



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: 11/2/2020

In Control: Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Neighborhood and Housing Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-Wide

SUBJECT:

Neighborhood Association & Community Organization Registration Policy Update

SUMMARY:

The Neighborhood Association & Community Organization Registration Policy is intended to guide Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) staff to maintain relevant, robust and reliable data about associations, and establishes a process for organization registration, updates, and removal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) administers the Neighborhood Association Registry and has an internal policy that regulates its administration. The Neighborhood Association Registry was established by Chapter 35-408 of the City's Unified Development Code (UDC) as a communication tool for notification of zoning, neighborhood plans, community plans and perimeter plans.

The Neighborhood Association Registry is intended to guide NHSD staff to maintain relevant, robust and reliable data about associations, and to solidify a consistent and predictable process for organization registration, updates, and removal. NHSD provided the Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee a plan to host several community input sessions citywide and briefings with regulatory bodies to garner feedback on the Neighborhood Association Registry in February 10, 2020.

Due to COVID-19, all in-person meetings for the Neighborhood Association & Community Organization Registration Policy update were paused in mid-March and the majority of NHSD staff were redirected to

support the COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program. The original timeline for updating the Neighborhood Registration Policy included briefings, which were completed in February and early March with the Development Process Task Force and the Historic and Design Review Commission. In person meetings with the Board of Adjustment, Zoning, and Planning Commissions scheduled for the week of March 16th were cancelled. In addition, the in-person Community Input Sessions scheduled March 24, 26 and April 8th were cancelled as well.

NHSD is resuming efforts to gather feedback on the policy and the new timeline includes scheduled meetings with the Board of Adjustment, Zoning and Planning Commissions on November 16, 17, and 18, 2020. NHSD will hold 3 virtual citywide Community Input Sessions on December 1, 2, and 3, 2020. A subsequent survey will be provided on December 4, 2020 to those individuals who are unable to attend one of the virtual sessions to gather their input. The survey will include questions regarding boundary overlap, association information updates, membership meetings, and bylaws. NHSD staff will present the feedback received from the community input sessions, survey and regulatory bodies to CNSCC in January 2021.

ISSUE:

The Neighborhood and Housing Services Department administers the Neighborhood Association Registry and has developed an administrative policy to regulate administration. The intent of the Neighborhood Association Registry is to facilitate communication and transparency. However, the intent has been compromised in some cases because of conflict among members and residents of a neighborhood. Members of some associations have reported not receiving notifications because of divergent viewpoints on issues and in some cases, members have separated from the registered association and formed a new association. In some instances, this has resulted in two neighborhood associations that have overlapping boundaries.

While Chapter 35-408 does not speak to the issue of overlapping boundaries, the current administrative policy developed by City staff and last updated in 2011 does include a restriction on boundary overlap. Per the policy, neighborhood association boundaries may not overlap unless both neighborhood associations consent to overlap. Because of this requirement, there is only one “registered” neighborhood association per geographic area because the neighborhood associations cannot agree to the overlap in most cases. Therefore, only the registered neighborhood association receives notifications, while the other associations have no mechanism to receive notifications tailored to their geographic area of interest.

Several neighborhood associations have requested staff amend the current administrative policy citing lack of recognition at zoning commission, planning commission, Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) and City Council Member neighborhood meetings because they are not the registered association. However, several neighborhood associations are adamantly opposed to such an amendment, stating the need for one voice of the neighborhood for which City Council Members and developers work with on projects and zoning cases.

The Neighborhood Association Registry is a communication tool only. If a Neighborhood Association is on the Registry, it will receive notices of zoning cases and other items related to neighborhood plans, permit requests, and public meetings. NHSD in coordination with the Development Services Department and Information Technology Services Department will develop an opt-in notification system that would allow any individual the option to receive planning and zoning notifications.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only. Staff will return to the Council Committee with a recommendation in January 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

For briefing purposes only. Staff will return to the Council Committee with a recommendation in January 2021.