

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

10:00 AM

City Hall

The Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee convened a regular meeting in City Hall beginning at 10:14 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Ana Sandoval, *Chair*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

Members Absent: Teri Castillo, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes for the October 27, 2022, Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve the minutes of the October 27, 2022 Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Sandoval, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran
Absent: Castillo

Councilmember Castillo entered the meeting at 10:27 AM.

Public Comments

There was no Public Comment.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing on the SASpeakUp Resident Portal. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Alanna Reed, Director, Communications & Engagement]

Alanna Reed, Director of Communications & Engagement (C&E), introduced Assistant Director, Laura Mayes, who provided an update on the SA SpeakUp Portal which launched in November 2021 as a one-step resource for residents to engage with the City and included surveys, comments, contacts, registration of meeting attendance and emails. Mayes presented a view of the Portal and described its utilization by residents and staff. Mayes described the after engagement process and ongoing work that included additional staff training, transitioning City Council to digital marketing tools and a master calendar of events and meetings that would be easily searchable online.

Reed introduced the department's Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET) that had been moved in the FY 2022 Budget from the Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) to the C&E Department. Reed provided an update on the department's engagement efforts including maintenance of the neighborhood registry which was planned to be updated on January 1, 2023, and oversight of the Neighborhood Leadership Academy which was currently taking applications for the January through June 2023 Training Academy.

Reed stated that the department was developing engagement capacity with trainings for staff and City Council, collaboration with city council offices, development of an "engagement playbook," and new ways to engage with the community through a partnership with the Office of Innovation.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Viagran requested a breakdown of survey responses and contacts by council district. She expressed concern about the digital divide and noted that many Council District 3 residents preferred print versions but if they were digital, they expected them to come from her office. Councilmember Viagran did not think the master calendar was feasible at the present time because her council district projects would get lost in a city-wide calendar.

Councilmember Viagran requested a progress report on the move of the former NET from NHSD to C&E and asked if there were specific council district assignments. Councilmember Viagran expressed support for the Neighborhood Leadership Academy and offered to assist with outreach related to the neighborhood association update.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that public engagement had always been his priority and congratulated the staff for making progress. He asked when he might have an opportunity to provide input on the systems, particularly the texting platform, and noted that each council district might have different needs. Mayes stated that there was one additional year on the contract with five additional one-year renewals. Reed stated that the innovation and the proposed playbook should offer an opportunity to refine the system. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended making the web platform more mobile device friendly.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she was happy to see many of her Neighborhood Associations listed but suggested improved outreach to ensure they re-registered. Staff stated that most organizations were outreached through an email contact list but they also utilized a phone list with three attempts made utilizing each method and added if the email or phone number was not working, they would send by mail. Councilmember Castillo commended staff on their innovative social media posts.

Chair Sandoval requested a breakdown of the contract as well as the opportunities to determine who was participating in the program. Mayes stated that the contract included an email sign up, events master calendar, survey, Customer Relationship Manager, Agenda Management System, and the Boards & Commissions Applications process. Mayes confirmed that contact and demographic information was confidential and kept specific to subscribers for each service/department. Chair Sandoval recommended that customers have visibility of what was on the Portal before they created an account so they could see what was available before they created one.

Chair Sandoval recommended that the NET ensure close coordination with the Neighborhood Associations and suggested developing opportunities for two-way dialogue. Reed confirmed that C&E was developing more training and networking opportunities. Chair Sandoval commented that there were some associations with low participation or more challenges due to their circumstances and recommended that C&E take into consideration the equity component of engagement.

Chair Sandoval stated that every city council office had a system to channel complaints back to City staff and suggested that the NET should expect to encounter these types of interactions. Chair Sandoval added that often the city council offices were handling issues because something did not get resolved by staff. Chair Sandoval closed the discussion by clarifying that the two-way dialogue was needed, not simply provision of information. Reed confirmed that the two-way dialogue was a goal of the program, as well as clear, concise, and consistent communication that would help establish trust.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing on the Solid Waste Managing Department's community engagement efforts for the upcoming route rebalancing and proposed success measures. [David W. McCary, CPM, Assistant City Manager; David Newman, Director, Solid Waste Management Department]

David Newman, Director of the Solid Waste Management Department, provided an overview of the Route Rebalancing Initiative which was driven by San Antonio's rapid growth, included reduction of larger routes that took longer than 10 hours or an additional trip to the landfill, however, the rebalancing included no changes to service levels. Newman stated that 330,000 of the 370,000 customers had a change in the day of pickup and all customers received two postcards providing notice. The department also placed 24,000 stickers on carts in Council District 1 in a pilot project.

Newman reported that a website was created to help customers find their collection day and CPS Energy sent text messages to affected customers who had signed up for texts. He reported that

several news outlets reported on the collection day change.

Newman stated that the department hosted four open house events each Saturday in October 2022 which was advertised on TV, radio, and social media. Newman reported that total attendance was over 400 at the open house events and also reported on the results of how successful the change in route had been as it just started this week.

Chair Sandoval commended the department on their communication strategies and asked if they had a playbook. Josephine Valencia, Solid Waste Department Assistant Director, stated that their communications manager collaborated with other departments.

Councilmember Viagran stated that her collection day changed but recommended stickers on the cart stating the pick-up day for that cart. She also stated that it would take some time to get everyone used to the new days. Councilmember Viagran recommended optimization of service and efficiencies so rates would not need to be raised. She also requested more information on the Holiday collection schedule.

Councilmember Castillo reported that her neighbors all adjusted to the new date and supported the new infographics on social media, noting that her team was able to re-post easily.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that his collection day did not change but he commended the department for their excellent communications.

Chair Sandoval asked whether the moratorium on CPS Energy cutoffs impacted Solid Waste Revenues. Newman stated that the department paid CPS Energy for their collection services, CPS Energy paid the Solid Waste Department up front, and then billed the customers so if the customer did not pay, they would owe CPS Energy and have a bad debt with them. Newman mentioned that annually, the department paid CPS Energy for bad debt as an adjustment within the administrative fees.

No action was required for Item 3.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Sandoval adjourned the meeting at 11:21 AM.

Approved

Ana Sandoval, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk