

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Community Health Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Chair: Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

Monday, March 24, 2025

2:30 PM

City Hall

The Community Health Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:32 p.m. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Teri Castillo *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the Community Health Committee meeting on February 28, 2025.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve the minutes of the February 28, 2025, Community Health Committee meeting. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Castillo, Rocha Garcia, Alderete Gavito
Absent: Kaur, Viagran

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. 2025 National Public Health Week Activities presented by the City of San Antonio Metropolitan

Health District. [Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

Dr. Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health, noted that today was “World Tuberculosis (TB) Day” and Texas ranked the highest among states with rates of TB. Jacob provided an update on the measles outbreak, which had stabilized, and that of the 309 cases in Texas most (211) were in Gaines County. He reported that there were no cases in Bexar County and the exposure by a visitor from West Texas no longer had the potential to cause illness as of March 8, 2025. He stated that Metro Health launched its Vaccine Campaign entitled “Risk Less. Do More” on January 1, 2025.

Jacob stated that Measles Prevention and Crisis Communications included a prevention post on social media with over 287,000 impressions since February 20, 2025. There were over 45 news stories regarding the possible measles exposure. He added that Metro Health had a new creative campaign, “Let’s Get Real.”

The 30th Annual National Public Health Week, according to Jacob, was April 7 through 13, 2025, and this year marked five years since the beginning of the global COVID-19 Pandemic. He mentioned that the theme for Public Health Week was “It Starts Here” and included three Public Health highlights: 1) Foundational Capabilities, 2) Prevent. Promote. Protect., and 3) Programs and Services. Jacob stated that policy changes included Metro Health being nationally accredited and holding a 2024 Gold Medal Rating. He noted that Metro Health planned to collaborate with the following: Big Cities Health Coalition, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)/Texas Association of City and County Health Officials (TACCHO), Community Partners, and the Public Health Workforce.

Jacob outlined the marketing strategy for National Public Health Week, which included a press release and Request for Coverage distribution, digital campaign, flyer distribution, digital banner displays at City Tower, City Hall and 52 street kiosks, social media toolkits with City Council offices, community partners, and the community health worker hub. He indicated that advertisements included TV and radio spots, interview segments on local programs, outdoor billboards, bus ads and bus shelters, print ads, digital online banners, streaming television and radio, movie theater ads, and a Fiesta medal giveaway.

Jacob announced that there would be a Public Health Fest on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at Rosedale Park from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. featuring the Healthier Texas Challenge, education and resources, free produce giveaways, and food samples.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Castillo thanked Jacob for the extensive community engagement and advertisements in partnership with VIA and others. She asked if any contact information was being collected at the National Public Health Week events including the health fair at Rosedale Park. Jacob stated that it was more about inviting the public to celebrate.

Councilmember Viagran planned to send a text message to all Council District 3 residents for the event. She asked if she could have a booth or table for council staff. Jacob stated that they were welcome to join in the event. Councilmember Viagran expressed concern with the Gaines County’s measles outbreak noting that a child had died. She wanted to ensure that rural hospitals received the funds and vaccines they needed.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended that Metro Health block walk near Rosedale Park to get the word out. She asked how many events were planned. Jacob stated that he would share events hosted by partners. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted the high quality of speakers. She recommended more art activities for kids at the events as art was healing. Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented that the City of Houston had a campaign to test children for dyslexia and asked if Metro Health had any programs related to dyslexia. Jacob noted that he would look at Houston's model and circle back with the Ready to Work Program. Councilmember Rocha Garcia also suggested more resources for dementia and for caregivers of people with dementia.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito congratulated Metro Health on the Gold Award.

Councilmember Kaur requested information on the conversion, click, and share rates of Metro Health's social media campaigns to determine what was successful.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked what the April 4 basketball sendoff entailed. Jacob reported that it was connected to the Final Four and a community give-back program for 25 student ambassadors who would be bussed from the Claude Black Center to the Alamodome for photo ops with the Mayor and others, and to make posters.

Chair Castillo announced that the Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

3. 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]

Director of the Development Services Department (DSD), Mike Shannon, provided background on Council Consideration Request CCR 2024-0024 entitled B.R.E.A.T.H. (Building Regulations Enhancing Anti-vaping Trends Habits), which was submitted on September 5, 2024, by Council District 9 Councilmember Courage. He indicated that the CCR requested an update to the City Code to regulate the zoning of and to prohibit tobacco retail stores, including vape shops, from opening within 1,000 feet of a public or private school, daycare, or institution of higher learning.

Shannon noted that Chapter 35 of the Unified Development Code (UDC), Article III, was amended last year to add Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) to the Smoking Ordinance; this update went into effect on January 1, 2025. Shannon listed several bills in the Texas Legislature proposed to limit vape shops near schools including Senate Bill (SB) 464, which would restrict vape shops from opening within 300 feet of a public or private primary or secondary school campus; House Bill (HB) 1816, which would restrict vape shops from opening within 1,000 feet of a public or private primary or secondary and school campus; and HB 3965/SB 1315, which would restrict vape shops from opening within 1,000 feet of a public or private primary or secondary school campus or within 300 feet of a church. Shannon noted that adoption of any State Law could preempt a local Ordinance.

Shannon reported that there were currently 225 vape shops in the City limits and 36% (82) were within 1,000 feet of a school, daycare, or institution of higher learning. He showed a chart of vape shops by council district noting that there were shops in all 10 council districts. He added that these would be grandfathered if a buffer was created.

Shannon recommended updating Article III. Zoning (Supplemental Use Regulations) Section 35-398.02 entitled “Prohibition of Tobacco and/or vape shops from certain uses”, which would state that no tobacco store or vape shop would be allowed to operate within 1,000 feet of a public or private school, daycare, or institution of higher learning unless granted an “S” Specific Use Authorization to do so by the City Council, in accordance with Section 35-423. Shannon added that existing locations within 1,000 feet of such uses would be considered legal but nonconforming and would be grandfathered.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Castillo thanked Councilmember Courage for initiating the prohibition and supported staff’s recommendation. She asked about closing the vape shops already near schools. Shannon stated that the Ordinance would not allow a vape shop to expand and if they were within 1,000 feet of a school and either closed for a year or went out of business and another business came in that was not a vape shop, the nonconforming use would be lost.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the 1,000-foot buffer and asked why there were so many in council districts 1, 8, and 9. Shannon stated that the takeaway was that they were in all council districts, but he did not know why there were more in some council districts than others.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a breakdown of the 82 vape shops and what level of school they were near. She asked what happened when a vape shop applied for a permit. Shannon indicated that there were no notifications currently but if the amendment was passed, DSD would notify the schools as was done for alcohol variances. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the practice to update the City Code only every five years and asked when this policy would go into effect. Shannon stated that most out-of-cycle City Code amendments resulted from a CCR and as soon as City Council approved the City Code in 4 to 6 weeks, the policy would be effective. She asked what happened if a school opened within 1,000 feet of an existing vape shop and whether cannabidiol (CBD) dispensaries were included. Shannon stated that CBD dispensaries were not included unless they met the definition of a vape shop. He added that this was a timely change to the City Code since the definition of smoking was recently updated to include vaping.

Councilmember Viagran recommended limiting the type of signs vape shops could install and suggested that their advertisement of flavors was geared toward youth and while they might have rights to stay in their current locations near schools, it would be helpful if the City could regulate advertising. Shannon noted that there were free speech limits on what the City could prohibit related to advertising.

Councilmember Kaur asked if there was a difference between vape shops and convenience stores that sold vapes. Shannon commented that the definition could state that more than 50% of their sales came from vapes. Councilmember Kaur asked if there was data related to the efficacy of moving vape shops from 300 feet away to 1,000 feet away from a school. Shannon said staff was proposing 1,000 feet but there were bills in the State Legislature related to both distances. Shannon mentioned that the alcohol variance was for 300 feet, not 1,000. Councilmember Kaur recommended that data be collected before and after the use of vape shops by youth. She noted the struggle with free weed and cannabis shops. Councilmember Kaur asked if there was a limit on the amount of light a sign could emit and suggested restricting the use of neon signs. Shannon stated that content could not be restricted but the

illumination level could be limited.

Chair Castillo asked Shannon to clarify the focus of the prohibition. Shannon stated that CBD and flower shop dispensaries would not be included as the focus was on vaping.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to forward staff's recommendation to the Zoning Commission, followed by the City Council. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion.

Aye: Castillo, Kaur, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Alderete Gavito

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Approved

Teri Castillo, Chair

*Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk*