

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Chair: Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4

Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Rosie Castro, Dist. 7

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall

The Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:00 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Chair*  
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
Rosie Castro, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

#### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes for the February 23, 2023, Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes for the February 23, 2023 Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo

#### Public Comments

#### Briefing and Possible Action on

**2. Metro Health's FY2022 Annual Report and National Public Health Week activities.** [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Metro Health]

Director of Metro Health Claude Jacob provided an overview of the activities related to National Public Health Week (NPHW) and the Annual Report. Jacob stated that the Annual Report presented the Department's accomplishments and alignment with the vision including a community assessment, snapshot of essential public health functions and programs. He noted that the Annual Report also included the first year accomplishments of the SA Forward Strategic Plan related to the following key initiatives: access to care, data and technology infrastructure, food insecurity and nutrition, health equity and social justice, mental health and community resilience and violence prevention.

Jacob announced that the theme for this year's NPHW was "Centering and celebrating cultures in health." Jacob listed public relations activities, a "Public Health Fest" with over 30 exhibitors to be held on April 6, 2023 at Mission Marquee, over 30 interviews on local media promoting local public health and advertising outdoors and digitally. He noted that NPHW would also include Resolutions, a garden dedication with tree planting and a lecture series acknowledging the contributions made by former Metro Health Director Dr. Fernando A. Guerra who passed away in January 2022.

**DISCUSSION:**

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked Jacob and the staff for their work and asked how many years the annual reports had been published. Jacob stated that he would send the prior annual reports. Chair Rocha Garcia also recommended map overlays for health data including hospitals, Emergency Rooms, income levels and rates of insured/uninsured, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, etc. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended partnering with other health providers during NPHW. She expressed concern that there was a hospital gap because of the closure of the Vista Medical Center Hospital on the south side of San Antonio and suggested raising awareness about accessibility of medical care and suggested convening a task force along with Bexar County.

Councilmember Viagran requested another briefing specifically regarding the closure of the Vista Medical Center Hospital and a proposed solution to address the need. Councilmember Viagran challenged members of Community, Health, Environment & Culture Committee (CHECC) to attend the "Public Health Fest" at Mission Drive-In Marquee and recommended that the Office of Innovation bring their survey on digital inclusion to the event as well as other surveys and information.

Councilmember Viagran commented that the pandemic negatively impacted persons with diabetes.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that the closure of the hospital on the south side had a ripple effect and noted that there had been a long-term gap of services on the east side of town and supported the discussion coming forward to the Committee.

Councilmember Castillo also expressed concern about the hospital closure and wanted to ensure that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were available as the closure could put a strain on their systems as well. Councilmember Castillo recommended a review of environmental and

infrastructure systems that contributed to asthma and otherwise impacted health. Councilmember Castillo applauded using the fiesta medal as an incentive to get people

Councilmember Castro echoed the south and east side hospital needs. She suggested notifying the colleges about what resources they could access for mental health issues.

Chair Rocha Garcia closed the discussion by noting that she had requested transport times from EMS to the nearest hospital to see the impact of closures in real numbers.

Item was for discussion only; no action was taken.

**3. The expansion of the City of San Antonio's Non-Discrimination Ordinance.** [Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Dr. Jennifer Mata, Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility]

City Attorney Andy Segovia introduced Dr. Jennifer Mata, Director of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Department (DEIA) who provided an overview on the nondiscrimination Ordinance (NDO) that was adopted in September 2013 and updated in 2021. Samantha Smith, Civil Rights Manager, DEIA, provided history, background, and an overview of the NDO and overview of the DEIA Department. Mata listed several recommended updates and the process. Smith recommended an update to the definitions and clarification of department roles and procedures Smith proposed adding accountability measures in the area of Equal Employment Opportunity, Public Accommodation, Housing, and requiring a mandatory review of the NDO and procedures every five years.

Smith compared seven peer cities and determined best practices including adding defined complaint procedures, investigatory powers, remedies before punishment and a statute of limitation on complaints. Smith stated that Fair Employment practices for non-City employees were under the purview of other agencies and Fair Housing initiatives and programs were through Federal, State and local agencies. Smith provided a chart of Fair Housing complaints received by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Smith proposed creation of a Human Rights Commission which would include one member from each of the following seven commissions: Veterans Advisory Commission, City/County Joint Commission on Elderly Affairs and the SA Climate Equity Advisory Committee,

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez for initiating this through a Council Consideration Request (CCR).

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed support for the recommendations noting that the high community engagement proposed was positive and stated that his council district office was available to support and guide the agency and to provide a list of residents that could provide feedback. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended including legal support but expressed concern that a 180 day statute of limitations might cause some complaints to go unresolved. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended including council district appointees on the Human Rights Commission. He recommended that staff return in May 2023 with more information.

Chair Rocha Garcia commented that the City Council was celebrating diversity in its own ranks and in the Boards and Commissions as well. Chair Rocha Garcia requested clarification on how to reach DEIA online and recommended including Spanish on the website and noted that there were many broken links on the website. Chair Rocha Garcia requested a breakdown of the HUD complaints by council district. Smith stated that HUD data was not broken down. Chair Rocha Garcia liked the idea of a Human Rights Commission and asked why only seven commissions were recommended for inclusion. Smith stated they had reviewed the list of Boards & Commissions and identified the ones that might overlap with DEIA initiatives. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended representation of educational institutions and community organizations.

Councilmember Castillo thanked staff for leading this effort and noted that the recent Texas Senate Bill (SB)15 was the perfect example of proposed legislation that discriminated and restricted the rights of transgender students and kept them from participating in sports that aligned with their gender identity. Councilmember Castillo supported providing legal support to persons who filed complaints. She recommended a comparison of the Cities of Houston and Austin Fair Housing.

Councilmember Castro requested more information about outcomes related to HUD complaints to help inform improvements to the Ordinance. Councilmember Castro stated that there was intersectionality between discrimination and domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking.

Councilmember Viagran stated that she had reviewed the Southside Independent School District's policies and suggested that San Antonio ISD had a good definition related to hairstyles. Councilmember Viagran stated that violence and discrimination against women happened daily and wanted to include microaggression in the workplace. Councilmember Viagran recommended communicating with City employees that family violence, micro aggression and discrimination were prohibited for employees and those outside. Segovia mentioned the City's antiharassment policy for staff but would research how to inform the community. Councilmember Viagran supported creating the Human Rights Commission with a review of other commissions and outside entities.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that members of the LGBTQ community were not represented in the new Human Rights Commission. Segovia stated that the groups identified were a starting point for discussion and DEIA would return in May 2023 with an update.

Item was for discussion only; no action was taken.

**4. Strategies for Public Art in 2022 – 2027.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Krystal Jones, Director, Department of Arts & Culture]

Krystal Jones, Director of the Department of Arts & Culture, invited Freda Facey, Chair of the Public Art Committee and Council District 9 appointee of the San Antonio Arts Commission to speak. Facey spoke in support of the strong and growing Public Art Program in San Antonio. Facey requested consideration of community feedback that supported more Public Art. Facey noted that Public Art was a method to attract businesses and families to relocate to San Antonio as well as promote tourism and travel.

Jones recognized her Public Art Division staff and provided a five-year history and overview of the Public Art program including those developed with bond and non-bond funding sources.

Jones also noted that maintenance of public art was a part of their workload, but capital funding was not eligible to be utilized for repairs and maintenance. Jones reported that 36 projects were proposed for the 1.5% or \$15.7 million in the 2022 Bond Program. The Department commissioned a resident and visitor survey, hosted community engagement sessions and surveyed artist satisfaction with the Public Art Program.

Jones listed seven strategies to move forward in the next five years which included: 1) Amending the Public Art Policy to update language and ensure support of community driven art on City property, 2) Connecting community at existing events and host engaging dedication events, 3) Developing an “Art in Visible Spaces” Toolkit for private property, 4) Fostering artist development, 5) Exploring opportunities for functionality and interactivity, 6) Prioritizing maintenance, and 7) Educating and informing the public on the public art process through marketing and communication including creation of webpages and dashboards. Jones provided a timeline for approval of the strategy.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked staff and the San Antonio Arts Commission for their work. She noted that she had dedicated \$300,000 of Neighborhood Access and Mobility Program (NAMP) funding for a Solar Walk public art project. Chair Rocha Garcia also supported embedding art in infrastructure and noted that she had found an example of a vertical garden in Mexico City that the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) stated could not be completed. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended using lighting to add a light beacon to the “Tribute to Freedom Sculpture” to represent Space Force which was not in existence when the artwork was installed on the corner of Highway 90 and Military Drive. She noted that there was a map and list of the 36 sites for public art to ensure that all council districts received a piece of artwork.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that art was important to our well-being and recommended updating the map of public art on the website. He was pleased that the funding for art was increased to 1.5% for all capital projects. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported more connection to individual artists. Jones commented that the Individual Artist Grants which began in 2020 increased engagement with artists exponentially. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended engagement with younger artists. Jones reported that the staff had provided presentations to high schools and noted a partnership with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) since the Southwest School of Arts joined with UTSA. She also mentioned private partnerships such as with Texas Public Radio.

Councilmember Castillo noted that Council District 5 was experiencing economic growth which put many of the murals on private property at risk and recommended including ways for private owners to preserve murals in the toolkit.

Councilmember Castro noted that much art was placed downtown and at the airport and recommended more artwork on the outskirts of downtown under the highways leading into downtown. Councilmember Castro recommended partnerships with the colleges and universities and more literary art. Jones announced that a new public art project related to the Seeling Channel Drainage Bond Project in Council District 7 was planned to be dedicated in April 2023 featuring the work of six local artists.

Councilmember Viagran asked Jones for the current public art maintenance budget amount and source of funds. Jones replied that the department currently had \$84,000 for public art maintenance and noted that capital project funding could not be used for maintenance, so the source was Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) in the Department's operating fund. Councilmember Viagran commented that the HOT should not be the only source of funding for art and recommended \$1-2 million in funding from the General Fund for the arts including public art maintenance. Councilmember Viagran recommended including maintenance of neighborhood art with the additional funding.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported more funding for public art maintenance noting the need for maintaining neighborhood art including the Martin Luther King, Jr. mural on MLK Drive. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that the Alamodome had been named one of the ugliest buildings in America and recommended public art to improve the building's aesthetic. Jones stated that there was funding for public art in the Alamodome renovation project.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Castro

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Chair Rocha Garcia adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**APPROVED**

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*Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*