

City of San Antonio



City Council Special Meeting

Webex Meeting - No in-person access to this meeting

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

1:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

Acting City Clerk Tina J. Flores took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: 11 - Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Gonzales, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry

Bexar County Clerk Lucy Adame-Clark took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following County Commissioners present:

PRESENT: 5 - Judge Nelson Wolff, , Justin Rodriguez, Kevin A. Wolff, Tommy Calvert, County Manager David Smith, and District Attorney Joe Gonzales

ABSENT: 2 - Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez

1. Briefing on the final reports of the COVID-19 Community Action Working Groups.

Mayor Nirenberg welcomed everyone and stated that this would be the closing meeting of the Joint City Council and Commissioners Court with regard to COVID-19 Action Groups. He thanked Judge Wolff and Members of the Bexar County Commissioners Court for their collaboration; and Gordon Hartman for his coordinating efforts.

Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff also expressed his appreciation to the members of the City Council and the Bexar County Commissioners Court for their joint cooperation.

Gordon Hartman, the COVID-19 Action Group Coordinator, stated that 57 days ago the discussion of Strike Teams began. He noted the sense of cooperation of the Elected Officials to have hundreds of hours of discussions via meeting, phone calls, texts, e-mails; and their

willingness to work together, and alongside the private sector which contributed to the success of the report presented. He stated that the report would be presented by the co-chair of each of the Committees of the Working Groups.

Commissioner Tommy Calvert stated that the Social Services Working Group recommendations focused on issues including adult literacy, asset funding, behavioral health, digital divide, connectivity, domestic violence, legal aid, evictions, homelessness policy, senior services, justice-involved community, special needs population, and an undocumented resident policy.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that the Food Security and Shelter Working Group recommended reviewing the inventory of vacant hotels, apartment units and developing an Eviction Probationary Program through the County and City Collaborative. She spoke of funding matching; purchase of tiny homes or container homes; the voucher program; and urban gardens. She addressed funding for students that were no longer in school and parents receiving SNAP cards to provide food for their children during the summertime.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez stated that the Working Group was divided into two subsections – Food Security and Shelter. He noted that the Working Group, along with Former Mayor & HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros discussed the three stages (relief, recovery and resilience) of the working group.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that we were currently in the recovery stage, and the way to move forward to the next stage was to shift the way we've done things in the past. He noted that this included affordable housing and how people gain access to it and the importance of the Food Bank in our community. He stated that as the Courts begin operations, they would be proactively reaching out to those who needed rental assistance in order to prevent evictions. He indicated that the Working Group would like to transition people into the workforce.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that her team made recommendations which were broken up into Small Business and Workforce Development, and each of the two areas had five categories. She noted that the Working Group recommended making calls and person-to-person contact with small businesses. She stated that the other recommendations that the group proposed were the Community Navigator Program, which was proposed for use in the CARES Funding;

Councilmember Sandoval noted that the Working Group recommended to increase local purchasing, encourage other local governments and other suburban cities to participate, and ensure that businesses have the necessary resources needed (which was already underway with Procurement Safety Supplies and PPE).

Councilmember Manny Pelaez spoke of the status of the State and Federal Community Action Working Group. He stated that the Working Group's goals were to: 1) Identify the revenue streams that would generate new dollars; 2) Identify newly established revenue streams that did not have an existing pipeline; 3) Categorize dollars based on the other Working Groups' needs to track all of the revenue streams; and 4) To acquire as much funding from Washington D.C. for San Antonio and Bexar County.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that the Working Group worked to ensure that our federal Representatives understood the San Antonio story and its needs. He stated that staff wanted to prioritize the messaging for City and County Lobbyists as well as Lobbyists for private organizations like Valero, USAA, etc. He stated that there were priorities that ensure that the CARES Act gets more flexibility baked into it for State and local relief funds and how they are allocated.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that the Working Group was reviewing the Paycheck Flexibility Protection Act, which would forgive expenses beyond the eight-week covered period set by the Payment Protection Program.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the Senate Arms Services Committee June 8th Subcommittee Hearing would be of importance to Military City USA. He stated that the FAA and the Airlines were negotiating flights which the Airlines could cut from their inventory of flights available to the public (and San Antonio is on that list).

Commissioner Kevin Wolff expressed his thanks to the private company that helped their Lobby Teams. He stated that their presence was instrumental in accomplishing a number of tasks.

Gordon Hartman stated that a Philanthropic Community Action Working Group was involved and held several activities and raised millions of dollars to help with COVID-19 recovery. He noted that the Working Groups would continue working and raising funds even though the Committee Action Working Groups were ending.

Mr. Hartman stated that there was not enough money available for the recommendations brought forward by the Working Groups. He noted that what we can resolve from all of this is that it speaks of the possibility of what can happen when people come together for the good of the community. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to work along with them.

Mayor Nirenberg expressed his thanks to Mr. Hartman for his coordination, and leadership of the entire effort. He stated that the Report would be posted on the COVID Action SA website, as well as the Agenda website for the City.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of the status of the previous Grant Applications that were submitted prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and if there were enough Grant Writers to assist with applying for and processing Grant Applications. Erik Walsh replied that Grant Writers were available.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of the financial shortfall of non-profit organizations from sources outside of the City. Mr. Walsh stated he did not have that information.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how many businesses have taken the Pledge and asked of the nature of their industry and location.

Assistant City Manager Carlos Contreras stated that there were several businesses that would be participating in the PPE Giveaway that have taken the Pledge, however, he would have to get back with her on the exact numbers.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if residents were being evicted and displaced from their homes. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston stated that she would provide the number of evictions that have been filed over the past few months. She noted that the Eviction Courts were not hearing any filings until June 1st and would not actually start having any hearings until mid-June. Ms. Houston stated they were reaching out to those filing evictions and informing them about the Housing Protection Eviction Program.

Andy Segovia, City Attorney, stated that the CARES Act restricts filing, so there were no evictions filed at this time.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez stated that Justice of the Peace Courts were hearing eviction cases which did not concern non-payment of rent.

Councilmember Viagran asked of the City's involvement in the eviction process. Mrs. Houston stated that staff were working with Commissioner Rodriguez and his staff to reach out to all four precincts who have agreed to have staff present at all of the hearings. She noted that if someone wanted to remain in their unit the City could help them with their payment by processing their application on site.

Commissioner Wolff stated that infrastructure projects would serve as a stimulus to the economy.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that staff partnered with the Food Policy Council and the Development Services Department to close the gap regarding urban farming to increase food supply options in San Antonio which may lead to relaxed restrictions and amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC).

Councilmember Sandoval stated that the health recommendations did not serve long-term needs. She asked how long-term recommendations would be addressed. Mr. Walsh stated that long-term needs should be included in either the Resiliency and Recovery Program or in future Budget discussions.

Councilmember Pelaez spoke of a real estate crisis. He stated that the City and Bexar County should work with the real estate community in anticipation of a crisis.

Councilmember Perry stated that he did not agree with adoption of the Plan and moving it forward as policy. He noted that his priorities were getting businesses and employees back to work.

Councilmember Courage stated that the City and Bexar County should address health, both short and long-term. He suggested holding a work session(s) to implement the recommendations of the Working Groups. He stated that his priorities included housing, homelessness, evictions, food insecurity, workforce development, digital divide, and getting businesses back to work.

Mr. Walsh reported that 5,600 businesses had taken the pledge, in response to Councilmember

Andrews-Sullivan's question. He noted that the PPE give away for businesses would take place tomorrow from 6:00 am-7:00 pm at the Alamodome.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that the COVID-19 Pandemic had exposed the underlying conditions in the community such as socioeconomic inequity, and health disparities. He noted that the Working Group reports would be a touchstone to policy making.

Judge Nelson Wolff stated that the report would assist in prioritizing recommendations. He noted that government could not produce without a strong economy. He stated that the City Council and public health played a critical role on health issues. He noted that the Bexar County Commissioner's Court has put \$458 million every year into the Bexar County Hospital System. He proposed a City/County Initiative on preventive health.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 2:48 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
Mayor

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk