

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

10:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

Members Present: Councilmember Ana Sandoval, *Chair, District 7*
Councilmember Mario Bravo, *District 1*
Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *District 2*
Councilmember Phyllis Viagran, *District 3*
Councilmember Teri Castillo, *District 5*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. **Approval of minutes from the November 9, 2021, Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee meeting.**

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the November 9, 2021 Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee Meeting minutes. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by those present. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez arrived after approval of the minutes so was absent for the vote.

Public Comments

None.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. **The City's COVID-19 response and preparedness updates by Metro Health staff. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude Jacob, Director, Metro Health]**

Claude Jacob, Director, Metro Health Department, provided an update on the COVID-19 cases

and other statistics noting that the community's overall risk level remained at "Mild." Jacob described outreach and rates for vaccination and provided a map of vaccination sites overlaid with the equity index. Jacob provided information on comparison cities, showcased advertising and outreach efforts and reported on the new Omicron Variant of COVID-19. Jacob closed his presentation by recommending continued masking and other precautions during the holidays when persons gathered with those outside of their household.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Sandoval congratulated Metro Health for receiving Nationally Accreditation and encouraged everyone to get their COVID-19 booster shot.

Councilmember Castillo asked about changes in service levels which Jacob replied that all City of San Antonio testing and vaccination sites were still open.

Councilmember Viagran asked if there was a process for helping individuals who have lost their vaccination card. Jacob stated that Metro Health was assisting with replacement cards process. Councilmember Viagran asked for demographics of the population that were receiving breakthrough infections (people who had received the vaccine but still got infected). Jacob stated that Metro Health was studying this information currently. Councilmember Viagran asked for written updates during the holiday break. Jacob stated that the COVID-19 updates will continue through the holiday both online on the Metro Health website and on local news.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if there were some school districts with higher or lower vaccination rates for school age children. Jacob said he could provide a district-by-district report to the Committee but noted that the data was a few weeks old due to collection processes. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested information about mixing vaccination brands of boosters which Jacob replied that it was recommended to stay with the same brand of vaccine, however, the Centers for Disease Control has stated it was fine to mix and match, however, side effects to the vaccine were very individualized.

Councilmember Bravo asked the percentage of the total population that was vaccinated, which Jacob replied 67% of the total population was vaccinated. Councilmember Bravo encouraged continued use of gift cards as an incentive for those to get vaccinated and offered to assist with door-to-door outreach and schedule a pop-up vaccination clinic in Council District 1. Jacob noted that if City Council Offices provided a couple of week lead time, they would be able to host a pop-up clinic without issues. Councilmember Bravo requested information on vaccination rates by school district. Jacob replied that he would provide a district-by-district report to the Committee

Chair Sandoval asked for the recommendations for masking. Jacob stated that persons indoors were recommended to mask-up.

No action was taken on Item 2.

3. The Municipal Setting Designation (MSD) application for the former SA Light property at 420 Broadway. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Razi Hosseini, Director, Public Works]

Nefi Garza, Assistant Director of Public Works provided an overview of the MSD program and provided information on the specific property under consideration. MSD was described as a tool for redevelopment and provided the difference between MSD and Brownfields. Garza provided the steps for the MSD process including the restrictions. Garza described the property and the details surrounding the MSD application for the SA Light property at 420 Broadway.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Sandoval announced that the briefing on the Brownfields Program had been postponed and would occur at the January 2022 meeting. Chair Sandoval stated that she was glad to see there was a component of public outreach, she asked about outreach to neighbors, the number of participants at the community meeting and comments received. Garza stated that five individuals attended and that the comments were more related to the location of the plume. Garza noted that the mailings went to the physical address so renters may have received but offered to do some door-to-door outreach for renters. Garza stated that the public hearing would occur during the City Council meeting. Chair Sandoval asked Garza to ensure renters received the notice of the public hearing. Chair Sandoval recommended the City Council Public Hearing presentation should provide a summary of the outreach efforts.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if input was provided by the Sierra Club and Edwards Aquifer. Garza replied that their input was considered when the MSD program was developed.

Councilmember Castillo requested information on the cost of the MSD process as it related to proposed 2022 Bond projects.

Councilmember Viagran moved that the Committee recommend the MSD application for the SA Light property at 420 Broadway to City Council for consideration and approval with the condition that outreach was extended to tenants within 2,500 feet of the property and that the City Council presentation would provide a summary of the outreach efforts. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

4. The Parking and Transit Public Comment Pilot Program. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Laura Mayes, Assistant Director, Government and Public Affairs]

Laura Mayes, Assistant Director, Government and Public Affairs provided an overview of the

pilot program which included an assessment of public interest and actual use of parking and transit assistance, testing of the registration process and a marketing plan. Mayes described the parking pilot project and introduced Leroy Alloway with VIA Metropolitan Transit who described the Transit Assistance Pilot. Mayes provided an overall timeline for the pilot program.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Sandoval requested follow up surveys to those who attended the meetings and place the notice on the agendas. Chair Sandoval understood that starting at the Wednesday Public Comment was a starting point but encouraged expansion to City Council A Sessions on Thursdays before major votes on key issues such as the Economic Development Guidelines, 2022 Bond and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended the program include City Council A Sessions and asked if the free parking could be extended for meetings that last more than two hours. John Jacks, Director of Center City Development and Operations Department, stated that the parking time could be extended if the meeting lasted longer than two hours. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if there was a way to provide a pop-up on the website. Mayes committed to adding information in a prominent way to the SASpeakUp portal. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for explanation of the availability of parking spaces in the garage. Jacks stated the staff would need to conduct more analysis of the need for parking and availability at the City Tower Garage facility. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez also recommended that the outreach encourage carpooling and public transit as well.

Chair Sandoval explained that the intent of the program was to remove barriers when it most mattered and declared that it mattered most for A Session meetings when decisions were being made.

Councilmember Bravo requested that the assistance allow flexibility for large turnout at City Council meetings on contentious issues and asked staff to anticipate longer wait times. Councilmember Bravo recommended that instead of a pilot, the parking should simply be rolled out to all meetings and then “tweaked.” Mayes cautioned that staff did not want to tell the community that it was available and then not be able to provide it, so recommended a more analytical approach so that the user experience would be a good one.

Councilmember Bravo asked if there was really a cost to the City for parking. Jacks explained that the City Tower parking garage was part of the City Tower Building Fund and added that meters now allow “pay by phone app” options.

Councilmember Castillo supported implemented the transit and parking assistance during A Session meetings and was also concerned with the limit of two hours for parking. Councilmember Castillo recommended expanding parking to other City lots and offer a blended

approach where citizens could park further away and take the VIA bus line. Councilmember Castillo recommended providing the parking pass after the meeting when it was determined how long of a pass was needed, rather than before.

Councilmember Viagran supported eliminated barriers and the pilot program starting on Wednesday's Citizens to be Heard. Councilmember Viagran noted that A Session often got started late because of ceremonial items and City Councilmembers needed to help get the meeting started on time so that the two hours of parking would not be an issue.

Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager stated that the City would collaborate with VIA to broaden transit assistance to A Session, as there was less demand than with parking on Thursdays.

Chair Sandoval supported Coyle's suggestion and acknowledged that there were many moving parts to the program but requested a timeline for the program noting that her request for parking and transit was made in 2018. Chair Sandoval also asked for the creation of a carpooling program for City staff to free up parking at City Tower. Remote work for certain workers and encouraging remote work on Wednesdays. Consider dynamic price surging on Wednesdays to create more open parking spaces in City Tower on those days. Chair Sandoval requested a comparison with the City of Austin. Mayes said she would reach out to the City of Austin. Chair Sandoval requested an update in January 2022.

No action was taken on Item 4.

5. The Boards and Commissions Childcare Subsidy Pilot Program. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Melody Woosley, Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS), provided an update on the Child Care Subsidy Pilot program. Woosley provided background on the impetus for the program which included elimination of barriers for women to participate on City Boards and Commissions. Woosley presented an overview of the plan which included a parent cost reimbursement model for the program and assistance by Human Services staff if the member did not have a provider. Woosley said the childcare subsidy would be advertised to all new board vacancies and would be offered to existing board members for retention. Reimbursement would be provided for the duration of the meeting plus one hour of travel time. Woosley noted that the program began in November 2021 with the 2022 Bond Committees. Subsidy assistance was also advertised for Planning Commission vacancies in November 2021 and that Board Liaisons would be trained by February 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Sandoval was concerned that only making the subsidy available to parents who declared that they had a financial barrier might make it difficult for parents to come forward.

Councilmember Castillo suggested potential space for childcare on-site at City Tower and recommended the City ask UTSA to make their space available for childcare and use the I-35 parking for public participation at meetings.

Councilmember Viagran wanted to see childcare provided at the City Tower and was also concerned about the requirement to declare a financial need as she felt the stipend should be available to all parents so they could serve the City and be admired by their children for participating. Woosley said that the financial need eligibility requirement would only be recommended in the event there were budget constraints.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that the City's Boards and Commission Application could include a question about the need for childcare. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez was interested in expanding the program rapidly and stated that he would support additional funding if needed. Woosley stated that DHS could potentially support the program within the DHS budget if the allotted \$10,000 budgeted in the FY 2022 Adopted Budget was not sufficient.

Councilmember Bravo asked about other cities' best practices for provided childcare. Woosley described the Head Start Policy Council as the program model that was utilized noting that staff was unable to find any other cities that offered childcare assistance for serving on their Boards and Commissions.

Chair Sandoval closed the conversation by stating that she would ensure that the City Council assisted with outreach.

No action was taken on Item 5.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chair Sandoval adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.

Ana Sandoval, Chair

Respectfully Submitted

Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk