after this pandemic.

Katy Pace Hollaran, Member, Artpace Board of Directors, submitted written testimony. “When my late aunt, Linda Pace, started Artpace, she was interested in supporting creativity not only because it is truly a vital aspect of being a human being, but because artists are often those who ask the hardest questions, who challenge the status quo, who unite and bring profound experiences to us as more than just individuals, but as a community.”

Maria Lopez DeLeon, President and CEO, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC), submitted written testimony. She stated that NALAC affirmed that Black Lives Matter and stand in solidarity in the struggle for justice. She added that it is important that this Committee move to restore funding to the dept of ac 2021.

Graciela Sanchez, Director, Esperanza Peace & Justice Center, submitted written testimony. “Black Lives Matter, George Floyd Presente.” She requested the Committee to increase the recommendation of \$2.6 million for the arts funding, to include \$800,000 currently set aside for street signage. She requested that funding be added for delegate art agencies in the City’s FY 2021 General Budget.

Marlena Gonzalez-Cid, Executive Director, Centro Cultural Aztlán (CCA), submitted written testimony. She stated that CCS depended on City funding and many artists who serve as essentially small business owners. She added that investing in the arts was investing in economic development.

Riley Robinson, Director, Artpace, submitted written testimony. She stated that research showed that within a thriving arts and culture scene tourists stay longer, thereby spending more money. Additionally, when a person attends an arts event in the City, they are likely to support other businesses, like restaurants and stores and when patrons attended a performing arts event, they typically spent more than \$27 per person.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how many individual artists reached out for COVID-19 relief and support. Ms. Racca-Sittre reported that Luminaria Contemporary Arts collaborated with the City to reallocate its technical assistance funding to provide \$600 relief assistance grants. She reported that over 115 applications were received, and 25 individual artists received grants. She reported that Luminaria, Texas Public Radio, HEB and other sponsors provided additional relief funds to serve more artists. She added that NALAC would fund approximately 20 local individual artists with \$500 grants each.

Councilmember Viagran asked how the public art projects were funded. Ms. Racca-Sittre stated that most of the art was funded through a mix of bonds and venue funding. She noted that the Airport Boulevard sculpture was paid with Airport funds.

Councilmember Courage urged local artists to apply for relief and support in the areas of housing, food assistance, and unemployment available through the CARES Act funding and not to rely solely on grants from \$2.6 million SA Cares 4 Art Grant Program.

Councilmember Perry asked of upcoming art projects. Ms. Racca-Sittre stated that there were projects planned for Council Districts 2, 3, 6 and 7 that were currently in the initiation phase or community engagement phase. She noted that more projects were forecasted for the future as part of the Arts & Cultural Department’s five-year plan. She added that she would keep the Committee updated on the status of all upcoming projects.

Chairman Treviño asked of the current number of staff employed in the Department of Arts and Culture. Ms. Racca-Sittre replied that there was a total of 6 employees.

**4. Update on the Zoo Parking Garage, a 2017 Bond and FY 2020 Parking Operating and Maintenance funded project.** [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager]

Assistant City Manager Roderick Sanchez reported that \$11.75 million from the 2017-2022 City Bond Program and \$600,000 from FY 2020 Parking Operating Funds was allocated for the Zoo Parking Garage Project, which was a new parking garage facility consisting of 5 parking levels, 612 parking spaces, and included electrical vehicle and bicycle parking spaces, and a sidewalk extension from the parking garage to San Antonio Zoo.

Assistant City Manager Sanchez reported that the Zoo Parking Garage opened to the public for use in October 2019 and proposed garage signage was reviewed by the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) on May 5, 2020. He stated that an Amended Design-Build Contract for signage design, fabrication, and installation was approved by City Council on May 14, 2020, and the Item went to the HDRC on May 20, 2020 for further discussion. He reported a meeting scheduled for June 2, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. with City staff, Members of the Zoo and Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC) to discuss design-related issues and HDRC scheduled the Item for discussion on June 14, 2020. He added that the sign would be fabricated in Summer 2020 and installed in February 2021.

**Public Comment**

Lynn Bobbitt, Executive Director, BPC, submitted written testimony. She stated that the rendering presented to HDRC by TCI was presented to the BPC on November 7, 2019 as the signage that would recognize Brackenridge Park. Parks and Recreation Director and Zoo leadership stated this signage was all that was possible. BPC stated that this was not equitable and that Brackenridge Park should be displayed in the most visible location on the city-funded parking garage to direct visitors to parking for the park, the Zoo, and its other attractions.

Amy Hartman, Gemma Kennedy, John Larcade, Patricia Pratchett, Mimi Quintanilla, Venisa Saenz, John Hertz, Blanquita Sullivan, Lucy Wilson, Chris Cullum, and George Nash, River Road Neighborhood Association (RRNA), submitted written testimony. We ask for a delay on approval for the signage and art installation on the parking garage until there is a transparent public process as outlined by the Department of Arts and Culture and the City Council approved public participation guidelines.

Gemma Kennedy submitted written testimony. She stated that the BPC should be consulted in all activity affecting Brackenridge Park and that there was no mention of signage at the Brackenridge Park Conservancy Annual Meeting or at a local neighborhood meeting earlier this year.

Mimi Quintanilla submitted written testimony. She stated that the garage on the north edge of Brackenridge Park was constructed with bond funds and the garage was for all Brackenridge Park users, including the Zoo.

Roy Schweers submitted written testimony. He stated he was opposed to the design of the Zoo Parking Garage signage and it deserved a public process before it was approved.

Tim Swan submitted written testimony. He asked why was the Zoo given unilateral and sole right to decide what graphics will appear on a garage built with public money for, as the bond offering stated, "Development of a new parking garage facility to service Brackenridge Park and San Antonio Zoo patrons."

Raleigh Wood submitted written testimony. He voiced concerned that the project was not open for public comment/discussion as was the case with the Park Garage near the Witte Museum. He stated that he did not believe the scale of signage was appropriate for the scenic 281 corridor or for the historic park.

Tony Cantu submitted written testimony. He voiced his support for the request made by Councilman Trevino to open the conversation to a public process.

Patty Zaiontz, President, The Conservation Society of San Antonio, submitted written testimony. She stated that a more equitable garage signage plan needed to be discussed for the Zoo and Park. The BPC has offered supplemental funding to balance park signage with zoo signage but the offer has been dismissed.

Joe Calvert, President of the Board, BPC, submitted written testimony. He stated that the BPC requested placement on the tower along with the Zoo logo and supported the Brackenridge name on the façade. He added that the sign on the retaining wall would be best relocated in some form to the entry of the garage to ensure that visitors understand that free parking was available to the Park and Zoo patrons as represented in the bond language.

Jay Loudon submitted written testimony. He voiced his support for the BPC's efforts to have signage identifying Brackenridge Park placed prominently on the new garage located within the park. He noted that the express intent of the project, per the language published for the bond election, was to provide parking for both the San Antonio Zoo (some grounds of which are actually part of Brackenridge Park) as well as for patrons of Brackenridge Park at large.

Lukin Gilliland, Jr., Officer and Board Member of the BPC, submitted written testimony. He urged that the public process continue and requested equitable signage be designated for Brackenridge Park.

Maria and Fred Pfeiffer submitted written testimony. They stated that the parking garage was built with public bond funds on land owned by and leased from the City of San Antonio. They added that tasteful, limited signage with the words "Brackenridge Park," "San Antonio Zoo," and "Parking" is perfectly adequate to identify this utilitarian structure.

Councilmember Treviño acknowledged that this item was for only briefing purposes. He stated that the Committee was disbanded in June 2019 and there had been no public participation about this project since. He noted that stakeholders such as the BPC and the RRNA were not provided an opportunity to meaningfully participate in the development of this item.

Councilmember Treviño asked if public input was received during the signage development project phase. He asked why the Item was not brought to the Committee for public input. Razi Hosseini stated that the Public Works Department worked very closely with the users, the Parks Department and the San Antonio Zoo. Assistant City Manager Sanchez replied that bond projects typically proceeded as design-build work that involved the client and the contractors. He stated that bond projects were typically not brought to Council Committees as they were voluminous and would overload the Council Committees.

Chairman Treviño asked why the San Antonio Zoo's application was expedited on the HDRC's agenda. Ms. Miller stated that there was currently a backlog for HDRC discussion items. She added that there was no backlog for Consent Agenda items. She explained that typically when the HDRC received an application, it would be posted to the very next agenda, but due to COVID-19, HDRC had limited the number of Non-Consent items per agenda. She clarified that under non-COVID-19 circumstances, the HDRC must take action within a 60-day deadline. She confirmed that the HDRC did vote to delay the item for more public comment.

City Attorney Andy Segovia advised the Committee that questions in terms of process should be directed to the City Manager. He noted that there were policies and procedures in place.

Chairman Treviño requested information on non-profit signage that the City had previously paid for, especially within the range of \$800,000. He requested more public engagement on the item and a better public engagement process. He noted HDRC had voted 9-1 to allow for public input on this item. He requested a more equitable compromise be made going forward.

Councilmember Perry asked why this item was agendaized at the Committee level after City Council had already voted on the authorization of the funding and the item was to go to the HDRC for final approval.

City Attorney Segovia urged Committee Members not to discuss the merits of the signage as the HDRC was going to discuss the merits at its June 14, 2020 meeting.

Councilmember Viagran reiterated that City Council heard public comments and the comments of Councilmember Treviño on the dais and voted to deny bringing this item to the Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee for further discussion.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that HDRC would be handling the design process and was certain that HDRC would conduct due diligence.

Chairman Treviño stated that at his discretion as Chairman of the Committee, he deemed it pertinent to this Committee to provide more public engagement as requested by the HDRC.

##### **5. Briefing on the Right to Counsel Program** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Ian Benavidez, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Ian Benavidez provided an overview on the Right to Counsel Program (RHP) that was established in January 2020. He stated that the RHP was funded through the Risk Mitigation Fund. He stated that the RHP provided free legal aid for individuals that qualified for the Risk Mitigation Fund (RMF) and the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP).

Mr. Benavidez provided an overview of the eviction process. He stated that RHP services were provided by Texas Rural Legal Aid (TRLA) and included legal advice, mediation, and representation in court or administrative hearings. He added that RHP also provided education and “Know Your Rights” trainings.

Mr. Benavidez presented a proposed Notice of Tenant’s Rights (NTR) which would emphasize to consumers that a Notice to Vacate did not require a tenant to leave the premises. He stated that the NTR would be enacted through an Ordinance and would apply beyond the COVID-19 response period. He added that the NTR would apply to all landlords and included fines of \$500 and allowed for multiple citations. He added that continued stakeholder outreach and education would continue through June 2020, when the NTR would be presented to City Council for discussion; thereafter, the proposed NTR would be presented to the Committee for final review.

Mr. Benavidez reported on the partnership of Bexar County Justices of the Peace (JP) in an effort to support and mitigate evictions. He stated that Eviction Hearings were suspended from March 16, 2020, through June 1, 2020 due to COVID-19. He noted that each JP Court was working on reopening timelines, and most would begin hearings in mid-June 2020.

Mr. Benavidez reported on the coordinated efforts between the City and the Bexar County Court system to support and mitigate evictions. He stated that docket information was collected for each Court and then

contact was made with the San Antonio Apartment Association to inform its members of EHAP and the Bexar County Rental Assistance Measure (TRAM); and rental assistance information was mailed to landlords. He added that EHAP and TRAM information would be included in each notice to the tenants and the landlord when eviction hearings were scheduled. He noted that City and County staff would be present at eviction hearings to inform landlords and renters of available assistance; start the application process; and negotiate agreements with the Court to avoid evictions.

Mr. Benavidez reported that when the Texas Supreme Court allowed eviction hearings to proceed on June 1, 2020, it provided additional protection for CARES properties. He stated that evictions filed between March 27, 2020 and July 25, 2020 could not proceed without a sworn petition stating that the property was not subject to the temporary moratorium on evictions imposed by the Federal CARES Act; and evictions were blocked for tenants who received federal rent assistance. He noted that an estimated 50% of rental properties in San Antonio were CARES properties.

### **Public Comment**

Bill Asher, Attorney, submitted written testimony. He stated that he worked with Sarah Dingivan and SALSA (formerly the Community Justice Program "CJP") for 4 years. He reported that he turned in over 100 hours of pro bono work to the Texas Bar Association in 2019. He stated how effective SALSA was under Sarah Dingivan's management. He noted that funding of SALSA's pro bono services to tenants would go a long way in continuing the legal services that they have proven in the past to be effective and appreciated by the underserved.

Robin Eubanks, Attorney, submitted written testimony. She stated that she worked with SALSA on the new Tenants' Rights Clinic for over 2 years. She added most other major cities in Texas had several full-time staff allocated to handle tenant's rights cases on a pro bono basis. She noted that a dedicated Housing Fellow could represent individuals, coordinate volunteer attorneys, and could kick-start a new clinic.

Greg Zlotnick, Director of Pro Bono Programs at St. Mary's University School of Law, SALSA Board Member, and South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) Board Member, submitted written testimony. He stated that expanding access to the justice system would make the community more equitable. He noted that in a city as economically segregated as San Antonio, pro bono programs built bridges across neighborhoods. He added that expanded funding would ensure the fairer administration of justice, empower the community, and safeguard against displacement, evictions, and homelessness.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of Tenants' Rights groups the City collaborated with and asked for a status on the proposed reinstatement of a Chief Housing Officer position. Mr. Benavidez replied that the City primarily collaborated with the RCP stakeholder group. He stated that he would provide a list of its members, to include Haven for Hope and others. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston replied that she would provide an update from the City Manager regarding the continued search for a Chief Housing Officer.

Councilmember Viagran noted the RHP Budget of \$100,000 and asked of the number of individuals that received assistance and how many staffing hours were accrued. Mr. Benavidez replied that approximately seven individuals received direct assistance and "Know Your Rights" training was provided to numerous groups. He added that more individuals sought further assistance through the EHAP process.

Councilmember Perry requested more itemized data on the RHP Budget to determine how many individuals sought and received assistance. He requested that a tracking system be established to monitor the return on investment for the City. Mr. Benavidez stated that the \$100,000 provided for a staff of two to provide legal advice and education. He added that he would provide more itemized data. Chairman Treviño emphasized that assistance was quantified by the measurable impact of "Know Your Rights" training. He cited the case

of the Olmos Park Apartments lockout of approximately 50 tenants and noted that RHP offered immediate onsite training and legal advice to the tenants and their families to avoid eviction.

**6. Update on the Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee Dashboard** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager]

Chairman Treviño stated that an update on the Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee Dashboard would be provided at the next meeting and it would include metrics on the RHP Budget.

**Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.

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*Roberto Treviño, Chairman*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Nancy Cano  
Office of the City Clerk*