

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Governance Committee 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6  
Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**City Hall Complex**

The Governance Committee convened a regular meeting in City Hall at 10:13 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Ron Nirenberg, *Mayor, Chair*  
Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Member*  
Manny Pelaez, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

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

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Governance Committee meeting on August 17, 2022.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Approve the minutes from the Governance Committee meeting of August 17, 2022. Councilmember Pelaez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage  
**Absent:** Rocha Garcia

### Briefing and Possible Action on

#### 2. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) regarding the expansion of the City of San Antonio's Non-Discrimination Ordinance. [Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Jennifer Mata, Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Department]

First Assistant City Attorney Elizabeth Provencio recognized the new Director of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Office Dr. Jennifer Mata, Samantha Smith, Civil Rights Manager, and Assistant City

Attorneys Camila Kunau and Krista Cover. Provencio also recognized the partnership with Human Resources and the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department.

Provencio provided an overview of the current Ordinance which included protections against discrimination for hiring, board appointments, housing and all contracts with the City and included enforcement and penalties. Provencio provided some comparison of City policies regarding non-discrimination in the areas of: public accommodation, employment (both internal and external), housing including the oversight of Fair Housing, and the creation of a Human Rights Commission. Provencio recommended review of the Ordinance every five years.

Provencio recommended referring the Item to the Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee (CHECC) for review and development of a Human Rights Commission and updated Ordinance.

Mayor Nirenberg recognized Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez, sponsor of the Council Consideration Request. The Councilmember spoke of his own employment discrimination experience and the intent of the Council Consideration Request (CCR) to increase protections from discrimination in the areas of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, age or disability. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that this expansion should improve experiences of those communities related to employment, housing, and public spaces. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez thanked everyone for their support and requested referral of the Item to CHECC.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she was pleased that the City Council had created the position of Civil Rights Manager and she supported the update of the Ordinance and referral of the Item to CHECC.

Councilmember Courage supported reviewing the Ordinance every five years and the intent of the Ordinance to protect our residents in an updated manner and supported referral of the Item to CHECC.

Mayor Nirenberg recalled that the vote on the NDO was one of his first votes on the City Council. He commented that many strides had been made over the years. Mayor Nirenberg stressed that the various Boards and Commissions involved would continue to have their policy conversations, but when it came to human rights, the new Human Rights Commission should be consulted and oversee the discussion. Mayor Nirenberg expressed concern about how Neighborhood Associations (NA) might be impacted. Provencio mentioned that the City's relation to NAs focused on registering with the City but stated that the specifics of how the policy would work with individual groups would be ironed out at CHECC. Mayor Nirenberg closed the discussion by adding that it was important to ensure that the Ordinance was fully enforceable.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Refer to Committee. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage  
**Absent:** Rocha Garcia

**3. Council Consideration Request by Councilmembers John Courage (District 9) and Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) regarding the City's Vacant Building Program [Lori Houston,**

Assistant City Manager; Shanon Shea Miller, Director, Office of Historic Preservation]

Shanon Miller, Director of the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), described the existing Vacant Building Program (VBP) which was created with the goal to address the root causes of vacancy, increase public safety, and encourage economic development by spurring owners of vacant buildings to bring their properties back into productive use. She stated that the VBP included properties in the Central Business District, historic districts and landmarks, a half-mile buffer around active military bases, and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones. Miller explained that the expansion would require more staff and resources and recommended referral of the expansion of the Program to the Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC) to oversee program expansion by OHP.

Councilmember Courage commented that there were more vacant and abandoned buildings in other areas of the City that lowered property values, created economic costs, and negatively affected neighborhoods, therefore, he recommended expansion of the program Citywide to address safety and code issues while creating more housing for our community.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked about the Budget and staff for the VBP and potential cost of expansion. Miller stated there were currently five staff working on the Program and the cost would be determined in a phased approach but noted that the Program currently covered about one third of the City.

Mayor Nirenberg suggested that since many of the buildings were commercial, the staff could develop a program to connect vacant building owners with small businesses. Mayor Nirenberg also supported the development of housing since some vacant structures were residential.

Councilmember Courage read Councilmember Rocha Garcia's remarks into the record which included leveraging the VBP for affordable housing and creating an online registry of all vacant homes and lots in the City and a recommendation on staffing levels to support the expansion.

Councilmember Courage moved to Refer the Item to the PCDC for further discussion and development. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage  
**Absent:** Rocha Garcia

**4. Update to the City of San Antonio's Commission on Veteran Affairs' By-laws** [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Juan Ayala, Director, Military and Veteran Affairs]

Tim Woliver, Assistant to the Director for the Office of Veteran's Affairs, presented an overview of the current by-laws and recommended changes to the by-laws which included changing the name of the Commission to the "Veteran's Advisory Commission," focusing the duties of the Commission to develop a strategic plan to advise the City's Elected Officials rather than provide direct assistance to Veterans. Woliver noted that the by-laws would also add Councilmember appointed non-voting Community Liaisons for each City council district and would require meetings every other month rather than quarterly.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda thanked the Council District 6 Veteran's Advisory Commissioner Philip Berkley and members of the Commission in attendance at the meeting and asked Woliver about the

work of the Subcommittees.

Woliver invited Council District 8 Commissioner Tracy Potts to speak. Potts mentioned the creation of the by-laws, Strategic Planning and Hidden Heroes Subcommittees. Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported creation of Community Liaisons that could assist the Commission if the appointed individual could not attend a meeting but clarified that they could not vote.

Councilmember Courage supported the update to the by-laws and the name of the Commission and commended members for looking at development of a Strategic Plan. Councilmember Courage also supported clarification of the duties to focus on policy rather than direct assistance. He thanked the Council District 9 Commissioner Humberto Quintanilla for his service.

Councilmember Pelaez thanked Tracy Potts for his service and recommended that the Commission assist with advising on organizing Veterans for disaster response.

Mayor Nirenberg recognized the Mayor's appointee to the Commission Richard Delgado, Jr. and asked if the Mayor's Office would have a Community Liaison. Woliver confirmed that it would have a Community Liaison. Mayor Nirenberg closed the discussion by thanking staff and the Commission for their work.

Councilmember Courage moved to Approve. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage  
**Absent:** Rocha Garcia

## **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 10:57 AM.

**Approved**

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***Ron Nirenberg, Mayor***

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**Debbie Racca-Sittre**  
***City Clerk***