

City of San Antonio



Minutes Governance Committee 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Chair

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

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

9:00 AM

City Hall

The Governance Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Media Briefing Room at 9:04 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*
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*
Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Member*
Manny Pelaez, *Member*
John Courage, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from February 21, 2024.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the February 21, 2024 Governance Committee meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Manny Pelaez (District 8) and Councilmember Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) on creation of the Innocence Reclaimed Project. [Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Dr. Jennifer Mata, Director, Disability, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Department]

City Attorney Andy Segovia provided background on the Council Consideration Request (CCR) to

provide expungement education and assistance programs to help eligible residents to eliminate barriers to equity. He stated that the CCR aimed to remove barriers that limited economic, social, physical, and mental well-being.

Segovia stated that the CCR requested a funded and staffed program to provide legal assistance, continuous city-wide public engagement, and wrap-around services. Segovia requested 60 days for staff to review the CCR and return to the Governance Committee.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the Innocence Reclaimed Project noting that there was opportunity to connect with Ready to Work and other programs.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda spoke in support of the project as an economic and workforce development tool. She asked if the plan was to partner with non-profits to implement the project. Segovia stated that they would review options during the 60 days. Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the staff recommendation.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that the plan would be to identify legal partners and contract with them for the expungement work as well as to provide information about options. Segovia stated that the communication and education piece would be a part of the program that the City Attorney's Office could manage but non-profits would need to provide the legal services.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended an income qualification for the expungement legal services and connection with the San Antonio Police Department's team for identification recovery.

Mayor Nirenberg supported the staff recommendation to review options and overall supported the CCR goals in the name of economic development.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Continue the Item for staff to review recommendations. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

3. Council Consideration Request by Councilmembers Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) and Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) on a Citywide Traffic Analysis. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Catherine Hernandez, Director, Transportation Department]

Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez provided background and an overview of the CCR which included conducting a citywide traffic analysis that would analyze existing traffic patterns and identify areas of the City that experienced traffic related issues, determined recommendations to support long-lasting improvements, and would be used to support the strategic development of appropriate traffic calming measures.

Assistant City Manager Sanchez recommended that the Transportation Department collect and review all past traffic analysis performed by the City and other municipalities and then determine costs and a timeline although this was a monumental task for such a large city. Assistant City Manager Sanchez recommended referring the CCR to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to determine next

steps.

Mayor Nirenberg recognized Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez, author of the CCR, to speak even though he was not on the Governance Committee. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez spoke in support of the CCR and its referral to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported staff review of the existing studies and referral to the Transportation Committee.

Mayor Nirenberg and Councilmember Courage supported the staff recommendation.

Councilmember Courage moved to Refer to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

4. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Teri Castillo (District 5) on Updating City Codes for Used Automobile Recycling Parts, Recyclers, and Metal Recycling Entities. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Shannon, Director, Development Services]

Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez provided background and an overview of the CCR including Current Chapter 11 Fire Prevention Codes and Chapter 16 of the City Code. Assistant City Manager Sanchez recommended the creation of a stakeholder group to develop recommendations and refer the CCR to the Planning & Community Development Committee (PCDC).

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia acknowledged the work of the Councilmember and residents to take control of their neighborhoods. She noted that the bulk of these recycling plants were in Council Districts 3, 4, and 5. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported moving the Item forward to PCDC.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the convening of neighbors but also industry representatives and recommended that the Item should go to a B Session for City Council to hear after the Committee completed its work.

Councilmembers Pelaez and Courage supported the CCR and review of the City Codes.

Mayor Nirenberg recommended a regular update of City Codes. He asked if Monterrey Iron and Metal incinerated metal or processed hazardous materials noting that some residents in the audience had posters of smoke and fire. Director of Development Services, Mike Shannon, stated that the law required hazardous materials to be removed before processing. Segovia noted that hazardous materials were regulated through Federal Laws. Mayor Nirenberg asked what changes were being considered. Shannon stated that they would review Chapter 11 which was the Fire and Safety Code and Chapter 16 which included inspections. Mayor Nirenberg recommended a good cross section of stakeholders to be included in the discussion about the City Code updates.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Refer to the Planning and Community Development Committee and to a B Session. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

5. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Teri Castillo (District 5) on Designation of a Memorial Way for Jovita Idar. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Shannon, Director, Development Services]

Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez provided background and an overview of the CCR requesting memorial designation of a portion of a street which had a prescribed process to be brought before the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC), Planning Commission and then City Council A Session on May 16, 2024.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the CCR. Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the designation so long as businesses were not impacted.

Mayor Nirenberg spoke in support of the CCR and the continued work with the Mexican American Civil Rights Institutes to recognize the work of Latino leaders.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Recommend and Forward the CCR to the full City Council A Session on May 16, 2024 for consideration. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Courage

Absent: Pelaez

6. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) regarding Teacher Homebuyer Assistance Program [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Neighborhood & Housing Services]

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston provided background and an overview of the CCR which had a goal to incentivize home ownership for teachers. She stated that the City had forgivable loan programs for first responders, employees, and low-income residents (known as HIP 80 and HIP 120) and the programs were managed by the Neighborhood Housing Services Department (NHSD). Assistant City Manager Houston stated that there was capacity within the HIP Programs to support teachers and recommended referral of the CCR to the Planning & Community Development Committee (PCDC) to further define the scope of the program and determine funding levels.

Mayor Nirenberg recognized Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez, author of the CCR to speak even though he was not on the Governance Committee. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez spoke in support of the CCR and its referral to PCDC or Community Health Committee (CHC).

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Courage expressed concern that some CCRs were not within the realm of what the City could or should do such as homebuyer assistance for teachers that worked for other government entities and these funding initiatives might need to be a voter referendum.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested allocating a limited amount of funds for this program and supported the referral to PCDC.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested clarification regarding whether the intent was for first time home buyers and supported this as an incentive for people to enter the teaching profession. Assistant City Manager Houston clarified that it was only for first time homebuyers. Councilmember Cabello Havrda expressed concern regarding the budget and the cost for the program but stated that it was a necessary program. She requested a review of what school districts offered.

Councilmember Pelaez supported the program to incentivize more people to become teachers which was similar to the Firefighter and Police programs. City Manager Erik Walsh agreed and added that there was also a civilian employee program. Councilmember Pelaez recommended expansion of the program to include bilingual and special education teachers at private schools.

Councilmember Courage recommended a pilot program for teachers rather than simply setting up a new program.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that he wanted to support public school teachers and reiterated the importance of voting to ensure that the State set wages that kept up with the cost of living and suggested that it was not appropriate for local communities to take up the slack from the State. He did not want to set up an unrealistic expectation because this could be a very expensive program and could cause disappointment if the City could not help everyone because we did not have the funds.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Refer to the Planning and Community Development Committee. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

7. Council Consideration Request by Councilmembers Manny Pelaez (District 8) and Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) on a Crisis Nursery Program. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston provided background and an overview of the CCR to help families in crisis with emergency child care. She stated that staff would explore establishment of a cost-free, short-term, emergency shelter for children whose families were experiencing a crisis which could include: sudden hospitalization, fires, homelessness, domestic violence, mental health or family issues.

According to Assistant City Manager Houston, proposed services would also include family preservation services and connection to wraparound care and the program model would offer grassroots community outreach and training with the goal of abuse prevention, and serve as a partner to other entities. She recommended referral to Community Health Committee.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Courage commented that there were many children living in poverty and would argue that they were always in crisis and this CCR could be far reaching and very expensive and also suggested that this might be a voter referendum issue, so he recommended close examination by the Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the CCR.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the crisis nursery program and noted that other cities had programs run by non-profits and suggested collaboration and assistance for those already doing this work.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that the plan was to provide a safe place for victims of domestic violence and families living in extreme poverty. He noted that this would have to be in collaboration with a non-profit.

Mayor Nirenberg was interested in this program as a tool to fight domestic violence.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Refer to the Community Health Committee. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

8. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) on Prioritization of Outreach Services and Abatement in Sensitive Community Locations Regarding the Unsheltered Population. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston provided background and an overview of the CCR and recommended the continuation of current policy to abate all reported encampments within two weeks and to prioritize areas identified as sensitive including serious criminal activity; proximity to schools and residential neighborhoods; impacting drainage and flood control infrastructure; and those areas identified with biohazard material and criminal activity.

Assistant City Manager Houston recommended referral of the Item to B Session on April 11, 2024.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how this would change the current practice. Assistant City Manager Houston stated that the program had evolved to prioritize these areas and meet the timeline but this would help with absent property owners. City Manager Walsh stated that those changes were made on February 1, 2024 to put recurring sites on a schedule which was effective. City Manager Walsh felt that the entire City Council needed to weigh in and that is why he recommended a B Session briefing.

Mayor Nirenberg and Councilmember Courage supported the staff recommendation.

Councilmember Pelaez moved to Refer the Item to the City Council at a Special Session on April 11, 2024. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

9. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) on a Historic Cemeteries Master Plan. [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks & Recreation]

Assistant City Manager David McCary provided background and an overview of the CCR and reported that the last cemetery master plan was adopted in 1990 by the Parks and Recreation Department. He recommended referral to the CHC.

Mayor Nirenberg recognized Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez, author of the CCR to speak even though he was not on the Governance Committee. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez spoke in support of the CCR and its referral to CHC.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmembers Cabello Havrda and Courage supported the CCR. Mayor Nirenberg supported creation of an updated cemetery master plan.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Refer the Item to the Community Health Committee. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg Mayor

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk