



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-5555

Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 9/16/2020

In Control: Governance Committee

DEPARTMENT: Development Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Briefing and discussion of a Council Consideration Request (CCR) to review and potentially bring forward amendments to the Unified Development Code relating to existing Urban Farm regulations.

SUMMARY:

Councilman Cabello Havrda initiated a Council Consideration Request (CCR) for Development Services staff to review the City Code, including the building and trade codes and the Unified Development Code, to identify potential barriers to Urban Farms and develop solutions to these barriers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Urban Farms serve important community purposes, including environmental services, community food security, economic generation, and community and neighborhood building.

In addition, urban farms and other urban agriculture can reduce ground-level ozone and improve air quality, extend expected longevity for vulnerable populations and result in reduced disparity in expected longevity, reduce urban heat island effects, reduce standing water in areas of inadequate drainage and resulting vector-borne diseases, reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, i.e. increase mental health, result in improved flooding infrastructure, responses to flooding, and evacuation routes, reduce crime focused on vulnerable zip codes and increase safety and security in the community.

DSD has worked with the Food Policy Council of San Antonio to develop an initial package of Unified Development Code (UDC) Amendments in 2015. Since then, the implementation of the 2015 UDC

Amendments has identified additional barriers faced by Urban Farms in order to begin operations.

This CCR is intended to identify additional opportunities for Urban Farms to succeed and develop solutions through code modifications.

ISSUE:

The UDC currently has regulations that permit Urban Farms within certain residential and non-residential zoning districts.

DSD proposes to move forward with the process to analyze these current City code regulations to determine if there is a potential need to amend existing regulations. DSD proposes to form a Taskforce with representatives from neighborhoods with Urban Farms, representatives from the community that have developed Urban Farms properties, city staff from Development Services, Health Department, and other applicable agencies. The Taskforce will review current regulations and recommend changes for public input and approval.

This will require thorough stakeholder and public participation and given the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency this item should not proceed to Council until it has satisfied the SA Speak Up process.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is a briefing on a City Council Request for possible changes to City Code, alternative is to not move forward with the analysis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this briefing.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends forming a Taskforce that includes representatives from neighborhoods, Food Policy Council, the development community, and city staff to properly review the current regulations related to Urban Farms and to bring forward potential amendments for a briefing to Community Health and Equity Committee.