

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

#### 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Chair: Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3  
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Thursday, June 29, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall

The Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Media Briefing Room 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*

**Members Absent:** None

#### Approval of Minutes

##### 1. Approval of minutes for May 25, 2023, Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve the minutes of the May 25, 2023 Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

#### Public Comments

There were no public comments.

#### Briefing and Possible Action on

##### 2. Creation of a Cultural Heritage District along Wurzbach Road in District 8. [Lori

Houston, Assistant City Manager; Krystal Jones, Director, Department of Arts & Culture]

Krystal Jones, Director of the Department of Arts & Culture, provided background on the Council Consideration Request submitted by Councilmember Pelaez for the creation of a Silk Road Corridor along Wurzbach Road in the Medical Center Area as well as an overview of the recommended plan which included evaluating the area as a potential Cultural Heritage District (CHD) in accordance with the 2005 City Council policy.

Jones provided the process and benefits of CHD designation which included ascertaining the cultural identity of the area, instilling neighborhood pride, promoting economic prosperity and wellbeing, discouraging demolition of cultural assets and encouraging preservation as well as leveraging grant opportunities. She noted that the next steps included the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) hosting community engagement meetings and working with key stakeholders in the area with a goal of cultural mapping and storytelling followed by a recommendation to and consideration by the Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) and finally, consideration by City Council for recognition and designation.

#### DISCUSSION:

Chair Rocha Garcia supported the recognition of the cultural significance of the area and recommended connection to other aspects of City government noting that cultural designations were quality of life issues.

Councilmember Viagran expressed concern with the name Silk Road Corridor as recently, the Silk Road was an online black market where buyers and sellers of illegal or unethical items could transact anonymously. However, Councilmember Viagran recognized that the name was chosen by the community.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that there was a large Korean population in Council District 2 and Korea was a part of the Silk Road Network. He asked of the historical context of the area that made it significant related to the Asian Community. Jones stated that the name was still up for discussion by residents, and as a part of the community engagement, the cultural significance would be identified but noted that multiple non-profits in the area as well as many in the community had offered support for the designation of Silk Road Cultural Historic District.

Councilmember Castillo commented that she had spoken to a history professor and suggested more community and stakeholder input. Councilmember Castillo requested a summary of the public outreach and subsequent input provided by the community at a later meeting.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested a follow-up presentation to the Committee. Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

3. **City's participation in the National League of Cities (NLC) City Inclusive Entrepreneurship Program.** [Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk / Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Dr. Jennifer Mata, Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility]  
Samantha Smith, Civil Rights Manager for the City within the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and

Accessibility Department (DEIA) provided background on the project which had a goal of expanding participation in boards and commissions as a part of the National League of Cities (NLC) - City Inclusive Entrepreneurship Program. Additionally, Smith noted that the City's strategies were intended to increase the opportunities for historically excluded entrepreneurs as a part of the leadership diversity track which would focus on gender inequity for women and nonbinary individuals on City Boards & Commissions.

According to Smith, a dinner was planned which would include a diverse panel that would discuss overcoming obstacles to service and encouraging more public participation on City Boards & Commissions. She noted that the event would be accessible to persons with disabilities, public transport, translated into various languages as needed and would be recorded / live-streamed to be more inclusive. She added that staff had coordinated with United WE for technical assistance and United WE would provide marketing materials.

Jamie Nieto, Assistant City Clerk, shared outreach strategies focused on increasing diversity and participation which included press releases, social media posts, City website and collaborations with the managing City departments and City Council Offices. She noted that board meetings were held in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant locations with language translation services available. Nieto described other strategies for reducing barriers such as provision of parking and childcare assistance. Nieto listed training opportunities through the Municipal Leadership Institute to help members of City Boards and Commissions feel comfortable with serving and to be more successful in their leadership roles.

#### DISCUSSION:

Chair Rocha Garcia noted that there was now a majority woman City Council and stated that often women thought about their family requirements and was pleased that the City could offer help with childcare and parking. Chair Rocha Garcia mentioned that diversity of experience to include both stay-at-home and working mothers and grandmothers provided valuable feedback for City priorities and programs. Chair Rocha Garcia requested a report on the number of women currently on boards and commissions.

Councilmember Viagran asked if the focus was to get women on City boards or in other capacities as well. Smith stated that the focus of the City's efforts within the NLC cohort was to increase the amount of women and non-binary individuals that applied for positions on City boards. Councilmember Viagran commented that sometimes board members felt frustrated that their voices were not heard and recommended setting the expectation that recommendations from City Boards and Commissions could move forward to the City Council or council committees. She also expressed concern that the time commitment for serving on some boards was significant and could make women not want to serve as they needed to feel that serving on a City Board or Commission was a good use of their time and that they would not take time off work or travel for a meeting only to be cancelled at the last minute due to not having a quorum.

Councilmember Castillo thanked staff for reducing the barriers to participation on City Boards & Commissions and suggested that the meetings be held around the city to make them more accessible to the public and to the members and recommended recording or live streaming the meetings. Castillo stated that many people did not feel comfortable with their skills or confident and

she was pleased to see training offered by the Office of the City Clerk through the Municipal Leadership Institute.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a demographic breakdown of all boards and commissions by City Council District to include race, disability and socioeconomic status. He added that boards and commissions that were more than advisory in nature might have less diversity. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended development of diversity standards. He noted that the Veteran's Affairs Commission was rotating their location which might help in achieving a quorum.

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked staff for their presentation and ended the discussion. Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

**Approved**

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***Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair***

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***Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk***