

City of San Antonio



Minutes Economic and Workforce Development Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Chair: Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8

Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4

Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall Complex

The Economic and Workforce Development Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:04 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Manny Pelaez, *Chair*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*
Marc Whyte, *Member*

Members Absent: Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on June 28, 2023.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes of the June 28, 2023 Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Viagran, Castillo, Whyte

Absent: Rocha Garcia

Public Comments

Briefing and Possible Action on the following items

2. Briefing and possible action on the Façade Improvement Grant Program funded by the American

Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development Department]

Ana Bradshaw, Assistant Director of the Economic Development Department, provided background on the Façade Improvements Program (FIP) which provided small grants (\$5,000 to \$50,000) for commercial building owners and businesses in targeted priority geographic areas. The eligible areas were World Heritage Buffer Zone (except Centro Public Improvement District, La Villita and Downtown Riverwalk) and SA Tomorrow Sub-Area Plans and Regional Center Plans, Northeast Corridor Revitalization Program areas and areas within 500 feet of City initiated construction zones with projects scheduled to last 12 months or longer. Bradshaw listed eligible improvements and noted that there was a cost share requirement which was scaled based upon the equity score of the area. Those areas with high equity scores received more funding than those with lower scores.

Bradshaw stated that several corridors in Council District 7 had been requested to be included in the priority areas as they did not meet the current eligibility criteria. Bradshaw provided a timeline for the program which would need to be extended if the three Council District 7 corridors were included.

Chair Pelaez invited Councilmember Alderete Gavito to address the Committee. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended adding Donaldson near Jefferson High School, Fredericksburg Road in the Deco District, and St. Mary's/Culebra Corridor to be included in the FIP.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Viagran requested clarification on the proposed Council District 7 corridors, why there were none, and timeline if they were included. Bradshaw stated that the proposed Council District 7 areas did not meet the original requirement established for the FIP and added that the application timeline would need to be extended in order for new applications to get the required contractor bids for the program. Councilmember Viagran did not support extending the deadline or changing the eligibility at this time as there could be other areas that would be included if there were new eligibility guidelines.

Councilmember Viagran noted that this was American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding which needed to be awarded and spent quickly. She recommended other funding for FIP to be included in the FY 2024 Proposed Budget with revised guidelines so that other businesses could apply.

Councilmember Castillo acknowledged that many businesses had already applied but there was a change in leadership in Council District 7 which left those businesses out of the discussion, so she supported adding the three new Council District 7 corridors. Councilmember Castillo requested information about the current applications including applicants per corridor and council district. Bradshaw stated that staff had not begun their detailed review of the applications, but most applications received so far were from Council District 1.

Councilmember Whyte stated that he was pleased that the Northeast Corridor was included in the program and expected those businesses to apply. Councilmember Whyte suggested that every

council district should be fairly represented during these processes and supported the request from Council District 7.

Chair Pelaez clarified that this was ARPA funding so it would be heard only by the Committee and not full the full City Council.

Councilmember Castillo moved to add the three Council District 7 corridors and update the timeline accordingly. Councilmember Whyte seconded the motion.

Councilmember Viagran suggested that other council districts not included in the program should be given an opportunity to add corridors to the program.

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve with the addition of three council district corridors and an updated timeline. Councilmember Whyte seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Castillo, Whyte
No: Viagran
Absent: Rocha Garcia

3. Briefing and possible action on a Professional Services Agreement with Texas A&M University - San Antonio in the amount of \$96,712 for a Study of Early Learning. [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Sarah Baray, Ph. D., CEO, Pre-K 4 SA]

Dr. Sarah Baray, Chief Executive Officer of Pre-K 4 SA, provided background on the proposal to study early learning with the intent to determine which areas of the city had a lack of high quality affordable childcare also known as a childcare desert. Baray reported that a Request for Proposals was issued to local research institutions and she recommended the proposal from Texas A&M University San Antonio to conduct the study; noting that they were the only applicant.

Baray stated that the study would include a statistically representative sample of licensed childcare centers, registered homes, Head Start, and Early Head Start, Pre-K 4 SA and independent school district offerings. She noted that the study would cost \$96,712 for a one-year term.

Councilmember Viagran commented that there was a tremendous need for childcare and hoped the information from this study would help our community access more grants and determine types of childcare needed, so she supported the contract.

Councilmember Castillo expressed support for the study and need for childcare during non-traditional work hours as well as for City employees.

Councilmember Whyte asked why the City could not study the need in-house, why an in-depth study like this was needed, and how it would help the community. Baray stated that the data was not all owned by the City so it needed a third party to survey the providers rather than relying on how much capacity their license allowed since many providers did

not serve the numbers they were licensed to provide due to many factors. Professor Melissa Jozwiak from Texas A&M University-San Antonio stated that the study would help identify effective strategies for San Antonio broken down by categories and sectors and noted that the study would take six to nine months.

Chair Pelaez acknowledged the need to study the childcare system in San Antonio noting that children who had quality early learning achieved better outcomes as adults. Chair Pelaez supported the study but asked how the information would be utilized. Baray stated that the report would first go to the early learning stakeholders' group and that working group would develop strategies and an action plan to meet the needs identified by the study.

Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez noted that trying to get more women in nontraditional fields was an important goal and noted that childcare and early learning was an initiative not only by Pre-K 4 SA but also Ready to Work and the Department of Human Services.

Chair Pelaez supported the contract with Texas A&M University as they had not received these contracting opportunities in the past.

Councilmember Castillo recommended review of childcare providers that could serve children with disabilities including autistic children.

Chair Pelaez closed the discussion by requesting a motion.

Councilmember Whyte moved to Approve. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Viagran, Castillo, Whyte

Absent: Rocha Garcia

ADJOURNMENT

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

Approved

Manny Pelaez, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk