

**State of Texas  
County of Bexar  
City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes  
City Council Special Meeting**

Municipal Plaza Building  
114 W. Commerce Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

**2023 – 2025 Council Members**

Mayor Ron Nirenberg  
Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6  
Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8  
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

**Thursday, May 9, 2024**

**1:00 PM**

**City Council Chambers**

The City Council convened a special meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 1:00 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

**PRESENT:** 11 – Nirenberg, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

**ABSENT:** None

**ITEMS**

1. A briefing on the status of the Resiliency, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability Fund (REES) and Urban Heat Island Mitigation Initiative [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Douglas Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, Office of Sustainability]

Assistant City Manager David McCary provided an overview of the Item and background on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) that was adopted in 2019. According to Assistant City Manager McCary, the CAAP was the roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality and adapt to

current and future climate impacts. He stated that it was planned to be updated in 2024 - 2025 as part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) regional planning initiative. Assistant City Manager McCary reported that while Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GGE) had been declining, additional reductions needed to be accelerated to meet targets.

Assistant City Manager McCary stated that the FY 2024 plan included grants from REES to fund actively supported Climate Ready implementation with \$1 million in the Neighborhood and Community Grants Program to support community climate action by providing grants of up to \$20,000. McCary noted that there was \$125,000 under the Grassroots Engagement Program where Community-Based Organizations (CBO) provided equity based climate engagement. He reported that The Community-Based Organization Resilience Network Program provided \$300,000 for capacity building and financial support to CBOs to increase community climate resilience. Assistant City Manager McCary mentioned that the Low-Income Neighborhood Resilience Pilot Program identified and implemented priority Urban Heat Island and Climate Resilience Projects through an expedited grassroots planning process.

Assistant City Manager McCary reported that the Business Urban Heat Island Mitigation & Sustainability Grant Program had \$1,500,000 to support business climate action by providing grants up to \$20K for projects with measurable impact and that were consistent with the SA Climate Ready Plan. He added that the Texas Solar for All (Tx SFA) Program was planned to provide direct financial benefit to low-income and energy-burdened households.

According to McCary, the \$1.5 million Airport Energy Master Plan included a partnership with Opportunity Home (OH), Multi-Family EV Charging, and the low-income E-Bike Rebate Program. He stated that the Office of Historic Preservation submitted a grant application for the US EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). McCary noted that the CAAP would be updated in 2025 and assessed every three-five years and would include an update to Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets, and prioritize community and municipal climate mitigation strategies.

Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, provided an example of record breaking heat noting that there were 75 days of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures in San Antonio in 2023. He noted that the Urban Heat Island Initiative included a plan to develop a Citywide heat equity map and install and test cool pavement options in FY 2023 and in FY 2024 the department would be creating storyboards. Melnick demonstrated the website that included information citywide and by Council District on climate trends, heat vulnerability, and heat related illnesses. Melnick indicated that the interactive map provided a heat score overlaid with an equity score and listed programs, resources such as swimming pools, and the impact of various initiatives such as cool pavement and the Tree Mitigation Program.

Melnick provided results of the Urban Heat Island Cool Pavement Pilot Program which was installed at ten locations (one in each council district.) He stated that the Program determined that Seal Master provided the best option with a heat difference of 18 degrees Fahrenheit compared to fresh black asphalt. Melnick stated that the next steps were to add more sites based on specified criteria including a focus on four priority census blocks, interdepartmental and interagency coordination, layering multiple infrastructure based mitigation measures, community and stakeholder engagement, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) research and sensor infrastructure installation, leveraging of programs including Casa Verde, Under 1 Roof, EquiTREE,

and Bond Projects.

The Low-Income Weatherization Program funded by the Resiliency, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability (REES) Fund was available to assist low-income homeowners in reducing energy consumption and costs by providing energy efficiency improvements and weatherization services for small scale home repairs, according to Melnick. He stated that REES Funds were integrated into the Neighborhood Housing Services Department's (NHSD) Major Repair Program to support qualifying repairs such as: wall and attic insulation, windows, siding, and heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. As of April 2024, 20 projects had been selected; NHSD was planning to accept up to 30 more projects.

Melnick provided an update on the Shade as Art Program which included GIS mapping of where shade and art were needed in relation to high heat areas. The Office of Sustainability initiated conversations with partner agencies to develop a potential FY 2025 Pilot Program which included a competition to commission local artists to develop creative ways to provide shade.

Ana Lozano, Director of Technology and Product Innovation at CPS Energy provided an update on the Sustainable Tomorrow Energy Plan (STEP) successful completion of year one which included goals of demand and bill savings. She reported that CPS Energy's portfolio of STEP Programs included: equity focused programs, Demand Response, Electric Vehicles, Residential Energy Efficiency, Commercial Energy Efficiency, and Solar.

Lozano stated that CPS Energy planned to expand the benefits of weatherization to multi-family customers who could not participate in the Single-Family Weatherization Program. She noted that eligible properties included multi-family properties with four or more units that were owned and operated by a 501(c)3 or 25% occupied by tenants who received low-income assistance. Lozano reported that expanded goals for community solar included: equitable offerings that supported Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) customers, increased visibility throughout the community, local partnerships to deliver the Program, heat island mitigation, resiliency opportunities, and creating an opportunity for local businesses to participate. She added that CPS Energy was currently evaluating proposals for the provision of up to 50 megawatts (MW) of additional community solar.

Lozano completed the presentation by reviewing CPS Energy's Vision 2027 power generation plans through the year 2030 which retired all coal power plants, retired inefficient gas power plants, and focused on renewable energy and cleaner gas power generation.

Mayor Nirenberg commented that the increment being accrued by the City generated from the STEP fee had been concentrated into CAAP programs including the Urban Heat Island Pilot Program. He recommended matching all weatherization programs up with each other and the Minor Home Rehabilitation Program to serve more residents. Mayor Nirenberg noted an obstacle to participation in these programs was the lack of a clear title and encouraged more funding to be put into the Title Clearance Program.

City Manager Erik Walsh commented that City Council wanted to provide feedback on the CPS Energy funding of REES and the split between CPS Energy and the City. City Manager Walsh stated that the staff had been working to integrate the two Climate Action Advisory

Commissions into one to continue the advisory efforts.

Councilmember Viagran appreciated the progress made to date on the CAAP noting that it was adopted October 17, 2019. She highlighted the Council District 3 accomplishments including the arboretum, food forests, the Cool Pavement Pilot Program, encouraging clean energy businesses to be developed at Brooks City Base, and the sustainability symposium held earlier this year. She recommended prioritizing signage for bicycle lanes so more people would use clean transportation alternatives.

Councilmember Viagran asked if the City was doing regular HVAC maintenance for the resiliency hubs and recommended the replacement of the old systems with clean energy systems. Melnick stated that the Building & Equipment Services Department (BESD) was responsible for maintenance and he would ask them to provide the information. Councilmember Viagran recommended that the Neighborhood Housing Services Department (NHSD) Minor Repair Program assist residents that lived in older homes that might not qualify for weatherization programs.

Councilmember Viagran asked about the Solar for All Program and spoke in support of the grant. Melnick stated that the coalition requested \$40 million and received 40% of that request from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which was expected to be \$21 million for the City of San Antonio to assist low-income and energy cost burdened communities. Councilmember Viagran recommended increasing the tree canopy in parks and requested a prioritization plan for park locations and noted that the Art-As-Shade Program would be a great partnership.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that the most vulnerable residents were the most impacted by climate change and he advocated for climate justice. He was pleased that the Office of Sustainability was applying for grants in partnership with other organizations. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez proposed a review of innovative programs such as the Air Conditioning Unit Program in New York City.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested clarification on the EquiTree Program funding noting that she had some neighborhood associations in her council district that wanted access to free trees. Director of Parks & Recreation, Homer Garcia reported that there was \$11.9 million in the Tree Program and just under \$3 million was designated for the EquiTree Program and interested parties could reach out to the Parks Department. Garcia added that the approach was to work with NHSD and collaborate with partners such as CPS Energy under the Casa Verde Program. Councilmember Aldrete Gavito advocated for addressing sidewalk gaps in our city and increased bike facilities so people could walk and bike more safely. She supported the plan to provide other mitigation.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how the CAAP could adapt to the population growth. Melnick stated that it was about working with the community and stakeholders to find the best balance between smart growth policies and just being practical noting that the department was already implementing similar principles in coordination with Public Works on their Bond Programs.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended focusing on more grant programs through collaboration including the goal of carbon neutrality. She asked about the proposal for the new

commission and timeline. Melnick recommended combining the two commissions into one because it was hard to get a quorum under the current structure. He stated that the new structure would shift to individual council district Councilmember appointees and the Office of Sustainability and the Office of the City Clerk would try to get the new structure before City Council in the next two months.

Councilmember Courage requested a breakdown of the spending on the entire REES Fund over the past year, how that was derived and whether the City would be looking to take more money in the future. McCary stated that \$8.9 million was assessed for the REES Fund and City Manager Walsh explained that the 14% associated with the STEP Program was being placed into the REES Fund and was annually adjusted based on the work CPS Energy did in the STEP Plan.

Councilmember Courage asked about the grants that were being applied for and whether the City had to fund a match. Melnick stated that the City submitted an application in partnership with CPS Energy and SAWS for \$164 million to install solar at SAWS H2Oaks facility and battery storage at the SAWS substation and 102.5 megawatts of solar for low-income communities; there was no match required.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented that there were many great ideas such as New York City's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and liked the "what can you do to help climate change" section of the website to encourage the community to get more involved. She asked how we defined success if we were to get additional funding for FY 2025. Melnick stated that the Business Grant and Community Grant Program cast a wide net for anything in line with the CAAP with measurable impact and he expected to use their proposals to develop a more targeted approach similar to the City of Denver that measured the amount of energy reduced. She recommended regular progress checks on the grants and a simple approach to the application.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a list of the homes that participated in the Casa Verde Weatherization Program and more information on the participation in the Affordability Discount Program (ADP). She recommended coordination with CPS Energy on the Urban Heat Island Effect and asked how much funding would be needed for all the areas that the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) was recommending treating. City Manager Walsh stated that an exact amount was not known and he had directed staff to see how the cool pavement strategies could be incorporated Public Works' annual Infrastructure Maintenance Program (IMP). She requested a copy of the results of the Urban Heat Island Pilot Program. Melnick stated that they were all on the dashboard but offered to email a link.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested data on heat equity, tree canopy, energy burdened and vulnerable families. She recommended follow-up on whether the trees survived after they were given away through the Tree Planting Program. Garcia stated that the Parks and Recreation Department monitored the City's trees planted in its parks and they were building an inventory to help track information on how the tree was doing and provide those who received trees with education on how to care for trees.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested information on projects that would include cool pavement. Hosseini stated that the planned IMP Map was overlaid with the heat island map and coordinated the treatment. City Manager Walsh stated that any street planned to be resurfaced in a

heat island area would incorporate the cool pavement product as a natural part of the IMP. DeeAnna Hardwick, CPS Chief Customer Strategy Officer stated that she would also provide information in the quarterly update.

Councilmember Castillo recommended evaluating drainage projects such as Bioswells for impacts. She thanked community organizers and the Maestro Center for connecting the community and businesses to the grant programs and providing education. Councilmember Castillo expressed concern that in her council district, there were cement blocks separating bike lanes from the street that attracted heat and suggested more shade. Councilmember Castillo wanted to ensure that the City of San Antonio residents were the ones accessing the free trees and not non-residents.

Councilmember Whyte asked why the grant program deadlines were extended. Melnick stated that there was \$2.5 million available, and the department had not received enough proposals, so they extended it and received more. Councilmember Whyte asked how measurable community and business impact was calculated. Melnick indicated that they measured electricity reduction for persons and businesses that participated in the programs as one impact and small businesses were targeted for the program as they seemed to need more help. Councilmember Whyte recommended continuing to look at the metrics to ensure a return on investment.

Councilmember Kaur requested a booklet or flyer the council offices could pass out at community and neighborhood meetings. Melnick said the plan was to leverage resources. Councilmember Kaur recommended adding Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure to underserved areas and suggested development of goals for hybrid vehicles as well as electric. Ruben A. Flores, Assistant Director for the Building & Equipment Services Department stated that any time they bought a light duty vehicle, it would be hybrid and the goal was to double the EV fleet to 100 next year. Councilmember Kaur asked how we could better support the homeowner to complete deconstruction and recommended tracking where the materials were going. Melnick said he would get the information from the Office of Historic Preservation.

Councilmember Kaur asked if there was a white roof program. Melnick said CPS Energy had a white roof incentive program and the Office of Sustainability was planning to discuss new building codes with the Developmental Services Department. Veronica Garcia, Director NHSD said her department administered the Under 1 Roof Program and anticipated completing 240 white roofs this year and this was funded separately from REES. Councilmember Kaur recommended an energy audit before weatherizing or other mitigation to ensure the proper steps were implemented.

Councilmember Kaur recommended providing businesses with a list of eligible activities and expenditures for the business grants. She said the community had provided positive feedback on the cool pavement and tree planting programs but wanted to ensure stakeholders were informed before the City took action and follow up on the impact and sustainability. Councilmember Kaur supported CPS Energy's work with multi-family housing.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported use of REES fund for any efforts with positive impact and supported the many partnerships including CPRG implementation grant and recommended a check-in for the STEP before year three. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a specific goal for addressing energy cost burdened families, children, and elderly. CPS Energy said the goal was to enroll 90% of the household in the targeted census tracts in ADP and weatherization programs.

She requested sustainable funding for future and goals including how much energy would be saved.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

**Approved**

**Ron Nirenberg  
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre  
City Clerk**

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