

# HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021, 11:30 AM  
VIDEO CONFERENCE

**Members Present:** Robert Abraham, Member  
Pedro Alanis, Member  
Kristin Davila, Member  
Shirley Gonzales, Chair  
Ed Hinojosa, Member  
Taneka Nikki Johnson, Member  
Sarah Sanchez, Member

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**Members Absent:** Jeff Arndt, Member  
Amanda Keammerer, Member

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**Staff Present:** Lori Houston, *City Manager's Office*;  
Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;  
Juan Valdez, *Mayor's Office*;  
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*;  
Allison Beaver, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;  
Rachel Smith, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;  
Crystal Grafft, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;  
Colton Powell, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;  
Sharon Chan, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*

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- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Shirley Gonzales at 11:32 AM.
  - **Roll Call** – Sara Wamsley, Affordable Housing Administrator, called the roll. At the time when roll call was conducted, seven (7) members were present representing a quorum.
  - **Public Comments** – Chair Gonzales announced there were ten (10) residents signed up to speak for public comment.
    - 1) **General** - Maureen Galindo, student, family therapist, and community psychologist, expressed she did not believe the Housing Commission to be an effective housing forum. She noted that the Commission had failed to provide community oversight over the Mayor's Housing Policy Framework. She quoted Arundhati Roy, "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or preferably unheard." She expressed that NHSD should be folded into the Development Services Department and another department should address the anti-displacement work.
    - 2) **General** - Kayla Miranda, housing justice organizer in District 5, noted the new time for Housing Commission meetings would be difficult for the most impacted to attend and requested the time be shifted back so community is able participate. She noted the

needs of residents up to 50% AMI (area median income), especially those at 30% AMI and below, should be prioritize above developer standards. She expressed that respect should be given to the essential workers as they worked hard through the pandemic and continue to do so.

- 3) **General** - Jessica Guerrero, former Housing Commission Chair, conveyed that the housing crisis is being used as a political pawn for the Housing Commission. Guerrero expressed she wished to be part of the appointment discussions and concern that now only two community members were part of the Commission. She reminded the Commissioners that their duty is to the communities living with housing insecurity and to engage the hardest hit in the communities so they can understand their lived experiences. Guerrero asked for Commissioners to request transparency and a direct briefing on the hiring of the Chief Housing Officer from the City Manager's Office.
- 4) **General** - Rebecca Flores, resident of District 5, stated the charge of the Housing Commission and the Housing Policy Framework's (HPF) Action Item #1 regarding establishing a coordinated housing system with the community and housing and service providers, aligning public and private sectors. Flores noted that housing should be a structural and organizational priority that leverages production, rehabilitation, and preservation. She stated housing should also assist in bridging the digital divide to help the community to access information for transparency. Many cities, like San Antonio, have adopted policies to counteract the worsening affordable housing issues. One critical action was to create an executive housing officer to oversee housing policy implementations and act as a liaison.
- 5) **General** - Linda Ortega, resident of District 5, spoke on Action Item #3, protect and promote neighborhoods, from the HPF. Ortega noted her house appraisal has increased by \$10,000.00 and her insurance has increased. She noted that she, being over 65, is somewhat protected from the effects of the gentrification in her modest neighborhood but many are not. Investors are asking if residents want to sell their houses and some houses are selling for \$200,000. Ortega noted that Zarcamora is far from the minds of those at City Hall and she asked for the Commission to help protect their neighborhoods.

Jameene Williams, Assistant City Attorney, noted that in alignment with the Texas Open Meetings Act and the City Ordinance, public comments should be limited to items on today's agenda and be directed to the Commission as a whole and not individual Commissioners.

- 6) **General** - The following written statement from Monica Cruz was read:  
"My name is Monica Cruz and I am a resident and community researcher. As this new Housing Commission begins its work, my hope is that the members will keep the primary focus on the residents of San Antonio who are experiencing the most housing insecurity.  
For the past decade, a majority of the developments where the city has granted support through tax breaks and incentives to developers has concentrated on populations at 80 percent AMI and above with only a mere fraction of the housing focusing on the individuals and families with much lower household incomes. Moreover, many believe that efforts to advocate for housing that addresses the needs of the extremely low-income population (30% AMI and below) in our city further supports the goals and vision the City of San Antonio has stated to develop policies through an equity lens, namely the Mayor and City Council, Neighborhood Housing and Services Department,

and the city's Office of Equity through its stated mission: "The Office of Equity is a citywide office focused on advancing social equity and dismantling racism within City Government, to help reduce and ultimately eliminate disparities experienced by our most marginalized San Antonio residents."

We ask members of the Housing Commission to focus their efforts on those that are most marginalized in San Antonio-- the 30,000+ individuals on the waitlist in our city who seek public housing, the hundreds of families who have been evicted or will face eviction this year, and the working poor in our city who are the backbone of our city's economy and help our community thrive. This population is affected disproportionately by displacement and is often overlooked in the development of affordable housing yet faces the greatest need. My expectation and the expectation of many in this community is that you will do the right thing and create policies that will address these severe shortages and promote housing equity in our city. Thank you."

- 7) **General** - Sofia Lopez, resident of District 5, stated that the afternoon meeting time was prohibitive to public input from those who are struggling with housing insecurities and requested the Commission to reconsider the time and having a completely virtual meeting space.
- 8) **Agenda Item 3** - Leticia Sanchez  
*Staff note: Ms. Sanchez declined staff's offer to add a written statement for the meeting minutes.*
- 9) **Agenda Item 3** – Silbia Esparza reiterated the Commission's charge to provide oversight of the HPF and its Action Item #3, increase affordable housing production, rehabilitation, and preservation. She requested priority be given to equitable homeownership stabilization through increased production, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable homes. She noted a comprehensive strategy required homebuyer incentives, education, down payment assistance, and more. Esparza stated like the City Charter amendment, public investment should reflect the priority of affordable housing. As federal funding is restricted to assisting households at 80% AMI or below, local innovative solutions should be passed, such as targeted incentives and fee waivers. Esparza also noted the need for deeper gap financing as a development incentive, particularly for the most vulnerable.
- 10) **Agenda Item 4** - Peggy Pena, resident of District 3 and resident of San Antonio for the past 50 years, noted she would address the Commission regarding HPF Action Item #3, protect and promote neighborhoods. Pena suggested the people impacted by rising taxes on housing affordability could be protected by tax exemptions, preservation districts, and TIF (tax increment financing). She inquired if the developer tax incentives were being re-evaluated and expressed that she believed these unchecked incentives are one of the causes of gentrification as they deprive the City budget and increase displacement. She expressed that all the commissions, boards, subcommittees related to housing are confusing and hide development deals that are not in the community's interest. She stated it is important for the Commission and Mayor to focus on transparency and accountability to the community.

*Staff note: The Housing Commission deadline for comment is 11:30 am 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 the May 26, 2021 Regular Meeting; June 9, 2021 Special Meeting; and June 23, 2021 Regular Meeting.**

Commissioner Kristin Davila noted a correction for the Minutes of June 23, 2021, regarding roll call as Commissioner Robert Abraham was counted present though he was absent as stated further in the Minutes.

Commissioner Pedro Alanis motioned to approve the Minutes for May 26, 2021 Regular Meeting, June 9, 2021 Special Meeting, and the amended June 23, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Kristin Davila seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Item #2: Briefing on the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) Progress and Next Steps.**

Verónica R. Soto, Director, stated that Ian Benavidez, Assistant Director, would present.

Benavidez stated the HPF established the City's affordable housing priorities and set a ten-year housing production and preservation goal that is now predicted to be exceeded in five years. The SHIP will include additional goals and strategies related to the HPF's vision, recalibration of previous production and preservation goals, an action plan for commitment and accountability across agencies and sectors, and center work around the community's lived experiences. He stated that the SHIP's housing equity principals are based on affordability, quality, accessibility, and choice. Benavidez noted there was a large public engagement and stakeholder process for the HPF and staff wanted to also have a similar thoroughness in the SHIP. SHIP stakeholder forums include over 80 participants in four categories (Resident & Community, Real Estate & Development, Affordable Housing Community, and Policy). A SA Speak Up survey will be launched in September in addition to continued public meetings (City Council, Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC), SAHA Board Meeting, and SAHT Board Meeting) to gather public feedback on the SHIP draft and implementation.

Benavidez stated that the SHIP's analysis identified 96,000 households that were most vulnerable and required affordable and financial assistance. Of this total household number, 48% are at 30% or below AMI. Two methods can be used to address the cost burden: 1) increase/subsidize household incomes 2) production and preservation of more income-restricted units. He noted that many programs are currently in place to assist and lower the cost of housing such as housing vouchers, down payment assistance, and childcare services programs. Benavidez stated that SHIP goals would lie more towards the second method of production and preservation of income restricted units. He stated that from the needs assessment, rental production and rehab would be in the 0-30%, 31-50%, 51-60% and 61-80% AMI ranges and homeownership production and rehab would be in the 81-100% and 101-120% AMI ranges.

Benavidez continued to the SHIP's next steps that included finalizing targets and beginning public engagement in September, returning to the Commission for final approval in October/November timeframe, and proceeding to Council, SAHT, and SAHA for consideration in November/December. He highlighted that staff would be working with the Public Engagement and Outreach (PEO) Subcommittee to find the best ways for public feedback.

Gonzales inquired regarding Slide 18 if all increase/subsidized income programs had been identified. Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager, stated that the City is working with partner agencies to develop target goals for this method; each entity will report quarterly on their progress. She noted the 96,000 households identified will be divided into which method and category would be the correct intervention for the household's need. Gonzales noted that many of the delegate agencies that assist in these areas should receive additional funding in their efforts. Houston noted that in the next regular Commission meeting, staff will present partner goals and target metrics for accountability. She noted that the programs have traditionally been funded and that funding can be forecasted for the next ten years based on how many families they are able to help. Benavidez stated staff will also track and update post pandemic census data to ensure accurate need. Gonzales requested how much has been spent on current programs (ex. Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP)) and how much in future programs. Houston stated that EHAP's dashboard data could be provided, and the next meeting would contain the long-term goals and targets for programs.

Davila noted that city staff closely worked with community housing organizations to connect residents with EHAP. She highly encouraged staff to continue connecting with these and other community services as many of these organizations already have a person that can act as a liaison between the resident and city.

Alanis noted regarding Slide 19 and the ownership production and rehab section, there are programs that assist and reach 60% AMI and it would be more in line with the Commission's definition of affordability. Benavidez stated 81-120% AMI was in line with ownership production but agreed preservation efforts can reach toward 30% AMI. He noted the slide would be corrected.

Commissioner Abraham noted a slide with AMI translated to average household income would be beneficial to persons not familiar with AMI percentages. Benavidez agreed that the average household income could be included.

Gonzales asked for clarification regarding "Most Vulnerable Household" slide. She asked which programs would have the biggest impact for the targets set. Houston stated that currently staff is working on that data and would present on the SHIP again next month with the breakdown of program targets. Gonzales inquired if the data would also breakdown the 96,000 households demographically or by need. Benavidez stated that a vulnerability index could display areas to provide a better idea of where to concentrate certain implementations. Gonzales asked if the efforts would aid in people experiencing homelessness. Houston stated the 0-30% AMI includes homeless individuals and there will be programs and tools (ex. permanent supportive housing) developed as well.

Alanis noted prioritizations for the housing bond include assisting the economically disadvantaged and vulnerable (ex. older adults, veterans, low-income families, homeless). He expressed that SHIP should reflect the similar priority.

Commissioner Johnson agreed with Abraham that a translation of AMI to dollar amounts would help bring clarity to people that are not familiar with the representation.

Gonzales requested a review of the timeline on Slide 20. Benavidez stated the SHIP draft is being finalized so it can be presented in September. A SA Speakup survey will also be launched to kick off the SHIP's public engagement feedback process which will carry

through December. Gonzales noted that the PEO is currently accepting applications for community members until September 10, 2021, and encouraged people to apply.

Abraham noted currently the PEO has three Commissioners appointed (Abraham, Johnson, Hinojosa) and that he invited Davila to join. He requested the applications of the current applicants. Benavidez stated that the applications would be able to be released to the Commissioners after the application period ended. Davila accepted the invitation to join the PEO subcommittee.

Commissioner Hinojosa noted in SAHA's demographics for 0-30% AMI household demographics were as follows:

- 53% Disabled or elderly
- 31% Working
- 14% Not working with barriers to employment
- 2% Not working with no identified barriers to employment

He expressed that assisting individuals with job placement in the 0-30% AMI would be difficult. Houston stated staff would follow up with Hinojosa for additional information. She noted 48% of the 96,000 households were in the 0-30% AMI but the total 96,000 included cost burdened households from 0-120% AMI.

**3. Item #3: Briefing, discussion, and possible action on the Development of the Proposed 2022-2027 Housing Bond.**

Soto stated that Jaime Lalley-Damron, Housing Bond Administrator, would present.

Damron stated \$20 million was previously approved by voters in the 2017 Housing Bond. In conjunction with the Urban Renewal Agency, 592 units across four developments are planned or currently under construction and \$18.8 million of the bond funds used. She noted some of the developed units also reached deeper affordability levels of 30-40% AMI.

She noted the foundation of the 2022 Housing Bond is based on the HPF's recommendation and robust community engagement, including the ForEveryoneHome (FEH) community work and SHIP. The engagement is layered with the Mayor's Pillars (connectivity, public health, and resiliency) to create recommendations. Damron noted that the overall bond guiding principals (prepared originally by the Public Works Department (PWD)) consisted of alignment with adopted City plans, environmental sustainability, equity, and strategic partnerships and leveraged commitments. She reiterated the estimated need of 96,000 cost burdened households is due to the lack of inventory and increased need for affordable housing.

Damron stated the Evaluation Framework, informed by the Commission, would assist in the selection of housing projects, and should align with the Pillars. Previous discussion highlights from the Commission included alignment with the SHIP, ensuring an energy efficient universal design, inclusion of supportive services, and proximity to transit systems. Damron presented a draft of the housing bond guiding principles that included: affordability, quality, accessibility, and choice. She mentioned that the document is a working draft awaiting more input from Commissioners.

Damron noted the HPF and staff's recommendation is to propose a \$250 million housing bond in the FY2022-2027 Bond Program. Six proposed priority funding categories include:

multi-family preservation, single family preservation, permanent supportive housing, single family new construction, multi-family new construction, and land banking.

Damron reviewed the timeline and highlighted the need for Commission to make recommendations in September. The public engagement process will last from October to December via Bond Committee community meetings. Council is slated to call for the bond election in January or February 2022 for this upcoming May.

Gonzales stated due to the timeframe of the evaluation framework, she recommended a Commissioner workshop so the Commission could spend more time on the evaluation creation process. She requested more specific examples of community land trusts, land banking, and the successfulness of the current down payment assistance program in the next meeting.

*Commissioner Sanchez signed off at 1:03 PM.*

Alanis stated that the core values of the Bond Guiding Principles should be expanded and clarified to demonstrate how the bond funds will help the most vulnerable portion of the public. He noted there should be an equitable targeting of bond funds for preservation and rehabilitation along side new unit production near Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) to increase accessibility to jobs and amenities. He also recommended clarification and recognition of the different factors that surround the affordable housing industry (ex. non-profits, financial agencies, support groups) to execute a successful bond program.

Davila agreed with Alanis and recommended that language from the SHIP be used as there was an extensive critical process to create the specific language used. She also recommended the evaluation tool be used for specific projects and to not use a generalized scoring guide for all types of projects: single family, multi-family, and rehab programs as there is not a one size fits all framework.

Johnson requested clarification of the discussion as she experienced technical difficulties. Damron stated the current discussion was on feedback regarding the bond evaluation framework. Johnson asked how involved the most impacted would be in the framework development. Damron noted that all community members are invited to share their experiences during the community bond process between October through December. She noted staff's recommendation will be forwarded to the Community Bond Committee which is usually comprised of three appointees per district. The recommendation and community feedback will inform the Committee's recommendation to Council. Johnson inquired when and how the community will be notified of the engagement opportunities. Damron noted that specific dates had not been set but would begin in October in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and be advertised by the City.

Gonzales stated the PEO would also assist in promoting the community engagement events and noted there could be more than five community representatives in the nine-member subcommittee and encouraged individuals to apply to generate more engagement.

Gonzales requested volunteers for the Commission Bond Workshop. Commissioners Alanis, Johnson, Davila, and Hinojosa volunteered alongside Chair Gonzales.

Abraham requested further information about how the City would communicate the Bond

engagement events. Damron stated staff would follow up on how the events and information would be distributed.

**4. Item #4: Director's Report.**

Gonzales requested Soto to present.

Soto stated that the follow up question from last meeting was included in the Commissioners' packets. Soto stated the Housing Tax Credit Policy that provides Resolutions of Support and Resolutions of No Objection is updated every two years. Soto noted the SA Speak Up survey would launch in late August and a briefing with PCDC would be on August 26, 2021. She stated in September the survey would close, additional practitioner meetings would conclude, and public comment on the draft policy would begin. In October, the public comment period would close, and a final draft would be taken to City Council in November.

Soto noted that public input is being taken on the FY2022 City budget. She noted different methods for involvement including:

- In Person: [www.saspeakup.com/all-input-meetings](http://www.saspeakup.com/all-input-meetings)
- Text: Send the phrase SASPEAKUP22 to 550000
- Email: [saspeakup@sanantonio.gov](mailto:saspeakup@sanantonio.gov)
- Phone: Share input through 311
- Social Media: Share input through #SASPEAKUP22 on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram

Soto continued with subcommittee updates and noted the PEO application period will end on September 10, 2021 and encouraged community members to apply. She stated that the Renter' subcommittee will have a more substantial briefing in a later meeting.

Soto stated upcoming public events such as the TLRA Tenants' Rights Power Hour on August 26 and September 30, 2021 and the next regular Housing Commission meeting on September 22, 2021.

**Closing-**

**There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 1:29 PM.**