

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021, 11:30 AM
VIA BOARD ROOM; 1021 SAN PEDRO & VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Members Present: Robert Abraham, Member
Pedro Alanis, Member
Jeff Arndt, Member
Kristin Davila, Member
Shirley Gonzales, Chair
Ed Hinojosa, Member
Taneka Nikki Johnson, Member
Amanda Lee Keammerer, Member
Sarah Sanchez, Member

Members Absent: *None*

Staff Present: Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Juan Valdez, *Mayor's Office*;
Teresa Myers, *Mayor's Office*;
Jameene Williams, *City Attorney's Office*;
Veronica Garcia, *Center City Development Office*;
Christopher Lazaro, *Center City Development Office*;
Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Allison Beaver, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Rachel Smith, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Crystal Grafft, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Sharon Chan, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*

- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Shirley Gonzales at 11:30 AM.
- **Roll Call** – Allison Beaver, Housing Policy Manager, called the roll. At the time when roll call was conducted, eight (8) members were present representing a quorum.
- **Public Comments** – Chair Gonzales announced there were two (2) residents signed up to speak for public comment.
 - 1) **General** - Peggy Pena, resident of District 3, stated CBS News covered how the mass evictions were creating a strain on the local law enforcement in San Antonio. She noted a specific portion of the report focusing on Michelle Medina, her newborn baby, and her partner, Josh. Due to the pandemic, Josh lost his job and their family moved into temporary shelter at the Salvation Army. Pena requested from the Commissioners keep their decisions focused on helping families like Michelle and Josh, those living on the streets, and the working poor.
 - 2) **Agenda Items 3, 4, 5** - Jessica O. Guerrero
Staff note: Ms. Guerrero withdrew her request for public comment.

Staff note: The Housing Commission deadline for submitted written comment is 24 hours before the meeting. The reason for this is because it takes 24 hours for comments received in a language other than English to be translated. Speakers can leave a voicemail to be played during the meeting up to three hours before the meeting. Speakers can sign up to speak live during the meeting virtually up to 3 hours before the meeting or to speak during the meeting in person up until the meeting starts. Speakers who call past the deadline are given the opportunity to submit a written comment to be included in the minutes but not read during the meeting, and to sign up in advance for the following meeting.

1. Item #1: Approval of Minutes for the August 25, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Robert Abraham motioned to approve the Minutes for August 25, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Arndt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Item #2: Briefing and Possible Action on the Next Steps for Subcommittees of the Housing Commission and Subcommittee Appointments.

Gonzales requested Sara Wamsley, Affordable Housing Administrator, to present.

Commissioner Sarah Sanchez entered the session at 11:40 AM.

Wamsley stated that two subcommittees were approved during the Commission's Annual Retreat: the Dashboard & Annual Report (DAR) and the Public Engagement & Outreach (PEO).

Applications for PEO Community appointees were accepted from July 14, 2021 through September 10, 2021. Fifteen applications were received and reviewed by the Commissioners who had volunteered to be part of the subcommittee. Five individuals were selected as Commissioner-recommended appointments.

Wamsley stated the DAR's charge is to produce an annual report and dashboard to measure NHSD's progress regarding the Housing Policy Framework (HPF) and Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP). She noted that Commissioners Alanis, Arndt, and Sanchez have been informally serving on the DAR and the subcommittee currently has one position unoccupied.

Commissioner Nikki Johnson motioned to appoint Commissioner Pedro Alanis, Commissioner Jeff Arndt, and Commissioner Sarah Sanchez to the Dashboard & Annual Report Subcommittee. Commissioner Robert Abraham seconded.

Gonzales nominated Commissioner Amanda Lee Keammerer to serve on the DAR subcommittee.

Commissioner Nikki Johnson amended her motion to appoint Commissioner Pedro Alanis, Commissioner Jeff Arndt, Commissioner Sarah Sanchez, and Commissioner Amanda Lee Keammerer to the Dashboard & Annual Report Subcommittee. Commissioner Robert Abraham seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Wamsley continued the PEO's charge is to efficiently engage the public relating to HPF and SHIP policy development, giving a voice to the traditionally underrepresented. In the community recruitment process, fifteen applicants applied and five have been selected as recommendations by Commissioners serving temporarily on the PEO subcommittee.

Gonzales invited the recommended community appointees to speak. Mike Lozito introduced himself and noted his work at Bexar County and justice for all populations, particularly with special populations. He looked forward to working on the PEO. Tajanieke Gardner introduced herself. (*Audio cut out*) Laura Salinas-Martinez introduced herself. (*Audio cut out*)

Commissioner Jeff Arndt motioned to appoint the following individuals to the Public Engagement and Outreach Subcommittee:

Commissioner Appointees	Community Appointees
Robert Abraham	Melanie Cawthon
Kristin Davila	Tajanieke Gardner
Ed Hinojosa	Mike Lozito
Nikki Johnson	Laura Salinas-Martinez
	Christina Wright

Commissioner Sarah Sanchez seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Item #3: Briefing on updates proposed to the City of San Antonio's City Fee Waiver Policy to align the program with the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP).** Gonzales asked Veronica Garcia, Assistant Director of CCDO, to present.

Staff note: Ms. Garcia has since been promoted and is now Deputy Director of NHSD.

Garcia stated the City is proposing updates to the Fee Waiver Program to align with the SHIP objectives by providing more subsidies to affordable projects. She noted the Program's goals are 1) to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing and 2) encourage growth of small businesses, legacy businesses, and targeted industry projects. The current budget for this program is \$5.5 million (\$2.5 million from City's General Fund, \$3 million from SAWS) and can support an average of 2-4% of the total development cost. Garcia stated that 1,783 housing units, 32 small businesses, and 6 historic buildings have been assisted since January 2019.

Garcia stated that to align with SHIP, the policy would require multifamily developments applying for the Program to have 50% of all housing units reserved at or below 60% AMI. The current policy requires 25% of units to be reserved. She noted the policy would also apply to the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADU) as recommended by the RBAH. The policy update would include a different approval method to prioritize equity criteria as opposed to a first come first serve basis. Processing fees for the Program would increase to \$200 per fee waiver (\$500 for multifamily or industry projects) and \$100 per renewal. Homeowners applying for the Program would be exempt from the fee.

Garcia noted the work to update the Program started in May 2021 with stakeholder roundtables that gathered input from nonprofit housing providers, city departments, community organizations, and development partners. A community engagement survey is currently being conducted targeting neighborhood representatives, nonprofit housing developers, and other nonprofit partners. The proposed updates will be presented to the Planning & Community Development Committee on September 23, 2021, and City Council tentatively in November.

Gonzales inquired if additional funding could be requested for the Program and/or if the different funding pools could be combined to fund all categories. Garcia noted previously the Program assisted mainly inner-city developments, but the policy shifted. She reflected that though the fee waivers were funded by the General Fund, there were other sources of funding that could be coordinated and layered with other departments as well with the Housing Bond funds, if approved by voters. Gonzales asked how the SAWS fee waivers were implemented. Garcia stated when the fee waiver is approved, the waiver is given to the applicant and passed from them to SAWS. No physical funds are exchanged to the City or applicant from SAWS.

Commissioner Abraham asked Garcia to explain the fee waiver process regarding Pinkerton's Barbeque restaurant. Garcia noted that the fee waiver was assisted by the Economic Development Department (EDD) as it was requested by a small business and was granted \$25,000 in fee waivers from SAWS only. Abraham asked for clarification regarding the small business fee waivers. Garcia stated that as the approved fee waivers are only good for a year, EDD proposed a moratorium on a portion of their small business fee waivers so they could be allotted to the affordable housing category.

Commissioner Arndt inquired about the splitting Affordable Housing (AH), owner-occupied rehab (OOR), and historic rehab into separate categories. Garcia noted that no OOR project has been assisted by fee waivers yet mainly due to the fact all waivers were granted on a first come first serve basis and AH developers applied first for their developments. The category separation is to allow homeowners the ability to request waivers without competing with developers. She also stated CCDO will coordinate with NHSD when an OOR is approved. The homeowner's information will be reviewed for fee waivers to streamline the process. Arndt asked for clarification regarding ADU fee waivers and short-term rentals (STR). Garcia stated there were additional criteria and stipulations for ADUs including that the ADU cannot be used as a STR or bed and breakfast. The waiver applicant also reserves the unit for an occupant at or below 80% AMI qualification. Arndt asked for clarification on the AMI limit for applicants. Garcia noted that the existing policy requires 25% of rental housing be at or below 80% AMI and another 25% be at or below 60% AMI; the proposed policy would have 50% of rental housing be at or below 60% AMI.

Commissioner Davila requested clarification on the Targeted Industry budget allocation. (*Inaudible*) Garcia noted Slide 28 showed the Targeted Industry budget was cut for FY2022 since the Program budget was reduced. She stated that Targeted Industry has 20% of waivers allocated so if funding is restored next year, the amount for Targeted Industry will return. (*Inaudible*) Garcia noted that more funding for the AH fee waivers was initially cut due to the larger proportion the category is allocated. Davila asked what the outcome was for the unused FY2020 waiver funding. Garcia stated that about \$1.5 million in waiver funds that were unused by March 2020 were reallocated to higher priority needs of the pandemic.

Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification regarding the unused waivers. Garcia stated that if there were leftover funds in the Targeted Industry category, funds would be rolled over to the next fiscal year. Typically for AH waivers, they are all dispersed; however, if the developer does not use the full amount or cancels their project, the funds can be returned and granted to other projects. For SAWS impact fee waivers, only \$5 million can be rolled over each year so funds over this amount would be lost. Garcia noted that EDD

agreed to reallocate their Small Business fee waivers to the AH category as they have enough rolled over funds available for their current recipients. Johnson inquired how often fee waivers funds were returned in to the OOR and Historic Rehab category. Garcia noted that due to the previous placement of OOR and Historic Rehab in the same category as AH, very little was able to be awarded to homeowners. Garcia stated that this inequity was recognized, and a separate category created to allot dedicated funding and monitoring for potentially additional funding.

Commissioner Alanis inquired if one of the fee waiver terms would request developers to accept Section 8 Vouchers from incoming tenants. Garcia confirmed that the new proposed updates would require developments to accept Section 8 Vouchers. Alanis asked Priority B on Slide 27 be moved higher on the list as many projects attempting to focus on reaching deeper affordability need the extra funds to accomplish their development.

Commissioner Keammerer inquired, regarding Slide 29, if homeowners were exempt from both the initial and renewal fees. Garcia confirmed they were exempt from both fees. Keammerer asked how applicants are notified of their renewal. Garcia stated as the initial application is online the applicant's email is required. With their email, notifications of the applicant's renewal are sent in increments of 60 days, 30 days, and 7 days before their waiver expires for renewal. As OOR applicants work with City staff during their rehab, staff will also notify the homeowners if needed. Keammerer asked if a posted mail option could be available for individuals that do not check their email often. Garcia stated a postcard option had not been explored initially but could be. Keammerer inquired, regarding Slide 27, what priority was set for OOR and Historic Rehab. Garcia stated no priority has been set as the OOR and Historic Rehab category would continue being a first come first serve basis. She noted that the majority of the OOR waivers would be less than a thousand and potentially a few thousand dollars for a Historic Rehab. Typically, there would not be a large influx of applicants as projects emerge through the year.

Johnson inquired how homeowners discover the Program. Garcia stated that outreach is done through NHSD, nonprofits, Council offices, neighborhood associations, and social media to alert the public of the Program. Garcia stated as homeowners apply for their OOR, the fee waiver application will be tied to their application for seamless processing. Johnson inquired what other methods NHSD uses for outreach. Ian Benavidez, Assistant Director, stated that Council offices, hosted events, and social media posts are traditional methods used for outreach to inform the public of rehab and repair programs. Johnson asked if applications are available at NHSD offices and the financial and housing recovery center. Benavidez noted that homeowners can apply in person and online and can request more information from housing navigators or 311.

Commissioner Arndt exited the session at 12:31 PM.

4. Item #4: Briefing, discussion, and possible action on a project evaluation framework to be used to evaluate 2022-2027 Housing Bond projects.

Gonzales asked Jaime Lalley Damron, Housing Bond Administrator, to present.

Damron shared that the mayor had requested the Commission develop an evaluation framework for the 2022-2027 Housing Bond. The evaluation framework would be used by staff as a screening tool when reviewing and selecting projects. It would not outline the programs to be voted on, include specific funding amounts or percentages, nor a barrier to

the development and preservation of affordable housing. Those tasks fall under the purview of the Community Bond Committee and Council. Damron read the following draft:

Projects supported with bond funding must:

- Advance the priorities established in the SHIP;
- Exemplify the SHIP's core values of affordability, choice, quality, and accessibility; and
- Connect vulnerable populations to stable housing.

The Housing Commission recognizes the tremendous need for affordable, safe, and healthy housing options for individuals and families with limited financial resources, and those who are most vulnerable to housing instability and involuntary displacement.

Projects that serve the 95,000 households identified as most vulnerable must be prioritized.

Commissioner Davila continued:

Connectivity

Housing bond projects must promote resident choice and improve connectivity among people, resources, and opportunities by:

- Connecting vulnerable populations with access to stable housing
- Integrating high-speed, reliable, and affordable internet and mobile infrastructure into design plans
- Creating walkable and ADA-accessible pathways to public transit options
- Providing appropriate and comprehensive supportive services for renters and homeowners
- Connecting residents to neighborhood-serving amenities and institutions, cultural assets, regional centers, and economic corridor

Public Health

Housing bond projects must work to improve public health outcomes by:

- Resolving issues with mold, lack of sanitary facilities, or other environmental hazards
- Reducing structural and physical barriers to mobility on existing housing units
- Increasing accessible options for persons with disabilities on newly constructed units
- Increasing access to green spaces and hike/bike trail systems
- Ensuring residents have increased access to health services and facilities

Resiliency

Housing bond projects must foster community resiliency by preserving and creating affordable housing that:

- Meets the needs of economically disadvantaged populations, including front-line essential workforce, older adults, low-income families with children, persons experiencing homelessness, person with disabilities, and veterans
- Provides for energy efficient design, sustainable water reduction features, resilient building and weatherization practices, residential storm water control features, and/or other innovative and bold strategies to reduce environmental impacts of development and lowers energy costs for residents and homeowners
- Upgrades major mechanical and structural systems (foundation, roof, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC) up to code in older housing stock
- Educates residents about how to maintain and protect their housing asset(s)

- Must not cause direct, involuntary permanent displacement of residents

Davila stated that the criteria in the evaluation framework may increase project costs, but the purpose of the bond and evaluation criteria is to encourage bold and innovative affordable housing.

Keammerer noted that the mayor's pillars of connectivity, public health, and resiliency have different meaning to different people and requested feedback if the draft criteria encapsulate Commissioner expectations effectively, so NHSD can utilize the framework.

Damron stated the community input process has started on the evaluation framework. The draft can be viewed and commented on through the Housing Commission's webpage or by voicemail at (210) 207-5329. A virtual public meeting will be held on September 29, 2021, at 11:30 AM for feedback. Public comment and feedback would be open until October 1, 2021. The feedback would be incorporated and presented with possible action at a Commission Special Session before being shared with the Citizen Bond Committees.

Gonzales thanked Damron and Commissioners for their efforts on draft and inquired if Abraham would lead the PEO and their efforts for community feedback. Abraham agreed.

Johnson recommended that under Connectivity, proximity to VIA bus stops be listed as well.

5. Item #5: Briefing, discussion, and possible action on the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan draft and next steps.

Gonzles requested Benavidez to present.

Benavidez stated the Housing Policy Framework (HPF) established the City's affordable housing priorities and set ten-year housing production and preservation goals that are now predicted to exceed their goals in five years. The five HPF action items (develop a coordinated housing system; increase City investment in housing; increase affordable production, rehabilitation, & preservation; protect & promote neighborhoods; ensure accountability to the public) broadly noted subjects to cover when strategizing but did not fold in interdepartmental coordination. The SHIP will include additional goals and strategies related to the HPF's vision, a recalibration of previous production and preservation goals, an action plan for commitment and accountability across agencies and sectors, and work centered around the community's lived experiences.

Benavidez stated that the SHIP's analysis identified 95,000 households that were most vulnerable and required affordable and financial assistance. Of this total household number, the majority 47% are living at or below 30% AMI (42,000 Homeowners, 53,000 Rental). Two methods can be used to address the cost burden: 1) increase/subsidize household incomes, 2) production and preservation of more income-restricted units. He noted that many programs are currently in place to assist and lower the cost of housing such as housing vouchers, down payment assistance, and childcare services programs. Benavidez stated that SHIP goals would lean more towards the second method of production and preservation of income restricted units. Base strategies that would assist in this method would be gap financing, tax credits, local rental vouchers, OOR, and rental rehab. He noted there were naturally affordable units and ADUs existing in private sector development as well.

Benavidez stated tracking for public assistance and job training will be key continuous improvement for the SHIP strategies. The breakdown to the SHIP approach on assisting the 95,000 households was noted as follows:

Category	Targets
Private Sector	25,898 Units (2,590 Units/year)
Public Assistance	17,210 Households (1,720 Households/year)
Job Training	23,798 Households (2,380 Households/year)
Affordable Housing	28,094 Units (2,809 Units/year)

Benavidez stated an expansion of deeper affordability in the targets is set in the 10-year goal as opposed to the broad action item. He noted the homeowner targets for the 0-50% AMI range totaled over 70% of the total units for production and preservation. For rental targets, similar targets are reflected as 6,897 units are targeted to be produced under the 0-30% AMI range, 1,000 of which will be permanent supportive housing.

Benavidez noted that the SHIP has developed thirty-six strategies to implement but will keep the five action items from HPF as focus areas. Once the strategy formatting has been finalized, the detailed list will be sent as a follow up to Commissioners, stakeholders, and Council for review. The formatting will include icons (to identify equity principles, strategy complexity, and timeframe), initial identified factors, goals, and background summary.

The next steps for SHIP include: finalizing strategies in September, hosting public engagement meetings in October and November, returning to the Commission along with the Planning and Land Development Committee before seeking final approval before Council, SAHT, SAHA, and Bexar adoption consideration.

Alanis requested clarification regarding Slide 53 and the private sector inclusion. Benavidez stated naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) would be the main area in the private sector for individuals that aren't able to locate subsidize housing units. The downfall of NOAH units would be that the affordability is not perpetual but can still be a solution for the most vulnerable as older housing tends to become more affordable. Alanis highlighted Slide 55's breakdown of rental AMI targeting and praised the deeper affordability targets. Benavidez noted that the targets can also be revisited by the Commission and adjusted.

Keammerer highlighted Slide 50 regarding cost burden being addressed by increasing household wages. She noted that as the nation's 7th largest city, San Antonio must do more to increase wages or residents will continue to have housing issues. She inquired regarding Slide 52 if there were any data/trends of the residents that have been assisted by the identified programs. Benavidez stated that NHSD and DHS implemented housing counselors to assist residents and track the programs and agencies residents are directed to. However, as the program was recently launched there is a small amount of data.

Keammerer stated as the SHIP is a long-term plan, success stories could help sustain funding efforts and public engagement since as the issue is intimidating and suggested it as a future briefing topic. She also noted that there are additional job training programs that can be tracked apart from the Ready to Work program and suggest identifying and tracking them.

Keammerer suggested regarding Slide 53 that the numbers could be integrated to a potentially more manageable yearly target breakdown and emphasize how the issue is being addressed with urgency. Benavidez agreed that the additional job training programs could be incorporated and that the goal numbers could be elaborated on to account for initial implementation compared to advanced progress. Keammerer noted the PSH unit goal and expressed interest in receiving updates/briefings.

Commissioner Sanchez exited the session at 1:41 PM.

Davila noted that with the target of 28,094 affordable housing units needed, skilled labors such as electrician, plumber, finish carpenters will also be needed and suggested a holistic approach by including skilled trades in the job training program. She inquired regarding Slide 55 if the 4,547 preservation units are currently subsidized or a combination of units that have expiring subsidies and NOAHs. Benavidez stated that the preserved units are a combination and that NOAHs would be requested to sign a restrictive covenant with the preservation to ensure affordability.

Commissioner Alanis moved to approve the SHIP draft. Commissioner Davila seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Item #6: Directors Report.

Item #6 was deferred in the interest of time.

Gonzales noted that the next workshop could include a briefing on the job training program, the census in relation to housing, bond categories, land banking, land trusts, and fee waivers.

Keammerer noted a previous topic regarding meeting time and the potential of having further discussion for a later time to allow for more public engagement. She requested to have an update regarding the Chief Housing Officer position.

Closing-

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 1:46 PM.