

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Governance Committee 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Chair

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

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**Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

**10:00 AM**

**City Council Chambers**

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The Governance Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Media Briefing Room at 10:06 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the roll call, noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Ron Nirenberg, *Mayor, Chair*  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*  
Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Member*  
Manny Pelaez, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from Governance Committee on October 16, 2024.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the October 16, 2024, Governance Committee meeting. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

### Briefing and Possible Action on

#### 2. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember John Courage (District 9) on **B.R.E.A.T.H. (Building Regulations Enhancing Anti-Vaping Trends & Habits)**. [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Amin Tohmaz, Interim Director, Development Services]

Interim Assistant City Manager John Peterek provided background on the Council Consideration

Request (CCR 2024-0024) submitted September 5, 2024, by Councilmember Courage (Council District 9) which requested that Chapter 35 Unified Development Code (UDC), Article III: Zoning, regulations for tobacco stores and vape shops be updated to prohibit the establishment of tobacco retail stores, including vape shops, from opening within 1,000 feet of a public or private school, daycare, or institution of higher learning.

Peterek recommended forwarding the CCR to the Intergovernmental Relations Committee (IGR) and to include the issue in the City's State Legislative Agenda as Senate Bill 464 filed by Senator Donna Campbell on November 22, 2024, would allow a city to adopt an Ordinance prohibiting an e-cigarette retailer from operating within 300 feet of a public or private primary or secondary school campus. Peterek noted that the prohibition did not apply to an e-cigarette retailer whose income from the sale of e-cigarettes were less than 50% of the total gross receipts.

#### DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Courage suggested that B.R.E.A.T.H. could be implemented by the City of San Antonio and did not need to wait until action by the Texas State Legislature, noting that the Texas cities of Sugar Land and Leander had both passed their own bans. He recommended referral of the CCR to the Community Health Committee (CHC) instead of IGR to develop an Ordinance.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the CCR.

Mayor Nirenberg supported moving the CCR to CHC noting that more discussion was needed.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the CCR, mentioning that teens were highly susceptible to addiction and agreed that the Item should move to CHC. She asked if convenience stores would be included in the prohibition. Interim Director of Development Services Department Amin Tohmaz stated that convenience stores were typically zoned as retail and this same zoning would cover vape shops, but the zoning was more general.

Councilmember Pelaez supported referring the CCR to CHC, noting that the IGR committee was briefed yesterday on a bill by Senator Donna Campbell related to the issue but it was limited to businesses where more than 50% of their income was from vaping supplies, which would leave out convenience stores.

Councilmember Courage thanked the Committee for supporting his recommendation to refer to CHC and moved to refer the CCR to CHC. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

**3. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) for a Large Area Rezoning of Property Located within the United Homeowners Improvement Neighborhood Association boundaries.** [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Amin Tohmaz, Interim Director, Development Services]

Interim Assistant City Manager John Peterek provided background on CCR 2024-0026 submitted on October 3, 2024, by Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez (Council District 2) which proposed large area rezoning to align the zoning with the existing use for properties located within the United

Homeowners Improvement Association, which was generally bounded by Frost Bank Center Drive to the West, the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks to the North, Salado Creek to the East, and Willow Springs Golf Course to the South. He indicated that the proposed large area rezoning would allow for future redevelopment opportunities to occur while also protecting the existing homes and property owners from incompatible uses.

Peterek stated that the Development Services Department (DSD) would conduct an analysis of the current land uses, bring forward any appropriate plan amendments and/or zoning changes that would be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, and bring non-conforming current land uses into conformance with appropriate zoning. He recommended referring this item to A Session for consideration of a Resolution to initiate the Large Area Rezoning.

Councilmember Courage moved to refer the CCR to A Session. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

**4. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda (District 6) on Enhancing Permitting Transparency & Expediency.** [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Amin Tohmaz, Interim Director, Development Services]

Interim Assistant City Manager John Peterek provided background on CCR 2024-0028 which was submitted on November 7, 2024, by Councilmember Cabello Havrda (Council District 6) which requested a multi-stakeholder review of operations related to permitting and communication to enhance transparency and expediency with proposed changes to preliminary plan review meetings and cost, improved communication of changes to permit requirements and code changes, downloadable checklists, grace periods for denied permits, expedited permit services, and steps to accomplish permitting in 30 days or less. Peterek recommended referring the CCR to the Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC).

**DISCUSSION:**

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that it was difficult for small businesses to navigate the building permitting system and supported the referral to PCDC.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia agreed that the building permitting process needed improvement and wanted to see the pros and cons regarding setting up a City Task Force.

Councilmember Courage moved to refer the CCR to PCDC. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

**5. Council Consideration Request by Councilmembers Teri Castillo (District 5) and Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) to Reduce Celebratory Gunfire & a "Call the Shots" Public Service Campaigns** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William McManus, Chief of Police]

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez provided background on CCR 2024-0025, which was submitted on September 24, 2024, by Councilmembers Castillo (Council District 5) and Alderete

Gavito (Council District 7) requesting staff to develop a public information campaign titled “Call the Shots” to remind residents throughout the City that celebratory gunfire was illegal, and the law would be enforced in San Antonio. She indicated that the campaign should also include messages that encouraged residents to call in gunshots to the San Antonio Police Department non-emergency line. Villagomez reported that the CCR stated that residents of Council Districts 5, 7, and other areas in San Antonio often heard stray gunfire in their neighborhoods and these incidents frequently led to stray bullets landing in residents' yards, on personal vehicles, and homes, even breaking through windows. She noted that while these incidents could happen throughout the year, they were especially common during holidays involving fireworks, such as New Year's Eve and the Fourth of July.

Villagomez clarified that the daily average number of calls for celebratory gunfire in 2023 was 102 with 361 shots fired calls on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and 304 calls on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Villagomez recommended that the CCR be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee.

#### DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked whether the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) was keeping track of injuries from celebratory gunfire or the source. Riley stated that shots fired calls would take priority over other calls and officers would be dispatched but it might be difficult to determine the origination of the gunfire; reports would include injuries. Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested that gun shops track ammunition to help SAPD find the source.

Councilmember Courage moved to refer the CCR to the Public Safety Committee. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

#### **6. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) on Addressing Cluster Mailbox Theft in the Community.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William McManus, Chief of Police]

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez provided background on CCR 2024-0027 submitted on October 23, 2024, by Councilmember Alderete Gavito (Council District 7) requesting that the City create a program to assist public and private Homeowners' Associations in obtaining and installing night security lighting around mailboxes in their neighborhoods, in partnership with CPS Energy's existing program, and create a Mail Theft Task Force composed of local and Federal agencies and stakeholders to better coordinate and address the issue of cluster mailbox theft in our community.

The CCR stated that the United States Postal Inspection Service reported in 2024 that cluster mailboxes had become increasingly targeted for theft, resulting in lost mail, compromised personal information, and heightened anxiety within communities, according to Villagomez. She noted that since cluster mailboxes carried a much larger amount of mail than individual mailboxes, they were more appealing to bad actors. Villagomez reported that the United States Postal Service (USPS) developed a plan aimed to improve the investigation of mail theft, but there appeared to be little assistance to help local residents impacted by mail theft.

Villagomez stated that the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) investigated claims of property damage to cluster mailboxes and mail theft and SAPD faced significant challenges in investigating and resolving these crimes, including the absence of crucial investigative leads, such as physical evidence,

video surveillance, fingerprints, eyewitness accounts, or detailed descriptions of suspect vehicles. She recommended that the CCR be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee.

**DISCUSSION:**

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the CCR noting that mailbox theft was a big issue for not only neighborhoods but also for apartment homes. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that the issue was citywide and supported the creation of a task force to approach the problem differently since there was a request in 2014. Villagomez indicated that the Public Safety Committee could discuss whether there should be a task force.

Councilmember Courage supported the CCR and recommended a partnership with CPS Energy to help alleviate the costs of lighting around the cluster mailboxes.

Mayor Nirenberg commented that USPS was in need of resources and supported addressing the issue.

Mayor Nirenberg invited Councilmember Alderete who was not on the Committee to speak in support of the Item. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended more lighting at the mailboxes and the creation of a task force.

Councilmember Courage moved to refer the CCR to the Public Safety Committee. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

**Approved**

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*Ron Nirenberg Mayor*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre  
City Clerk*