



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:16-2528

Agenda Item Number: 1.

Agenda Date: 4/13/2016

In Control: City Council B Session

DEPARTMENT: Office of Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Shanon Miller

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

A briefing on the implementation and early success of the 18-month Vacant Building Registration Program.

SUMMARY:

A briefing on the implementation and early success of the 18-month Vacant Building Registration Program. This presentation will focus on identified performance measures, early successes, and recommended program changes created by an advisory committee comprised of stakeholders and local real estate professionals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Vacant Building Registration was adopted by Council as an 18-month pilot program in June 2014. The program became effective on January 1, 2015, and it is now in the sixteenth month of implementation. The program requires vacant buildings to register and their exterior and structure to be maintained in good condition. The pilot program area covers the Central Business District, the City's historic districts, all vacant Historic Landmarks, and a half mile buffer around the City's three active military bases. The standard of care within the ordinance requires that a building's exterior and structure be maintained in good condition.

The Vacant Building Program is currently working to address 330 vacant properties. There are also 63 buildings that are exempt because they have been occupied or are single family homes that have been improved to meet the standard of care in the ordinance. An additional 10 buildings have been sold as a result of the ordinance and staff is working with the new owners.

When staff confirms that a building has been vacant for thirty or more days, a notice is mailed to the property owner alerting them that they have 90 days to register with the Office of Historic Preservation. That registration

must include a plan to rectify violations of the standard of care along with reasonable timelines. Property owners must pay a registration fee of \$250 for a single family home or \$750 for all other building types. They also pay a \$0.01 per square foot inspection fee (minimum \$50). The ordinance includes fee waivers for owners that have already pulled permits and have started to make improvements in order to occupy the building; for situations where a catastrophe such as a fire or flood caused the vacancy; for indigent owners; and if a property owner recently passed away and the property is being probated. Staff may also provide an extension from the registration requirements and associated fees if an owner lists a building for sale or lease at fair market value.

As recommended by City Council in June 2014, an advisory committee of stakeholders and real estate experts has been created to offer general guidance on the implementation of the Vacant Building Program. The committee has created recommended program changes, helped to identify solutions to common title problems, and suggested potential resources for both program staff and the owners of vacant structures. The recommended program changes will be presented during the B Session.

ISSUE:

This is a B Session briefing with no requested action.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is a B Session briefing with no requested action.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is a briefing with no requested action. For context, the Vacant Building Registration Program had a budget of \$375,593 in FY2015 and \$325,901 in FY2016. The year to year difference is due to equipment and startup costs budgeted in the initial program year.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is a briefing with no requested action. Staff will present recommended program changes to City Council in May or June.