

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021, 11:30 AM
SAHA BOARD ROOM (818 S FLORES) & VIDEO CONFERENCE

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

Members Absent: Jeff Arndt, Member

Staff Present: Mark Carmona, *City Manager's Office*;
Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Michael Shannon, *Development Services Department*;
Michael Ramsey, *Workforce Development Office*;
Juan Valdez, *Mayor's Office*;
Teresa Myers, *Mayor's Office*;
Jameene Williams, *City Attorney's Office*;
Crystal Gonzales, *Development Services Department*;
Melissa Ramirez, *Development Services Department*;
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*

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- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Shirley Gonzales at 11:37 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.

Staff note: Commissioner Johnson was present for the whole meeting. At 11:47 am, she signed in on a second device to due to audio issues.

- **Public Comments** – Verónica R. Soto, Director, announced there were zero (0) residents signed up to speak 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 the Minutes from the San Antonio Housing Commission meeting on October 12, 2021.**

Commissioner Pedro Alanis motioned to approve the Minutes for October 12, 2021, Regular Meeting. Commissioner Ed Hinojosa seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Item #2: Briefing on the 2021 Unified Development Code (UDC) Amendment Process and Affordable Housing Team.**

Soto introduced Michael Shannon, Director of the Development Services Department (DSD), and stated he would present the briefing.

Shannon stated that the UDC amendment process was underway and that he would also elaborate on the new team created to help affordable housing projects. He introduced two DSD Assistant Directors, Crystal Gonzales and Marissa Ramirez. Shannon noted every five years the UDC is updated and that the last major update was in 2001. The current update was expected in 2020, but was suspended due to the pandemic and resumed in October 2021. The UDC helps define how the City's policies are implemented, essentially the rulebook for development projects. Benefits of a habitual review process include eliminating unnecessary development costs, increasing efficiencies, and reflecting changes to law or standards in planning and design. The amendment process can be initiated as well by City staff, Council, external parties (ex. neighborhoods, businesses, etc.), and certain boards and commissions. Shannon noted most amendments fall into edits, clarifications, and Rule Interpretation Determinations (RIDs) where the amendments elaborate on policies not initially covered.

Shannon stated that the UDC Amendment Process typically takes about a year as it is an extensive process with very detailed language that is discussed among community and experts alike. The current timeline for the amendment process is acceptance of amendment proposals from October 2021 to February 2022; review and discussion with the Planning Commission & Technical Advisory Committee (PCTAC) through June; final recommendations by the respective board & commissions to the Planning & Community Development Committee (PCDC) in October before heading for Council approval. Once approved, training of staff, customers, and community members would begin. Currently, DSD has briefed Council, met with other City departments, presented at neighborhood meetings, and hosted DSD Academies to help the public learn more about the process and answer questions.

Commissioner Johnson entered with a second device to help with audio issues at 11:47 AM. Commissioner Keammerer entered the meeting at 11:52 AM.

He noted that affordable housing is a prevalent topic such that an Affordable Housing Team (AHT) lead by Crystal Gonzales will be overseeing related projects through DSD for expedition with extra attentiveness. Shannon stated that DSD currently has an "UDC Updates" website that is providing information and resources for the process and noted printed material regarding the update is being provided in libraries, senior centers, and at the DSD main office.

Chair Gonzales recognized Commissioner Johnson and Kemmerer's attendance. She also acknowledged Jordan Ghawi from the Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development & Preservation subcommittee (RBAH). She asked for clarification on the size

of DSD's Affordable Housing Team. Shannon noted that there were five team members budgeted for FY2022 but they would reevaluate and add if necessary. She inquired if there was an account of the top three items people request from DSD. Shannon noted that permit requests are high, particularly redevelopment and remodeling permits due to weather and structural issues. He also noted development permits are the highest they have been in the last fifteen years. Gonzales inquired if there was data for the market value of the houses requesting permits. Shannon stated that DSD is not allowed by State law to base permit fee structures on the value of the project only by the project size. He noted DSD could follow up at a later meeting with data regarding the permits requested from DSD (ex. type and size of projects). Gonzales also requested if the data also could have a section regarding the specifics within Loop 410. Gonzales inquired how the Public Engagement and Outreach subcommittee (PEO) could help to assist in gathering more awareness for the UDC process. Shannon noted that DSD works weekly with NHSD particularly with the urgency of the amendment recommendations. He recommended that PEO and DSD could review current outreach methods and make suggestions. Sara Wamsley, Affordable Housing Administrator, noted that the RBAH subcommittee has been meeting on recommendations. Commissioner Johnson currently bridges the gap between the RBAH and PEO and is assisting in coordinating the public engagement before it is brought the full Commission.

Commissioner Davila applauded Shannon and his team for the AHT creation as it aligns with the coordinated housing system.

Commissioner Alanis requested clarification between building codes and the UDC as it pertains to visibility and new products and where should concerns be addressed. Shannon noted that the codes and UDC are linked as the UDC is Chapter 35 of the building codes. The City Codes will also be considering changes/amendments in the upcoming year. He stated if there are suggestions, DSD would be happy to consider them and identify the proper chapter to place them.

Commissioner Keammerer inquired if there were any permit trends regarding manufactured homes and comparing them to other metro area trends. Shannon stated that there are not any trends he has seen currently with manufactured home permits or that there had been proposed for amendments. Keammerer asked about the attendance of the DSD Academies. Shannon noted that the Academies has decent attendance around 20-25 people, but they do take the Academy out on the road beside staying at the main office to educate and answer questions that the community has.

3. **Item #3: Director's Report.**

Gonzales asked Soto to present.

Soto noted that the SHIP is in its public comment period and staff has provided draft to the Commissioners. The document is also available online and printed at the Central Library and both NHSD office sites. Following the Director's Report is a requested optional briefing on SA Ready to Work. Soto stated LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) has completed their Housing Systems Analysis and would be happy to present the findings to the Commissioners in an upcoming meeting. Currently staff are discussing with VIA how to have bus cards available for easier access to future public engagement efforts.

Soto continued with the SHIP's update regarding its timeline for public engagement. Community concern was brought in regards the comment period versus the document

length. As such, the timeline has been shifted to Monday, December 6, 2021 at 9:00 AM and additional public meetings have been scheduled for December 4, 2021 at Mission Branch Library and the Spanish-language only meeting site is still being finalized. Council date has also been moved to December 16, 2021.

Soto stated regarding the Housing Bond that a fourth meeting has been added for November 30, 2021, at 6:00-8:00 PM and will also be held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The final meeting will still be held on December 8, 2021.

She concluded with an update on the HOME – ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) that public comment period will begin on November 29, 2021, and conclude on January 10, 2022, with a public meeting held on December 1, 2021, and public hearing on December 15, 2021. Soto noted that homeless services and services for victims of domestic violence are also being consulted during the period.

Gonzales asked for clarification about the timeframe between the SHIP's Council date and Commissioner review of final edits. Soto noted that the final document would be emailed to Commissioners and would potentially convene if there were any major edits.

Alanis inquired if the HOME-ARPA funding was in Phase 1 of the funding release. Soto stated that the local recovery funding was being portioned in phases where the HOME funding was in a different pool and distributed by HUD. Alanis asked for clarification if the Phase 2 local recovery funding could be used in affordable housing projects. Soto confirmed that the Phase 2 funding could be used in housing projects as well as housing assistance programs such as EHAP (Emergency Housing Assistance Program). Alanis also noted that other national communities have used the funding for housing preservation alongside affordable housing developments and hoped it would be a discussion point in the ARPA townhalls. Commissioner Abraham confirmed that in the ARPA townhall he attended included affordable housing in its survey questions.

Davila noted that the SHIP highlighted supportive services as a key component, but bond dollars are not able to be used for this purpose. The HOME-ARPA funds would be a good source to support and further the SHIP goals. Davila thanked staff for their work on the three public engagement meetings that had concluded. She noted that the second and third sessions facilitated more discussion and clarify questions from the community and suggested an informational session on the affordable housing subsidy process to educate the broader community. A follow-up session with developers on provisions to ensure affordability in their housing developments. Gonzales agreed with Davila and stated the sessions would greatly benefit the Housing Commission's outreach. She suggested since staff had many items to also coordinate, Commissioners volunteering to coordinate with staff would be helpful. Davila volunteered to coordinate with staff.

Davila recommended if a location was still needed for the SHIP public meeting, Casitas de Villa Corona on 339 SW 39th Street had a large community room with Wi-Fi and may be good to used.

4. **Item #4: Briefing related to the SA Ready to Work Program.**
Gonzales requested Mike Ramsey, Executive Director, present.

Ramsey introduced the Workforce Development Office and stated his previous work in Tampa, Florida with educational systems to rescale and upscale working adults for economic mobility. He stated one of the goals with the SA: Ready to Work Program (SA WORX) is to help people be able to afford housing. Four guiding principles of the SA WORX are as follows: Focused Approach, Alignment, Equity, and Collaboration. A focused approach to strategically reduce poverty through targeted solutions for maximum impact. Alignment of high-quality training and education with employer needs for driving long-term success. Alignment is a key principle. Equity lens on a workforce program should consider benefits and burdens to historically underserved populations so people can support their families. Ramsey stated that the issue is too broad in scope for a silver bullet solution but collaboration with the community can ensure a productive and positive ecosystem is developed.

Ramsey stated the goals of SA WORX are to help underemployed, unemployed, and underserved residents. They align training and education with current and anticipated high-demand, well-paying careers, and secure careers for participants. Objectives of the program are to increase access to industry-recognized certifications; provide wrap-around services and emergency funding to ensure success; increase collaboration with workforce ecosystems; and promote process accountability and adaptability. Individuals in mind when creating the program were individuals that had earned a high school diploma or equivalent, people of color, women, persons with prior justice system involvement, people with disabilities, and people negatively impacted by the pandemic. Target occupations for participants would include priority sectors for the San Antonio area including but not limited to healthcare, IT/cybersecurity, construction, education, aerospace, manufacturing, oil & gas. Conversations with employers will help build this talent management process in assessing the local workforce demand, closing the skills gap between training and the current market.

Ramsey noted wraparound support services would reduce issues with life situations and circumstances, the highest barrier to participant completion. The support service model would have three levels in accordance with what individual challenges are faced. Types of wraparound support services include other program eligibility, career exploration, college and career readiness, mentoring, financial literacy, and job referral and placement. Emergency services offered include daycare, transportation, supplies, record expungement, rent/mortgage assistance, food, and clothing. Ramsey stated an estimated \$200 million will be raised with the voter-supported 1/8 cent sales tax funding. However, with the sizable cost for tuition and initial wraparound support, referrals will still be needed for healthcare, long-term assistance, and legal services.

The SA WORX process would begin with community outreach to motivate target populations. Ramsey highlighted that many of NHSD's target audiences overlaps with SA WORX and they can coordinate efforts. Moving forward to a centralized standardized intake process to ensure better assistance from community agencies and resources with a tailored case management guidance. Lastly, employer engagement is vital to tie all the elements to a program that builds a bridge for successful workforce. The SA WORX Employer Pledge assists in understanding employers current and future needs. He stated the Pledge would request employers give a level of commitment to hiring from the participants as they have been instilled with training based on the needs identified.

Ramsey stated the current Train for Jobs SA program, developed in response to the pandemic's employment issues, had interest from over 13,000 residents. Over 3,000 individuals had entered the program and more than 800 participants completed their training and will enter the workforce before the program sunsets on December 31, 2021. The program showed a long-term interest and demand from the community and a way to efficiently establish the connections with employers.

Davila noted that in a previous meeting the SHIP (Strategic Housing Implementation Plan) would need more qualified skilled contractors for housing production and rehab and expressed she was glad to see that construction and skilled trades were a part of the areas targeted in SA WORX. She recommended that SA WORX be linked in one of the SHIP recommendations about a holistic financial counseling program. Davila also recommended to have proactive case management outreach with participants as they may be reluctant to initially verbalize their hardships.

Johnson requested clarification regarding if the cash assistance would be similar to the initial program. Ramsey concurred that cash assistance would be available for emergency expenses of participants. Johnson inquired if the assistance would be distributed by the case managers. Ramsey stated the assistance would be administered by the case management agencies that are currently being vetted by the City. Johnson asked regarding the turnaround time of assistance during the emergency. Ramsey noted he could not state a specific timeframe, but the assistance would be distributed as soon as possible to avoid detriments to the participant's success.

Commissioner Sanchez welcomed Ramsey to San Antonio. She requested elaboration regarding the core services presented on Slide 37 (ex. Partnership structure with community colleges, list of certifications obtainable, enrollment, and program duration). Ramsey stated that the program covers a spectrum of training from 6-week certifications to 4-year degrees. Training catalogs are being developed based on target occupations that will be approved by the Workforce Advisory Board. Sanchez inquired if an individual expressed interest in a certification would they be paid to go through the program. Ramsey stated unlike Train for Jobs SA, SA WORX would not have a financial stipend during the training process. Participants heading into a degree program should be eligible for Pell grants and the gap not covered through a financial aid tool pre-existing in the community would be covered through the program.

Keammerer noted that the presentation lacked a program background and timeline of when items would be executed. She stated the background and timeline may have worked with the Train for Jobs SA slide (Slide 46) as she was not familiar with the previous iteration. Keammerer also recalled that the SA WORX program was to start in 2021; however, the program appears to require more work before launch and stated a visual would help display the progress and continuation. Ramsey thanked Keammerer for her feedback and noted the presentation would be updated. He noted the Train for Jobs SA program launched at the height of the pandemic which continues in operation to date. SA WORX was voted and approved in November 2020 and would not start until early 2022. Keammerer noted since inception, Train for Jobs SA has placed 695 participants with new jobs but inquired how many in the city were currently under/unemployed. Ramsey noted the unemployment rate for San Antonio is at 4.8% but would follow up with an exact number of individuals. Keammerer stated a baseline of data would be beneficial to see how much the community

has improved and which professions participants were interested in and being placed towards.

Keammerer requested the timeframe of the case management contract. Ramsey noted that the process is ongoing and would be completed in early 2022 but couldn't further elaborate as negotiations are in process. Keammerer noted it was unacceptable for organizations that had submitted proposals on the project not being able to contact Councilmembers regarding critical workforce development issues for a year since the bid had closed because of the undetermined status.

Commissioner Abraham welcomed Ramsey to San Antonio. He stated SA WORX aligns with the Commission's charge and as Chair of the PEO he would like to collaborate and find more outreach opportunities for the program. Abraham inquired if there would also be apprenticeships for trade work (ex. plumbers, electricians, etc.). Ramsey stated apprenticeships were underutilized nationally and was hopeful they will direct more towards the tried-and-true method.

Johnson inquired if the tuition was to be paid with the stipend. Ramsey noted that tuition would be paid with tuition vouchers, but the stipend is only through the Training for Jobs SA program. Johnson inquired if the stipend was able to pay for anything the participants needed. Ramsey confirmed participants of the Training for Jobs SA program could use the stipend for individual needs.

Gonzales requested clarification regarding the oil & gas industry as a targeted sector. Ramsey stated the targeted industries were based on local workforce boards' analyses. Gonzales inquired about if any green related jobs were identified. Ramsey stated no green jobs were listed in the locally identified sectors but noted representation of green energy and construction subsections. Gonzales asked if an individual without a high school diploma could still apply. Ramsey stated that they would help everyone who requests assistance. Gonzales inquired about the coordination efforts between SA WORX and NHSD. Ramsey stated coordination was in the initial phase of discussions but would follow up to strategically formalize the concepts.

Abraham inquired regarding the second chance system with prior justice system involvement on a prior bullet point (Slide 36) and to what degree would individuals be accepted. He also noted one of the PEO community representatives works in the Bexar County Justice system (Mike Lozito) and would like to connect Ramsey and Lozito. Ramsey appreciated the connection point and stated the degree of acceptance is mainly determined by the employers as each has a different level of tolerance.

Davila offered to connect Ramsey with various affordable housing properties' resident services coordinators as an avenue to recruit participants for SA WORX. Ramsey thanked Davila for the connection.

Closing-

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 1:08 PM.