

**COMMUNITY HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND CULTURE  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 12, 2021 10:00 AM  
CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING ROOM – CITY HALL**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, <i>Chair, District 7</i> Councilmember Mario Bravo, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Phyllis Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Teri Castillo, <i>District 5</i>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	None
<b>Staff Present:</b>	David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Monica Hernandez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Debbie Racca-Sittre, <i>Interim City Clerk</i> ; Aurora Perkins, <i>Deputy City Clerk</i> ; Jennifer Herriot, <i>Metro Health</i> ; Colleen Swain, <i>Director, World Heritage</i> ; Arisa Larios, <i>World Heritage</i> ; Doug Melnick, <i>Director, Office of Sustainability</i> ; Homer Garcia III, <i>Director, Parks &amp; Recreation</i> ; Melinda Cerda, <i>Assistant Director, Parks &amp; Recreation</i> ; Tony Forshage, <i>Parks Manager, Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Dr. Steve Nivin, <i>Economist</i> ; Melissa Bryant, <i>Chair of the Technical Committee of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan</i>

**Call to order**

Chair Sandoval called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM.

Chair Sandoval announced that the Government and Public Affairs Department had convened a group to review community engagement and SA SpeakUp with the new portal expected to launch October 30, 2021.

Chair Sandoval thanked Councilmembers McKee-Rodriguez and Viagran for serving on the ad-hoc committee to review candidates for the Municipal Golf Association Board. She noted there were 27 candidates reviewed and that the ad-hoc committee had recommended 11 for interviews which were to occur at the next meeting of this Committee.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

**1. Approval of minutes from the September 23, 2021 Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee.**

Councilmember Viagran made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2021 Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee Meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Councilmember Bravo arrived at 10:14 AM after approval of the Minutes.

## **Briefings and Possible Action Items**

### **2. City of San Antonio's United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creatives Cities Network Gastronomy program** [Lori Houston, Colleen Swain, Director, World Heritage Office]

Colleen Swain, Director of the World Heritage Office introduced new Special Projects Manager for Gastronomy Arisa Larios, Economist Dr. Steve Nivin, as well as an intern visiting from Thailand. Ms. Swain noted the partnership with Metro Health Department and Office of Sustainability. Ms. Swain provided an overview of FY2021 key accomplishments as well as Visit San Antonio's marketing in the area of gastronomy. In November 2021, a four-year report will be due to UNESCO, which includes a survey of the community, an annual economic impact report. Ms. Swain outlined the three program priorities of 1) Food Security and Food Justice, 2) Traditional Knowledge and 3) Sustainability. Ms. Swain listed the Sustainable Development Goals as well as programming.

Chair Sandoval invited Dr. Nivin to further describe the economic impact of the program. Dr. Nivin explained there was a decline in the culinary industry in 2020 due to COVID-19 and explained the industry would be changing as businesses assess their needs and options. Part of the research for the Creative City of Gastronomy was to assess how local restaurants adapted to the pandemic and help them move forward, explained Dr. Nivin.

Councilmember Viagran encouraged her Council colleagues to set the agenda of what they wanted to take forward to full Council with creative ideas for the program which could include nominating restaurants for the designation as well as getting more involvement from the community. Councilmember Viagran also noted that Visit San Antonio had been a good partner and they could provide more information on how they have supported the creative cities designation. Councilmember Viagran applauded the priorities of food security and food justice.

Councilmember Bravo commended Ms. Swain on the work that had been done and expressed support for collaborations with other creative cities and showcasing San Antonio as a Creative City of Gastronomy.

Councilmember Castillo requested that the next round of surveys include a question for restaurants regarding their access to, and need for, more emergency relief business grants.

### **3. The Trust for Public Land ParkScore and 10 Minute Walk to a Park Initiative.** [David W. McCary, Assistant City Manager; Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation]

Homer Garcia III, Director of Parks and Recreation Department, provided a background on the ParkScore program as well as the City's ranking which improved in 2021 over the prior year. Mr. Garcia explained the criteria for ranking which included: access, investment, acreage, amenities, and equity. Mr. Garcia outlined strategies for working toward ensuring all residents had access to a park within a 10 minute walk which included partnerships with schools making their recreational amenities

available to the public when not in use by the school, as well as City assets such as utility/drainage easements and park land acquisition/expansion or donations.

Chair Sandoval requested more details on how the scores were calculated which Mr. Garcia said he would provide to all committee members. Chair Sandoval was concerned that pedestrian access to parks was not always a part of the park project and whether the 10 minute walk to a park took into consideration safety and access to sidewalks. Mr. Garcia explained that his department had been working with Anthony Chukwudolue, Deputy Director of Public Works Department, to assess the pedestrian walkways leading to parks including the condition of the sidewalk and access to shade trees.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for a definition of a park which Mr. Garcia replied that the Trust for Public Lands ParkScore used “access to public green space” as their definition, and also described the Parks and Recreation Department’s collaboration with other departments and partners to ensure green spaces reflected what the community wanted and questioned why the numbers were improving. Mr. Tony Forshage, with Parks and Recreation Department explained that staff coordinated to bring on some new school parks through a memorandum of understanding, adding 40 campuses that may have been used by the community for years, as well as reporting Bexar County acquisitions. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a comparison, district by district, of the parks in the 10 minute walk; Garcia described the Texas Public Land’s heat map and said he would send a link to the map to the Committee.

Councilmember Viagran was pleased that shade would be taken into consideration but wanted the City to consider more public restrooms and identify restrooms on the map. Land acquisition of flood plain property could be an opportunity, noted Councilmember Viagran, and added that she wanted to ensure the City consider the sensitivity of creek ways as well as infrastructure that already existed within a green space so residents would not have unrealistic expectations.

Councilmember Castillo favored the 10-minute walk to a park but was concerned about the sidewalk gaps and asked for a list of gaps near parks so the City Council could work to improve the sidewalk gaps and requested a comparison of park space by income as well as race. Mr. Forshage explained that 54% of lower income neighborhoods were within 10 minutes of a park as compared to 40% for higher income neighborhoods, communities of color had 33% more park space than majority white communities. Councilmember Castillo asked about activations such as fitness in the park and expanded programming beyond traditional parks into open green spaces or other partner locations within the neighborhoods. Mr. Forshage told the committee if they had any specific partners or events they would like him to consider, to let him know.

Councilmember Bravo asked if the City had its own parks score based on criteria that was specific or unique to San Antonio to which Mr. Garcia replied that the Texas Public Land’s score was utilized as well as community-wide surveys, annual budget process, and will develop new data driven metrics. Councilmember Bravo asked the Parks Department to bring forward their draft criteria to the committee to help define them. Councilmember Bravo suggested that parks should stay open after sundown when it would not be too hot, which Mr. Garcia noted that most parks close at 11:00 PM.

**4. City of San Antonio's Energy Efficiency Fund and Municipal Building Energy Benchmarking Program.** [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, Office of Sustainability]

Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, introduced Melissa Bryant, Chair of the Technical Committee stating she would be available for questions after the presentation. Mr. Melnick provided a briefing on the City of San Antonio's Energy Efficiency Funding and Municipal Building Energy Benchmarking Program. Mr. Melnick listed the SA Climate Ready Plan Strategies for municipal buildings and provided an overview of the history of the Energy Efficiency Fund as well as standard operating procedures and metrics relative to the Fund. Mr. Melnick mentioned next steps including incorporation of equity into the process.

Chair Sandoval asked when the Committee could be briefed on the Public Works Design Criteria. Assistant City Manager McCary suggested these would be individual briefings once the Public Works Department had more time to prepare. Mr. Melnick stated that he has provided Public Works with a high-level framework of priorities to be incorporated into their review matrix. Additionally, Mr. Melnick stated the Municipal Green building policy will be updated in FY22.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for a description of the process to develop the Bond criteria and expressed concern that the Bond was moving quickly and this could be behind schedule. Mr. Melnick explained that the detailed level work would happen once the projects were approved, so the timeline was on target. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended using the Bond to achieve carbon neutrality and requested the number of municipal facilities. Ruben Flores, Assistant Director for Building and Equipment Services confirmed the City had 600+ buildings and structures.

Councilmember Castillo wanted clarification on energy efficiencies that could be done on Police Station West to improve efficiency and questioned where the City Council Chambers ranked on energy efficiency, as it seemed to always be very cold. Mr. Melnick replied that these buildings would be reviewed.

Councilmember Viagran asked if Unified Development Code (UDC) changes could impact Green Building Policies. Assistant City Manager McCary confirmed that the process could include this information. Councilmember Viagran noted that Public Works was finalizing the 2022 Bond list with \$19 million for new substation in District 3 and recommended taking this excellent opportunity to create the substation as a model of a state-of-the-art new-build that is both green and accessible to persons with disabilities. Councilmember Viagran suggested that there were several City-owned buildings that housed arts organization and requested a breakout of the list of facilities by type and suggested making these old arts and culture buildings more energy efficient and sustainable.

Councilmember Bravo asked why Claude Jacob, Metro Health Director, was not at the meeting as the minutes indicated that he would provide a monthly briefing, and also expressed concern about the minutes. Assistant City Manager McCary explained that Mr. Jacob would come to the meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup> which would be the second one for the month of October. Councilmember Bravo stated that he recently toured the Credit Human Building and noted that although that building was larger than their old building, they indicated the cost was only 5% more than a traditional building but is much more energy efficient and recommended the City use the Credit Human Building as a model for green

buildings in the 2022 Bond which would also help with workforce development and a shift in the San Antonio brand to energy efficiency and sustainability.

**5. The City of San Antonio's Municipal Solar Strategy to reach 100% renewable electricity for municipal buildings and facilities.** [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Douglas Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer]

Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer provided a briefing on the item, described economic, public health and innovation benefits of using renewable energy. Mr. Melnick reported on the progress that has been made as well as national recognition for San Antonio as being first in Texas for solar in Environment Texas Research and Policy Center's Shining Cities 2020 Report and 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Mr. Melnick described the city's current solar assets and mentioned next steps including a Request for Proposals process.

Chair Sandoval introduced the topic and thanked Councilmember Bravo for requesting the briefing. Chair Sandoval asked about the type of contract and procurement that would be employed for the project and requested it be limited to local vendors that meet workforce and other criteria. Assistant City Manager McCary suggested only allowing local would be challenging but stated staff would meet with Finance Department to determine if these criteria could be included. Chair Sandoval asked if all departments would be included, or just those on the list and what was the role of CPS Energy. Mr. Melnick replied that all facilities would be assessed and that CPS Energy was a key partner to review the Request for Proposals (RFP) and help score them.

Councilmember Castillo noted that some homeowners had experienced solar vendors offering to install solar for free, only to end up with a lien on their home. Mr. Melnick reported that he would look into this issue and determine how his department could assist residents.

Councilmember Viagran asked for the new public safety station to be included in this study of adding solar, and also supported adding points for local vendors as well as consideration of how adding solar panels would impact the community in 15-20 years.

Councilmember Bravo supported incorporating energy efficient designs into new facilities, mentioning the St. Mary's Street substation could be reviewed to ensure it included energy efficient heat pumps, etc. Councilmember Bravo recommended getting the RFP out next month and urged Mr. Melnick to get started quickly. Mr. Melnick said the consultant, RMI, recommended more time for site assessment. Councilmember Bravo suggested phasing the project to get started earlier. Mr. McCary did not want to cut down on the time for community engagement and stated he would come back and lay out a timeline for this as to not shortchange the public engagement process which should happen before the RFP was issued. Councilmember Bravo noted that he also supported prioritizing local and did not want to cut down on the community engagement process either.

Chair Sandoval cautioned against prioritizing this item at the cost of the Bond policy-work that needed to be done by the Office of Sustainability.

No action was taken on Item 5.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez motioned to reconsider the minutes. The motion was not seconded.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 PM.

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*Ana Sandoval, Chair*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre,  
Interim City Clerk*