

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021, 4:00 PM
VIDEO CONFERENCE

Members Present: Robert Abraham, Member
Pedro Alanis, Member
Jeff Arndt, Member
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Chair
Taneka Nikki Johnson, Member
Ed Hinojosa, Member
Susan Richardson, Member
Sarah Sanchez, Member

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lori Houston, *City Manager's Office*;
Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Jameene Williams, *City Attorney's Office*;
Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Edward Gonzales, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Edith Merla, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Irma Duran, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Allison Shea, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Edith Merla, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Kristin Flores, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sharon Chan, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*

- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Jessica O. Guerrero at 4:08 PM.
- **Roll Call** – Irma Duran called the roll. At the time when roll call was conducted, nine (9) members were present representing a quorum.

Chair Guerrero welcomed Ed Hinojosa, Interim CEO and current CFO at SAHA, as the newest Housing commissioner. Commissioner Hinojosa thanked Guerrero for the welcome and stated he has been with SAHA for 16 years and currently oversees planning and technology. Prior to SAHA, Hinojosa worked in an international food company, helped struggling companies, and lived in Mexico. Originally born and raised in Edinburg, Texas, Hinojosa stated his gratefulness toward being on the Commission. Guerrero also thanked Richard Milk during the transition from Commissioner Nisivoccia to Commissioner Hinojosa.

- **Public Comments** – Duran announced there were seven (7) residents signed up to speak for public comment.

1. Dr. Katherine Anderson, social psychologist, provided general comment. She stated her concern over deed restricted covenants, stating that people of color cannot purchase or live on a property, are still listed on closing documents. Though prohibited by 1968 Fair Housing Act, these documents are still provided to buyers during closing. Dr. Anderson also stated there were restricted covenants based on disease and income. She stated as racism is now considered a public health crisis in San Antonio, Dr. Anderson hopes the City and County will be able to address this problem.
2. Maureen Galindo, Risk Mitigation Policy (RMP) and EHAP stakeholder, provided general comment. Galindo stated that the RMP was tasked to assist in the evaluation of EHAP and that their input was not factored into the evaluation. She stressed that the community must be brought into discussions on how help avoid displacement and help the most impacted. Galindo stated that Commission members were only sent the EHAP survey report the night before with staff analysis and recommendations, no community analysis. Galindo called for the dissolving of NHSD and distribution of services to other departments.
3. Fabiola Torralba spoke regarding Item #3. Torralba requested that all funds be used to assist residents in need of housing assistance and not to subsidized private housing development projects. In her volunteering, she expressed a continuing need for assistance, particularly in undocumented immigrants, LGBTQ, unhoused families, and non-English dominant families. Torralba requested the funds to address gaps in the system where said individuals can request the resources and promote community development. She stated if funds were to be used for development, a community land trust or down payment assistance programs would be best for reinvestment and long term housing solutions. Torralba stated if anyone would like to further discuss these items, they could contact her at vuelodelviento@gmail.com.
4. *Daniella Terrazas was unable to be reached for public comment.*
5. Kayla Miranda, member of the Coalition for Tenant Justice, spoke regarding Item #2. She voiced her support for the SOID ordinance and stated landlords should not be weary of where the rental income is from and more landlords should accept vouchers. With more education on the voucher system and landlords accepting the vouchers, more people will be able to be housed.
6. Rich Acosta with My City is My Home spoke regarding Item #2. He thanked NHSD staff, the Mayor's Office, and Council District 1 and 9 staff for assisting his request for the SOID policy. Acosta stated nearly a year of work has been placed into this policy to end discrimination amongst veterans, disabled, and low-income seniors that use tax-funded programs for housing. This issue should not be controversial and enforce that San Antonio runs programs that do not discriminate against their most vulnerable. He hopes that with this alignment, other landlords and property owners will follow suit.
7. Leticia Sanchez Retamozo, member of the Historic Westside Residents, commented regarding Item #2. She stated many of the residents in District 5 are hardworking individuals that work in the service industry and other low wage jobs. Due to this, many residents require Section 8 voucher assistance, and many are turned away from landlords due to SOID. She recommended support of the SOID ordinance to protect the most vulnerable.

Staff note: The Housing Commission deadline for comment is 4 pm the day before the meeting. The reason for this is because it takes 24 hours for comments received in a language other than English to be translated. Speakers who call past the deadline are given

the opportunity to submit a written comment to be included in the minutes but not read during the meeting, and to sign up in advance for the following meeting.

1. Item #1: Approval of Minutes for December 2, 2020 Regular Housing Commission Meeting.

Chair Guerrero requested a motion to approve the minutes at a later time to allow for more time to review. Commissioner Richardson motioned for approval of the Minutes for December 2, 2020 Regular Housing Commission Meeting be rescheduled to February 12, 2020. Commissioner Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Item #3: Briefing and Possible Action on the COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) evaluation survey results and proposed amendments to the EHAP.

Guerrero requested Verónica R. Soto, Director, to present. Soto stated that Ian Benavidez, Assistant Director, and Edward Gonzales, Assistant Director, would present.

Benavidez stated that the goal of the EHAP survey was to identify strategies to improve EHAP and was co-developed with the Outreach Working Group, Commission, and Planning and Land Development Committee (PLDC). The survey was launched in November 2020 and closed on January 1, 2021. Benavidez stated staff emailed all EHAP participants twice (November 9 and December 7) and partnered with GPA (Government and Public Affairs) to publish the survey through SA Speak Up. Survey flyers were distributed at the NHSD lobby and Financial and Housing Recovery Center and applicants were also selected at random for survey participation by phone (27 people participated). Applicants, property owners/managers, and implementation partners were included in the survey results.

Benavidez reported a total of 7,091 survey responses were received, 88% were applicants, 7% property owners/managers, 4% no connection to program, and less than 1% implementation partners. 92% of surveyed applicants responded they would recommend EHAP. 90% of surveyed property owners/managers responded they would recommend EHAP. Of the surveyed applicants, 84% reported the assistance was enough to keep them housed and 94% that received assistance were currently at the same residence. In contrast, 90% of surveyed applicants that did not receive assistance also reported there were currently at the same residence. 79% of surveyed applicants responded they were not able to afford their household payments currently and 89% did not receive a referral to another agency for additional assistance. 61% of surveyed applicants reported that the application process was somewhat easy. Benavidez stated that the timeframe of when the surveyed applicant applied was not asked but large improvements were done since the program launched in April and hoped to improve the positive responses in the next survey. 83% of English surveyed applicants and 80% of Spanish surveyed applicants responded that the application was very easy to somewhat easy to understand. 33 of the surveyed implementation partners stated that assisting clients in the application process was very easy to somewhat easy. 74% of surveyed applicants stated that they were assisted in a timely manner. The majority of surveyed applicants and implementation partners reported they made under \$15,000; majority of property owners and managers reported they made between \$30,000 and \$49,999.

Benavidez reported that comments varied between responses on how to make EHAP more accessible. Applicants requested more human help and a method to save the application

while completing it. Property owners and managers requested inclusion of landlords in communication and a faster process. Implementation partners requested streamlining the document process and having a scenario list for reference on complex cases. Benavidez stated that Gonzales would continue discussion of the EHAP program.

Gonzales stated that EHAP was created in April 2020 to assist residents of San Antonio under COVID hardship. Recently, Council entered a contract with Bexar County to help county residents with rental payments. As many of the survey respondents were denied due to being out of city limits, this solution greatly assist many that were not able to previously be assisted. Currently EHAP has distributed \$70 million in assistance, the majority assisting with rent and mortgage (\$55.7 million). EHAP is currently in Phase 3 and an upcoming Phase 4 has been introduced due to \$46.8 million awarded by the Federal Treasury Department which is scheduled to be accepted by Council toward mid-February. With the upcoming acceptance of the new funding and feedback from survey respondents, Commission, and Council, staff is recommending three amendments to the EHAP program.

- 1) Allowances of housing assistance from 3 months to up to 6 months
- 2) Elimination of cash assistance
- 3) Improvement of referral system with a Benefits Navigator

Gonzales states the two main reasons for elimination of cash assistance was due to the ineligibility of cash assistance with the funding to be accepted and UpTogether, the implementation partner for cash assistance, was not able to continue support. Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager, stated that another reason for the discontinuation of the partnership was moving towards a holistic approach of applicants' long-term needs through a referral program as opposed to a one-time cash assistance structure. Gonzales concurred and presented that the improvement would formalize a referral process to assistance not offered by EHAP through a Benefits Navigator, such as SNAP enrollment, childcare, transportation, job training, and pet care support. With the Benefits Navigator and partner referrals (ex. SAGE, Domesticas Unidas, and COPS/Metro), applicants would be helped from start to finish with one dedicated navigator. Gonzales stated the next steps after the Housing Commission discussions, would be the Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee (CNSC), a public comment period, and Council consideration.

Guerrero paused for public comment.

Commissioner Alanis requested the number of responses that from were applicants. Sara Wamsley, Interim Affordable Housing Administrator, stated out of the 7,091 total responses, 6,281 were from applicants. Alanis stated the large survey response showed how the community was engaged to improve the EHAP program. Alanis requested clarification of the amended assistance amounts and if a person can request assistance multiple times for a total of six months assistance. Gonzales agreed with Alanis and added that if an applicant was two months in arrears upon application, they would receive three months in total of assistance. The same applicant could still reapply and receive an additional three months of assistance if they needed. Alanis requested what entities/referral partners were already enlisted to help with the Benefits Navigator system. Gonzales stated that the Benefits Navigator will be handled through DHS and they had already been working on this system for several months. The amendment will expand DHS' current program. Current organizations that are in the referral program include Any Baby Can, Big Brother, Big Sister, and Catholic Charities. The referral network uses the Signify system (Signify

Health) that has long been established and is currently being used by DHS. Gonzales states that if an applicant needed certain services that city case workers aren't aware of, Signify will direct the case worker to other programs. Alanis asked if undocumented households could still use this system. Gonzales stated that the undocumented households could use the system.

Commissioner Abraham stated he was appreciative that a solution was in motion for the low referral responses. He asked what the timeframe was from application to receiving funds. Gonzales stated that at the beginning, the timeframe was 28 days from application to mailing out the assistance check and was greatly reduced to 14 days. This timeframe varies greatly per person due to the completeness of an individual applicant's case file. Currently, it is taking about 20 days to process an application.

Commissioner Furukawa asked for clarification on how the city was able to secure \$46.8 million, as it was more than what was previously anticipated. Houston stated when the City was first notified of the potential to receive funding, previous formulas were used to estimate the amount. Houston stated they were conservative with the estimate given rather than overcalculate an amount.

Commissioner Johnson requested clarification on the benefits navigator versus a case manager if the navigator was mainly a referral specialist. Gonzales stated that the navigator would refer a client but ensure that the client was enrolled in the referred program. If they did not qualify for the referred program, the navigator would search for a different program. Johnson asked if there was a system in place for the navigators to check in on statuses for programs that have longer timelines to be processed for applicants and what is the expected case load per navigator. Gonzales replied that he would follow up and require a system be in place for status checks on benefit enrollments. He also stated he would ensure that there would be proper resource management. Johnson stated pre-pandemic Fair Housing would assess the needs of a client and refer them and asked if more was discovered about why there had been a low number of referrals, such as temporary workers not having enough training. Gonzales stated that the call center training and the dramatic increase in applicant volume contributed to the lack of referrals. He stated the volume is the main reason a separate system is being proposed so that referrals can be properly handled. Benavidez added that staff will ensure that the referral questions are more prominent on the application. Johnson asked regarding the discontinuation of cash assistance if a gift card would count as cash assistance. Houston replied that gift cards are counted as cash assistance; however, gift cards can be distributed if after the benefits navigator's assessment, a gift card is a recommended course of action to obtain needed items. Johnson asked for clarification if the gift cards would be distributed through a partner agency or through the navigator. Houston stated that the navigator would have access to gift cards but stressed that gift cards would be assessment based. Johnson asked if the applicant doesn't qualify for a benefit like SNAP or childcare would a gift card be an option. Houston stated that the gift card can be one of the tools used to assist the applicant. Guerrero stated if Commissioners have recommendations to staff that they can do so during the meeting as the feedback would be relayed at CNSC. Houston suggested to follow up with Johnson regarding the benefits navigation assessment process and tools. Johnson asked, regarding Slide 21, why the table only went as high as 25 and not 100%. Benavidez stated that as the question was asked solely to implementation partners, the raw number of responses from partners were displayed instead of a percentage. Johnson inquired if the table formatting on Slide 20 was similar. Benavidez concurred that the table was scaled to the largest

percentage of responses (55%) to view it more easily on the slide and all percentages still add up to 100% response rate.

Commissioner Richardson inquired if the applicants that were previously denied due to being outside city limits need to reapply or if they would be contacted. Gonzales stated that Bexar County resident applications submitted after January 1, 2021 are being automatically considered as their documentation is still valid. Older applications would need to reapply as many of their documents would need to be updated. Any Bexar County residents that applied for assistance at the County are being redirected to EHAP. Richardson requested clarification on utility assistance for residents. Gonzales stated any qualified applicant that is under 50% AMI would be assisted with rental/mortgage, utility, internet services; applicants that are over 50% AMI would be assisted with rental/mortgage only. Richardson commended staff on analysis of data, but stated the Outreach Working Group offered assistance and felt it would have been a good collaboration point for Commissioners and staff. She stated in the report there were individual comments listed but they were not in the presentation. Though it would be a potentially difficult conversation, it would be a necessary one.

Commissioner Hinojosa asked if the federal funds would be available to assist residents in public housing, as there are 300 families in the Alazán residences that are in need. Houston stated that SAHA residents can apply for EHAP as the City can control which pool of funding is used to assist the applicant. SAHA residents would be assisted with general fund or TIRZ funds; residents have also been assisted through SAHT funding. Hinojosa requested clarification regarding the COVID hardship documentation required if a family that had difficulties because children weren't able to go to school because of COVID restrictions and they weren't able to afford childcare and work at the same time. Gonzales stated that if an applicant has a factor that has been impacted by the pandemic, additional documentation may be required, but the case worker will work with the applicant in their assistance request. If an individual's situation had not changed from pre-pandemic to present, then the certification cannot be met. Hinojosa asked if the stimulus or unemployment payments are calculated for the 50% AMI threshold. Gonzales stated that AMI is calculated under federal guidelines and stimulus payments are not counted but will follow up with verification. He stated there is a chart that is provided to processors to delineate what to count as income. Hinojosa asked if rental assistance was counted as income. Gonzales stated that rental assistance would count towards their duplication of benefits amount.

Commissioner Arndt commended staff for their thoughtfulness on the amendments presented as many reflected changes from the survey comments. Arndt asked for clarification on how the public comment process would work during the week of February 8th as the second phase of the EHAP evaluation process did request a qualitative pursuit of input. Gonzales stated that public comment would be similar to Council's procedure, public comment period would be launched by Wednesday and people would be able to state their comments and input adjustments for the amendments before being brought to City Council. Houston stated there would also be a special community meeting and that when the resolution is passed Commissioners will be notified of the date. Arndt requested clarification regarding if the gift cards provided by the benefit navigators would be from a different source of funding. Houston agreed the cards were from a different source. Arndt asked if a resident received assistance from the County and applied for EHAP would it be considered a duplication of benefits. Gonzales stated that if the applicant did not receive

assistance from the County for January or February, it would not be considered a duplication of benefits. Arndt asked if SAGE was a referral organization listed. Gonzales stated that SAGE is one of the partnered organizations that the City has relied upon. Gonzales stated that this is a paid service the City has requested, not as a volunteer or grassroots effort, and will be using administrative budgeting for the costs. Arndt stated as a member of the SAGE Board, he was happy to know that SAGE was able to provide support.

Johnson asked for clarification if feedback could be provided for the CNSC meeting. Guerrero stated the recommendations from today's meeting would be taken to the CNSC meeting. Johnson recommended the following:

- 1) Have an effective follow up system and Plan B established if the applicant does not qualify for the first benefits recommendation.
- 2) Gift cards are not used as a last resort option. One gift card should be provided for transportation assistance/ reimbursement to the initial appointment.
- 3) The Referral System that is created must have a recommended case load limit to have proper applicant to benefit navigator ratio.

Guerrero stated the survey was developed with much discussion with the Outreach Workgroup and that there would be a follow up public meeting to discuss and receive qualitative community input. She expressed disappointment that NHSD moved forward with analysis, report, and recommendations without qualitative data discussions and was concerned about fully understanding the impacts of EHAP to the community. Benavidez concurred that after the survey, additional analysis and discussion were discussed but not solidified. He stated with the amount of data needed to review and the availability of new funds, staff wanted to present preliminary options to the Commission. Benavidez stated that staff will await Commission's direction on how to continue. Guerrero expressed a breakdown in communication and that she expected for staff to present data and not analysis. She looked forward for true collaboration with staff, community, and Commissioners in this critical program. Guerrero asked for clarification on the assistance outreach to undocumented families. Gonzales stated there is continued outreach to undocumented individuals; most undocumented applicants are worried about where the funds come from and what documents they may need to provide. The majority of outreach effort is to alleviate individuals' worry and tell them EHAP will help find a way to assist them regardless of their undocumented status. Guerrero recommended engagement with the outreach organizations and clients to find best practices for outreach and notify clients that they can reapply for assistance. Soto stated that NHSD has started engagement. There is one dedicated staff member that has been connecting with immigrant communities such as the Mexican Consulate, RAICES, and American Gateways to address what concerns they have when applying for assistance and outreach in general to improve communication and outreach to this community.

Guerrero asked how many households were denied due to non-COVID impact qualification. Gonzales stated that he didn't have the number on hand but would follow up with that information. Guerrero stated her concern about the outsourcing of case management and asked about the agreements and accountability between the City and the referral partners. Soto stated that contracts are still being discussed and haven't been finalized. Performance metrics and follow ups will be stipulated in the contracts to ensure people will not be left out. Guerrero recommended that the Risk Mitigation Policy Group be

engaged in the process of reviewing contract terms to ensure a viable agreement is created. Guerrero stated that the previous Commission meeting many concerned comments were brought up regarding DHS' handling of survey input from the community and the lack of trust with the department. She stressed this to ensure there was a high standard of coordination between NHSD and DHS.

Guerrero asked if there was a breakdown of EHAP applications by council district. Gonzales stated application are broken down by district on the EHAP dashboard; however, if there are further specifics requested, such as a breakdown of the denials in each district, it would take time to filter the requested data into a report. Guerrero stated she would follow up in the next meeting regarding additional questions about the dashboard as it would pertain to the definition of affordability.

Guerrero recommended that the Risk Mitigation Policy (RMP) Stakeholders Group be given the opportunity to present community analysis of the evaluation survey to CNSC. Benavidez stated that staff would need to find out how to proceed with the request and follow up. Soto suggested that the request could be made as a motion. Guerrero asked for clarification if, as Chair, she would not be able to make the motion. Jameene Williams, Assistant City Attorney, agreed that a motion must be made by a fellow Commissioner. Guerrero asked if there were any Commissioners that would motion for the request.

Commissioner Hinojosa motioned the request for the RMP Stakeholders Group to present community analysis of the EHAP evaluation survey at the CNSC meeting.

Alanis asked for clarification if the RMP Stakeholders Group was a subcommittee of the Housing Commission. Guerrero stated that the RMP Stakeholders Group was a separate group that collaborates with NHSD staff, members of which sit now on the Commission. Benavidez stated that the group contained Chair Guerrero, Commissioner Johnson, and Maureen Galindo. Benavidez asked Williams for clarification regarding presenting to a council committee which staff does not have control over. Houston requested clarification of the motion/request. Guerrero stated that the motion on the floor was to request the RMP Stakeholders Group present community analysis at the CNSC meeting. Houston stated that staff would be able to make a request to the committee, however, staff was scheduled to present at the CNSC meeting on February 1, 2021 and could present community analysis at the next meeting. Houston asked for clarification from Williams regarding the motion. Williams stated if it was not specifically Housing Commission feedback then the Commission does not have the jurisdiction to order a separate group to do an action. Commissioner Sanchez asked for clarification if it would be an item of consideration for the Agenda Workgroup. Benavidez stated that it would be appropriate to discuss the process further in the workgroup. Williams asked for clarification of the action the Commission is requesting. Alanis stated that individual Commissioner recommendations are being provided to staff to be forwarded to CNSC; however, this recommendation being requested as a motion. He proposed that staff record Commissioner recommendations and forward on to CNSC.

Commissioner Alanis motioned that city staff forward Commissioner recommendations to future committee consideration. Commissioner Arndt seconded the motion.

Williams stated that the first motion on the floor needed to be resolved first before the second incoming motion. She stated that Alanis could motion to amend the first motion.

Houston stated that Alanis' motion was the purpose of today's briefing and would be accomplished even without the motion. Alanis acknowledged Houston's statement but noted that with the multiple recommendations coming from each Commissioner it would be fair to treat each recommendation equally.

Commissioner Alanis motioned to amend the Commissioner Hinojosa's motion that city staff forward Commissioner recommendations to future committee consideration.

Houston expressed that the amended motion seemed excessive as the recommendations would be forwarded to the committee by staff and that she would need to follow up if the first motion would be under the Commission's jurisdiction. She stated that the raw data would be provided for community analysis that could be taken to the Housing Commission for approval and provided for council committee consideration.

Commissioner Hinojosa withdrew the original motion for the request of the RMP Stakeholders Group to present community analysis of the EHAP evaluation survey at the CNSC meeting. Hinojosa stated that it should be important to record as a motion as the funding is an important issue.

Commissioner Sanchez acknowledged the pressure of creating recommendations in such a short timeframe in lieu of the new funding. She also encouraged staff to request as much community feedback that they could within an effective timeframe. Sanchez stated her support of the recommend amendments as presented. She requested to also include benchmarking looking at the best practices from other cities and communities to ensure EHAP's improvements continue and to continue the search for long term solutions.

Johnson requested clarification of the procedural order of recommendations and motions. Houston stated that there was a recommendation for a formal motion but stated no action could be taken as it was not noted in the agenda. Guerrero stated the agenda did state possible action could be made although the motion at hand was currently for something that would occur without a motion. She expressed that she supported the motion to proceed as it would emphasize the importance of the item's issue.

Commissioner Alanis motioned for the EHAP survey recommendations be provided to the CNSC meeting. Commissioner Arndt seconded. Motioned carried unanimously.

Hinojosa asked for clarification over the previous concern of raising a motion for recommendation approval. Williams stated generally with feedback from Commission regarding an item, staff will notate and present to the council committee and no action needs be taken. She stated if there is reason the Commission would like the recommendations entered on the record as a formal action, they can do so as well.

Guerrero stated staff did release raw data of the survey to Commissioners and the Outreach Workgroup. She also noted that the Risk Mitigation Stakeholders group contains not only Commissioner Johnson, Maureen Galindo, and herself but also NHSD staff. [2:28:36]

3. Item #2: Briefing & Possible Action on a Proposed Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance (SOID)

Guerrero requested Verónica R. Soto, Director, present. Soto stated that Sara Wamsley, Interim Affordable Housing Administrator, would present.

Wamsley stated that SOID was defined as refusing to rent or sell a housing unit to an applicant – or ending tenancy – based on the applicant’s lawful form of income such as a voucher. Many federal programs prohibit SOID at participating properties and individual state statutes. Statewide, Austin and Dallas both have SOID ordinances that apply to city-supported properties. Wamsley stated, combined, there were 14,800 active households with vouchers and 14,600 on the voucher waitlist for SAHA and HABC. Currently, for SAHA there are 2,287 contracted owners renting to at least one SAHA voucher holder. Many owners do have properties with over 100 units under contract. The proposed ordinance would be applicable to development contracts receiving city-support and would not be retroactive. The ordinance would match the compliance period of developments and would be scaled to the size and respective funding source’s compliance period. Enforcement would begin first with a complaint being received by the city. Staff’s recommendation is to introduce proactive testing to conduct random testing of properties. Stakeholder feedback on SOID stated the ordinance may increase the unit availability for voucher holders and increase the acceptance of vouchers. There were concerns about the scale of the problem, processing of vouchers for owners also needing improvement, and the term “discrimination” in the ordinance language. Wamsley stated the next steps for the SOID ordinance would be to take feedback from Commissioners to the Planning & Land Development Committee on February 8, 2021 and, pending council approval, launch a public engagement campaign to spread awareness.

Guerrero paused for public comment.

Alanis thanked city staff researching this issue and the local advocates, like Rich Acosta, for bringing awareness to the issue. Due to this recognition, the SAHT took action and is glad that the city has also followed proposed action. He stated that the SAHT, along with a SOID policy, is proposing a holistic tenant protection policy that he would like to present to the Housing Commission. He again thanked staff, particularly Benavidez and Wamsley, on their dedication in removal of this barrier.

Abraham agreed that SOID was a barrier to housing. He noted that as vouchers are tax-funded, owners who discriminate, discriminate against the same citizens that contribute to the funding. Abraham stated that though the present ordinance is not retroactive, he would support more efforts to make it retroactive.

Hinojosa detailed that SAHA issues 50-60 vouchers per month and only 57% of individuals succeed in finding housing within the timeframe; this process happens after 4 years of the person being on the SAHA waitlist. He stated that the SOID ordinance is a good start but other reasons why individuals are not able to find housing within the timeframe are much larger and should be examined.

Richardson requested clarification of why there would be an expiration to the compliance. Wamsley stated that there is a varying compliance period with the awarded funding contract. As the ordinance changes the language on the contract once the contract expires so would the compliance to terms. Benavidez elaborated if a small development were to be awarded \$5,000 in fee waivers, the compliance period may be 2-3 years versus a large development that had a compliance period of 30-40 years. The SOID would scale accordingly to these attributes. Richardson inquired if Dallas had similar language. Wamsley stated that Dallas had a compliance limitation of 15 years. Richardson asked if

that was a standard average for compliance. Benavidez stated that many large developments have a 30- 40 year compliance period and the SOID compliance would be reflected in the contract.

Guerrero requested elaboration on the feedback discussion of “discrimination”. Wamsley stated that concern arose in a community feedback session that the voucher program is now being turned into mandatory participation where it was first thought of as voluntary participation. She detailed that if a tenant is not able to afford rental expenses even with the voucher funds that would not be considered discriminatory. Discrimination would be investigated if the tenant was refused housing solely due to them using voucher funds. Benavidez elaborated regarding the community feedback of the perceived scale of the SOID issue. He stated there were concerns raised over if there was data to prove the magnitude of the SOID problem. Benavidez noted there was sufficient evidence as there has been research, stated in the presentation, and community analysis of multifamily complex data. Guerrero requested clarification of the stakeholder process so far. Wamsley stated the item originated with community voices, conversations then progressed to the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) and ForEveryone Home (FEH), afterward it was shared with the PLDC and staff was directed to begin drafting an ordinance. Discussion continued to the Housing Commission, then to the San Antonio Apartment Association (SAAA) and the Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) while drafting said ordinance. Guerrero noted other Commissioners thoughts on following up beyond the initial ordinance and took a poll of current support.

Richardson stated that her only concern was the length of the compliance period but supported moving forward with the ordinance.

Hinojosa stated his support of the ordinance. He noted, regarding compliance, larger landlords would be easier to start educating then moving to smaller landlords. He also highlighted due to the pandemic issue, many tenants now face impact to their credit scores due to rental arrears and that it may be a new item to look investigate.

Commissioner Arndt motioned to support of the SOID ordinance and forwarding feedback to the PLDC. Commissioner Abraham second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Item #4: Director’s Report

Guerrero requested Verónica R. Soto, Director, present.

Soto stated that responses to follow up questions and public comments from the last meeting were included in the agenda packet. Updates regarding the SHIP and FEH that were requested are also placed in the packet. Soto noted that staff is planning on presenting the EHAP amendment recommendations to the PLDC but is centered on the fact that the item will make it on the committee’s finalized agenda that is not in NHSD staff’s control. Once the final agenda is posted, staff will forward to Commissioners. FEH also presented to the SAHA Board this week.

Soto stated that the Housing Commission Special Session will take place on February 12, 2021 at 10:00 AM. The topic will be the definition of affordability and will be covered as it was requested from last Special Session and the meeting would be in addition to the regular Commission meeting on February 24, 2021.

Soto noted that in last January the Housing Commission had a successful retreat and staff is currently planning on a retreat for March.

Richardson noted that the Special Session date wasn't included in the packet. Guerrero stated information was the latest breaking news that was sent by email to the Commissioners in the afternoon. Soto asked Benavidez regarding quorum. Benavidez stated the date was chosen due to quorum. Duran stated Commissioners and Soto's schedules were confirmed before finalizing the session. Richardson stated that she would need to rearrange some items but thanked staff for clarification.

Furukawa thanked staff for organizing the Commission retreat but requested March 19-20, 2021 be listed as unavailable due to a personal celebration.

Closing-

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 7:16 PM.