

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session**

No in-person access to this meeting

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

2:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

The City Council convened in a Regular Meeting. 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

1. Briefing on updates to the Alamo Plan and ground lease and management agreements between the City and Texas General Land Office. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager]

Mayor Nirenberg reported that the Texas Historical Commission (THC) denied the permit to move the Cenotaph and this impacted the overall design of the project and would require a re-design as it impacted the ability to recapture the historic mission Plaza and would change what the southern part of the Plaza would look like. He noted that the City Council had discussed whether to amend or roll back the lease agreement. He indicated that the majority of the City Council supported the City's partnership with the Texas General Land Office (GLO). He stated that the City Council expressed concern regarding access to the site, allowing parades to go through the site and the future of the Crockett and Woolworth buildings. He reported that he and Commissioner George P. Bush were briefed on the proposed changes and all were in agreement and the parties were confident that a modified plan that would bring dignity and respect to the site. He thanked City Attorney Andy Segovia, the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee and the Tri-Chairs of the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee Councilmember

Viagran, Aaronetta Pierce and Sue Pemberton for their efforts.

Councilmember Viagran indicated that the next three months would be spent reviewing the Interpretive Plan and then the Plan design would be reviewed and more feedback would be provided to the Management Committee prior to being brought before the Historic and Design Review Committee (HDRC) in late 2021.

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston reported that the denial of the permit to relocate the Cenotaph jeopardized several components of the Alamo Plan (Plan) making it impossible to implement the Plan as approved. She noted that the City, the Texas General Land Office (GLO) and the Alamo Trust remained committed to the Plan and wanted to amend the lease, operating agreement and the Plan. She stated that the project partners had agreed to revisit several components of the Plan:

1. Continued commitment to the vision and guiding principles
2. Repurposing the historic Woolworth and Crockett buildings
3. Flexibility on street closures
4. Improving access to the Plaza

Ms. Houston stated that the Alamo Cooperative Agreement determined the management structure for the Plan. She reviewed the membership of the Executive Committee, the Management Committee and the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee (ACAC). She indicated that the role of the ACAC was to provide citizen input in an advisory capacity to the Management Committee on the development of the Joint Master Plan to ensure that it was in keeping with the vision and guiding principles.

Ms. Houston reported that the Mayor addressed the ACAC on March 8, 2021 at their first meeting and discussed the charge and expectations for the ACAC set by the project partners and City Council. She indicated that the Tri-Chairs hosted three listening sessions from March 15-March 19, 2021 with ACAC members. She stated that an ACAC Workshop was held on March 24, 2021 where several revised design concepts were presented to ACAC members for their feedback. She reported that on March 29, 2021, the ACAC provided a presentation and held discussions on draft recommendations which included public comments. She added that on March 31, 2021, the ACAC approved six statements regarding the new assumptions for the design.

Ms. Houston stated that the ACAC was ready to move on to Task 2 which included the Interpretive Plan and content development. She indicated that once the amended lease was approved, the design would begin which would be presented to the ACAC in August 2021 for feedback. She noted that the feedback would be provided to the Management Committee and to the HDRC for approval in December 2021 which would allow construction to begin.

Ms. Houston reported that an archival investigation would be initiated of the City-owned property on the Campo Santo footprint. She noted that the scope of work would include a synthesis of all previous archeological reports and other documentation which encountered human remains on the site and would investigate areas of interest that required further review.

She indicated that the archival investigation would be reviewed by the Archival Investigation Committee which was comprised of City Archeologist Sean Marseaux, and Ramon Vasquez, Dr. Carey Latimore and Dr. Sharon Skrobarcek of the ACAC who represented the history/archeology category. She noted that they would assist in the development of a plan of action in the event that remains were found on the site.

Ms. Houston stated that an Archeology Advisory Committee (AAC) would be established which would aid in the development of a plan of action and would offer insight and guidance should other features be encountered during the archeological investigations. She noted that the AAC would recommend the appointment of a trained tribal monitor who would be onsite during archeological digs. She added that the AAC would include representation by local organizations and the members of the Alamo Mission Archeology Advisory Committee (AMAAC).

John Kasman of PGAV Destinations stated that the vision and guiding principles were the basis of the Plan and what had been retained included:

- Five key elements of the Master Plan:
 1. Restore church and long barracks
 2. Delineate the historic footprint
 3. Recapture the historic mission Plaza and create a sense of reverence and respect
 4. Create a world-class museum/visitor center
 5. Create a sense of arrival and enhance connectivity between site and other public spaces

Mr. Kasman reported that the potential new parameters included:

1. Retain Cenotaph
2. Do not lower grade
3. Preserve Plaza access
4. Retain parade/phase street closure

Mr. Kasman stated the following were proposed:

1. The Cenotaph would be repaired but not moved
2. The mission footprint would be delineated by paving material changes
3. The Plaza would remain accessible to pedestrians, without railings
4. The parades and key rituals would be accommodated
5. Streets would be closed as planned and approved, with certain allowances for service, emergency and public transit vehicles. Alamo Street, between Houston and Crockett, would be closed beginning on June 1, 2021 to allow for programming and traffic modeling.

Eric Kramer stated that the rich layers of history at the Alamo and within the historic urban fabric of downtown San Antonio formed a distinctive backdrop for the Alamo church. He noted that as the City had grown and evolved, elements of the Alamo's history had been obscured,

while newer layers had become cherished parts of the place. He indicated that the intent was to reveal the scale and proportion of the historic mission footprint as a way of providing context for a full telling of the history of the Alamo and remained a guiding principle. He added that the use of paving pattern and vegetation (light and shade) as strong framing elements could provide a clear threshold to the site.

Mr. Kramer reported that simplifying the ground plane would provide a much more accessible and permeable site and the footprint would be delineated in order to see where the mission and the battlefield were. He stated that a district could be defined by utilizing special and unique paving. He noted that patterns on the ground could be utilized to represent patterns and agricultural history. He indicated that there would be an opportunity to breakdown the scale of the Plaza to create places to sit and using planting to cool and create spaces of intimacy and open spaces for gathering. He stated that by utilizing differentiating paving materials and ascribing a threshold that wrapped around the site, a sense of arrival would be created at the site. He noted that it was important that the work coincided with the work of the GLO to understand the impact of moisture migration within the church and long barracks. He indicated that if it was determined that reducing the grade around the buildings was necessary to preserve them, it would not run counter to the Plan. He added that interpretive elements would be highlighted and spoke of creating a sense of corridors defined by big canopy trees.

Mr. Kasman reported that the visitor experience would be studied and how a sense of arrival and orientation could be made. He stated that improving the legibility of the historic context of the church, and creating a clear sense of arrival and orientation at the Alamo remained key strategies for elevating the visitor experience. He indicated that a system of wayfinding elements at the gateways to the district combined with initial introduction to the Alamo would orient visitors arriving from multiple directions. He reviewed the five zones, the flexible management options, an interpretive plan for a single secure perimeter with one secure entry point, and a revised approach with two secure perimeters with two secure entry points which would be created. He spoke of connecting the Plaza with other public spaces, information provided at every edge, directing visitors to orientation hubs and preserving public access to the site. He indicated that parades could continue to move through the site and noted that it was important that the site was a safe pedestrian zone. He reported that bollards would create accessibility for emergencies, loading and unloading.

Ms. Houston reviewed the statements of support provided by the ACAC to the Management Committee. She stated that the proposed lease term would be for 50 years with two, 25-year extensions and reviewed the ground lease and operating agreement terms, design assumptions, events and programming and construction.

City Attorney Andy Segovia reported that the City of San Antonio allocated \$38 million for the Plan which included \$1 million in 2012 General Obligation Bonds, \$17 million in Certificates of Obligation and \$21 million in 2017 General Obligation Bonds. She added that the State of Texas allocated \$106 million and the Alamo Endowment would allocate an amount to be determined to the Plan.

Ms. Houston stated that the amended and reinstated ground lease and operating agreement would

be brought before the City Council on April 15, 2021 and before the GLO in April 2021 for consideration. She reviewed that Alamo Plaza schedule:

- Design: May-December 2021
- Traffic Study: Summer 2021
- HDRC consideration: December 2021
- Construction start with potential phasing: Early 2022

Ms. Houston reported that a preservation plan was underway for the church and long barrack and the Alamo Trust and the GLO were performing due diligence and their conceptual plans were underway.

Mayor Nirenberg expressed his appreciation for the work of the partners.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if the tenants in the future museum buildings were aware of the Plan. Ms. Houston stated that they were and since January 1, 2021, a meeting with them was held every Tuesday to provide them with a construction schedule and to gather feedback.

Councilmember Courage expressed his support for the Plan. He asked of the restoration and repairs to the Cenotaph. Ms. Houston stated that a plan for restoration and repair to the Cenotaph would be developed in May-June 2021 and would be presented to the ACAC and the Office of Historic Preservation before any work would begin.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if the City would maintain ownership of the Plaza. Ms. Houston stated that the City would always own the Plaza and currently the City was leasing a portion of the Plaza to the GLO.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked of the programming timeline and who would develop the programming. Alamo Trust Executive Director Kate Rogers reported that the Alamo Trust's Education and Living History Department would develop the programming and every day interpretations and period demonstrations were held on the site and would be expanded.

Councilmember Perry asked if businesses in the area had approved the new layout and the street closures. Ms. Houston stated that the revised Plan was presented to the stakeholder group and all businesses around the Plaza were invited. She indicated that staff were proposing to close Alamo Street from Houston Street to Crockett Street and staff would partner with the surrounding stakeholders to perform traffic modeling. Councilmember Perry requested a list of the surrounding businesses and their feedback. He requested information on the amount paid by the City for studies.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that the Plan would preserve the history and tell the full story and demonstrated that all voices had been heard.

Councilmember Treviño stressed that the core values be honored and that the complete story of the Alamo be told in a way in which all cultures were acknowledged and celebrated. He asked that the findings of an audit be shared with the public regarding previous expenditures that were

made. He asked if the City would pay for Plaza improvements. Ms. Houston stated that the City would fund Plaza improvements.

Councilmember Sandoval asked where people would enter the church. Mr. Kramer stated that it would be discussed in the next phase. Mr. Kramer added that staff would review time ticketing as a strategy to spread out the visitors and would have visitors wait in line on the side of the church so as not to obscure photo opportunities. Councilmember Sandoval asked if the area designated for the first amendment would also be designated for second amendment rights. City Attorney Segovia stated that staff would discuss this with the GLO but no one could change how the second amendment was interpreted by the Supreme Court and the State of Texas.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that he would oppose any effort to limit an individual's right to carry a gun near the Alamo. He spoke of utilizing the stone quarried in the Canary Islands to delineate the Plaza.

Councilmember Perry expressed concern regarding the street closure which would take place on June 1, 2021. He stated that the street should be reopened following the completion of the traffic modeling.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke of giving credit to Native Americans who built the missions.

Mayor Nirenberg asked if an additional financial burden was being placed of the City in the amendment. Ms. Houston stated that it was not and the City's financial commitment remained at \$38 million. Mayor Nirenberg stated that City Attorney Segovia would work to secure the final draft least amendment which would be posted on the agenda and shared with the GLO.

Councilmember Viagran stated that the Alamo belonged to everyone and the City had to ensure that it continued to elevate the experience for all.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Economic development negotiations pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087 (economic development).
- B. The purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.072 (real property).
- C. Legal issues related to collective bargaining pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- D. Legal issues related to litigation involving the City pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- E. Legal issues relating to COVID-19 preparedness pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

- F. Discuss legal options pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

Mayor Nirenberg announced that the Executive Session would be carried over to April 8, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 4:11 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
Mayor

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
City Clerk