

**CULTURE & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2021
2:00 PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
Staff Present:	Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Shanon Shea Miller, <i>Director, Office of Historic Preservation</i> ; Debbie Raca Sitre, <i>Director, Department of Arts & Culture</i> ; Michael Shannon, <i>Director, Development Services</i> ; Veronica Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Edward Gonzales, <i>Interim Assistant Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Jameene Williams, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Sara Wamsley, <i>Housing Policy Manager, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Neighborhood Housing Administrator, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Barbara Ankamah, <i>Neighborhood & Housing Services Department</i> ; Diana Hidalgo, <i>Department of Arts & Culture</i> ; Amin Tohmaz, <i>Development Services Department</i> ; Danny Liguez, <i>Development Services Department</i> ; Denise Luckey, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	

Call to Order

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the minutes from the March 10, 2021 Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to approve the Minutes from the March 10, 2021 Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Live Testimony

Graciela Sanchez, Director, Esperanza Peace and Justice Center spoke on Item 2. She stated that she reviewed the Dashboard and that it appeared to be very limited in cultural programs. She asked for an increase of the Public Arts funding from 1% to 2%. Ms. Sanchez then spoke to Item 6 and stated that District 5 now had the highest number of demolitions. She stated that public engagement should be made with community members to address the displacement of resident. Ms. Sanchez quoted a report that stated that every week for the last 10 years, the City lost more than three units of pre-1916 housing due to demolitions.

Humana Lopez stated that in November 2019, a Code Compliance Officer demanded to take photos of the home she shared with her mother Lucia. She stated the officer later began bullying them to go into their home without any authorization. This action continued for a month and a half, and finally the officer came to the home with three other officers and a warrant. Ms. Lopez explained that there was someone in the house with COVID-19 so they did not enter the house. On March 31, 2021, the Officer finally entered the home, took photos, and informed the family that the home would be demolished. Ms. Lopez stated they had lived in the home for 40 years and it had tried to make the home repairs to satisfy complaint.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Public Comments have been submitted through the eComment system and are attached to the Minutes.

2. Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee Dashboard Overview.

Councilmember Treviño asked what prevented more trees from being planted in Council District 1. Lori Houston stated that most of the tree planting occurred in the Spring and that process was about to begin. She added that an increase would be visible during the months of April and May.

Councilmember Andrew-Sullivan stated that she would like to see the Dashboard as a tool for the community. She added that the Dashboard should be made available on social media platforms.

Councilmember Viagran asked for clarification on the residential permits that had been issued. Mr. Shannon stated that they were for new residential homes. He added that there had been strong activity for new home permits through the first half of the year.

Councilmember Courage questioned the zeros on the chart and if that meant there were no trees planted. He asked if outreach was needed or that residents were not asking for trees. Ms. Houston replied that the information would be provided.

3. Policies related to Public Art, Design Enhancement, and Art in Private Development. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, Director]

Debbie Racca-Sittre provided a briefing of the Public Art Policy Update. Ms. Racca-Sittre presented the design enhancements, pilot project status updates, proposed design enhancement, and defined Public Art. She gave an overview of the Eligible Funding Sources, benefits of Public Art, and Public Art investment by other local entities, and she provided a summary of the Public Art projects from the 2017-2022, the Planning for 2022 Bond Public Art, and the Public Art Police Ordinance recommendations.

Councilmembers Perry and Courage spoke in support public art, however they felt the increase of 2% was too high.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how many additional projects would the 2% increase fund. Ms. Racca-Sittre stated it was estimated that the projects would double, however it is dependent on the size of the Bond and how much money was allocated for capital projects. Councilmembers Courage and Perry spoke to incentivizing art through private development.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if there were any endowments or art foundations that could help speak to the project and finding additional funds for the artists. Ms. Racca-Sittre stated they were working with NEA and other foundations, and that their stance was to have the art agencies apply for the grants and distribute the funds through nonprofits.

Councilmember Viagran moved to forward Item 3 to the full Council. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion prevailed as followed:

Ayes: Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, and Courage

Nays: Perry

4. Briefing and discussion on the Neighborhood Engagement Strategy. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Ms. Barbara Ankamah Burford gave a briefing of the Neighborhood Engagement Strategy. She provided the background, concepts & focus group feedback, engagement strategy areas, community engaged learning, messaging and conversations, neighborhood engagement toolkit, and next steps.

Councilmember Perry asked what the real emphasis would be on the large groups, and neighborhood associations. Ms. Ankamah Burford stated the purpose is to engage the residents, and that participation would shape the development of the strategy.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of the digital access and how the City was reaching out to those who are not within the digital platform. Ms. Ankamah Burford stated that they relied on the residents to work with them to provide information to others that may not have access.

5. Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and Texas Eviction Diversion Program (TEDP) Update [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager, Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services]

Mr. Edward Gonzales provided a briefing on the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) Update. He gave an overview of the program's creation, eligibility, assistance provided, allowances, community outreach, EHAP Dashboard, current budget, average assistance per household, assistance provided per week, demographics, and referral system update.

Mr. Gonzales provided an overview of the Texas Eviction Diversion Program. He outlined the program's creation, eviction moratorium, and eviction hearing outcomes, eviction filings in Bexar County 2019, 2020 & 2021, and the Texas Rent Relief Eviction Diversion Program.

Councilmember Treviño asked of how many residents from Bexar County have applied to the state for support; and if the Supreme Court's decision on evictions affected the CDC's policy on federally funded properties. Ms. Sara Wamsley stated that the CARES Act had expired except for one piece where tenants must be given a 30 days' notice instead of the typical three-days. Ian Benavidez stated that the CDC moratorium order and the CARES ACT are two separate pieces. Ms. Jameene Williams clarified that the Texas Supreme Court's order had expired, and Justice of the Peace Courts are no longer restricted from holding eviction proceedings.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan questioned if the 95 families of default judgements had been addressed. Councilmember Perry also asked if the displaced residents had been assisted. Ms. Wamsley stated that flyers had been mailed out regarding an assistance program.

6. Briefing on the City's current process for the review and consideration of dangerous structures and demolitions. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager, Michael Shannon, Director, Development Services Department]

Michael Shannon provided a briefing of the City's process for the review and consideration of dangerous structures and demolitions. He gave an overview of demolitions, current process for dangerous structures, process for Historic Landmarks, Building Standards Board, and number of demolitions.

Councilmember Courage asked if more than one evaluation on a property was conducted to determine if it would be demolished. Mr. Shannon stated that several individuals would conduct an inspection, and the team usually included a licensed code officer, building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical inspectors.

Councilmember Courage asked of the percentage of properties that were owner occupied at the time that the city decided it should be demolished. Mr. Shannon stated city-wide that percentage is about 20%.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Roberto Treviño, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Luckey, Office of the City Clerk