

City of San Antonio



Minutes Planning and Community Development Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5
Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

Thursday, March 28, 2024

10:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

The Planning and Community Development Council Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:01 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Chair*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*
Manny Pelaez, *Member*
John Courage, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from February 27, 2024 Planning and Community Development Committee Meeting

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve the minutes of the February 27, 2024 Planning and Community Development Committee meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Pelaez, Castillo, Courage

Public Comment

Leticia Sanchez, President of the Historic Westside Coalition, spoke of concerns with residents dealing with housing crisis issues. She requested that the City provide funding for programs and initiatives for affordable housing projects and programs.

Albert Campbell objected to the reappointment of any current Building and Standards Board Members. He also spoke to the need for an increase of affordable housing options for residents.

Araceli Herrera, a resident of Council District 7, spoke to the need of affordable housing within the City of San Antonio and her desire to own her own home. She stated that more programs were needed to support affordable housing.

Blanca Rivera, a resident of the West Side, spoke on behalf of individuals earning minimum wage and struggling to live in quality and affordable housing and of the financial challenges faced by these individuals in seeking affordable housing and home maintenance.

Anna Polanco spoke in support of affordable housing programs and initiatives to assist residents to identify affordable homes. She stated that she worked with the non-profits Historic Westside Coalition and Domesticas Unidas to assist residents in the identification of affordable housing and programs to maintain their homes and spoke to the need for partnerships to work together in the delivery of housing services.

Graciela Sanchez of the Esperanza Community Land Trust, spoke of the need for representation to the Building and Standards Board that could reflect the need of the community for housing programs and services. She spoke to the increasing need of programs for home repair services and affordable homes and discussions needed during the budget process.

Ray Morales, resident of Council District 10, spoke to the need for new members to the Building and Standards Board with fresh perspectives and knowledge of true housing needs.

Luisanna Santibanez spoke of efforts of area non-profits who worked for affordable housing needs and the need for funding for more housing programs and affordable housing programs.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Consideration of one (1) At-Large appointment to the Building Standards Board. [Debbie Racca- Sittre, City Clerk]

Councilmember Viagran made a motion to continue the Item to the next Planning and Community Development (PCDC) meeting based on the concern of appointing members not currently serving on the Building and Standards Board. She stated that she was concerned regarding the comments provided during Public Comment and would like to gather more information on current board members and also give additional time to Councilmembers still needing to appoint their representatives to the Board.

Chair Rocha Garcia opened discussion on the motion to continue the Item. Councilmember Pelaez asked if there was any practical impact to the Development Services Department operations and considering of cases if the Item was delayed. Development Services Director Michael Shannon stated that there had been issues in the past with obtaining quorum due to four of fourteen positions being vacant and that when quorum was not met, cases were delayed for consideration. He added that filling of the current four board vacancies would assist greatly in obtaining quorum for meetings. He added that delays in quorum meant that fewer cases could be heard in a timely manner.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the subjects that the Building Standards Board considered other than demolition. Shannon stated that the Board not only addressed demolition cases but also small repair and maintenance cases, dangerous dwellings, and other structural issue cases. Councilmember Courage stated that he had concerns of delaying cases that dealt with safety of structures but he supported the delay for consideration of the Item.

Councilmember Castillo supported the continuation of the Item to the next PCDC meeting and asked if there were individuals being considered for the council district vacancies. Councilmember Pelaez noted that he was considering the appointment of Troy Summers if the PCDC did not appoint him to the At-Large position.

Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins noted that of the three candidates being considered for the At-Large position, only one was a possible reappointment.

Councilmember Pelaez spoke to concerns of a letter submitted by St. Mary's School of Law professor Matt Garcia addressing ethical concerns about applicants seeking reappointment to the Building Standards Board. He expressed the need for investigation of remarks in the letter by staff. Shannon stated that staff would review the letter and investigate its comments brought to the attention of the PCDC and report staff findings back to the Committee.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Continue. Councilmember Pelaez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Pelaez, Castillo, Courage

3. Briefing and possible action on the Zona Cultural Public Art Update. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Krystal Jones, Director, Department of Arts & Culture]

Arts and Culture Director Krystal Jones provided an update on the Zona Cultural Public Art Program and introduced Public Arts Program Manager Kimberly Mireles and Public Arts Project Manager Bianca Alvarez who oversaw projects within the cultural zone.

Jones noted that the Zona Cultural area was a 44 block historic area in the downtown area and encompassed not only the art installations and other City art attraction to include the Centro de Artes, Main Plaza, and San Pedro Creek. She noted that all of the art installations were inspired by community input and engagement.

Jones reviewed the public art installations in the area and first reviewed the City Tower sculpture installation on the W. Houston Street side of the Tower by artists R & R & R (Ronny Eckels, Roberth Diaz de Leon, Ryan Takaba) which was estimated to be completed by September 2024. She added that community engagement and input was received determining what kind of art was sought for the area which included lighting and a connection to Heritage Park across the street. Jones stated that the installation took its inspiration from the Tree of Life and connected nature to the area and added that the installation was supported by area partners.

Jones provided an overview of the City Tower mural which was to be located on the west side of the building (Flores Street) and was created by artist Joe De La Cruz and was expected to be completed in Spring 2025.

Jones spoke to the Plaza de Armas mural titled Iluminacion de la Plaza by artist Chris Montoya. She noted that the mural had been completed in November 2023 and illustrated the historical activity of the Plaza. She spoke to community feedback which guided the mural design.

Jones reviewed the future installation of sculptures by artist Diana Kersey at the Goodwill location at Commerce and Santa Rosa Streets. She stated that the installations were to be completed in the Fall of 2024 and would address accessibility designs of nature.

Jones provided a synopsis of the Zona Cultural Sculptures at the Santa Rosa Street median which were expected to be completed by the Fall of 2024 and designed by Rhys Munro. She noted that the sculptures were whimsical, colorful and a play on light inspired by the adjacent Market Square and would provide entertainment and inspiration to the children staying at the Children's Hospital.

Next, Jones spoke to the proposed Milam Park Mural by artist Cristina Sosa Noriega which was to be completed by September of 2025. The mural would be located on a wall on Santa Rosa Street and community input would be gathered to finalize the mural design.

Jones provided an overview of the completed Historic Market Square Mural titled The Spirit Within by artist San Antonio Cultural Arts members Ashleigh Garza and Hailey Marmolejo. She noted that the piece was completed in April 2023 which speaks to the women and history of Market Square. She stated that the Market Square tenants provided input on the design of the mural. She also spoke to the Historic Market Square underpass columns under the IH-35 overpass which was a project by the Center City Development Office to increase activation. She stated that the area pillars had murals installed that depicted the women of and activities at Market Square.

The last art installation discussed were the Commerce and Frio Street sculpture installation of El Trompo and El Papalote by artist Joe Villarreal which was estimated to be completed in May 2024. Jones mentioned that the sculptures would connect the downtown area to the West Side of the City. She noted that the pieces spoke to generational modes of entertainment and were reflective of the surrounding community.

Jones noted that the art installations came to fruition due to the collaboration of the City and community partners such as the Texas Public Radio/Alameda, Centro San Antonio, and other artistic partners.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia expressed her support of the art installations and focus of the arts within the community. She requested that staff continue to engage the community in the development of art installations within the City.

Councilmember Castillo asked if the Commerce and Frio Street installations would have an exposed base. Jones stated that the base would be exposed and have a Greco pattern used within other areas of the City. Councilmember Castillo expressed her support of the art projects.

Councilmember Viagran supported the projects but expressed concern of vandalism of the projects and requested information on maintenance and lighting of the projects. She stated that

there should be funding identified to maintain the installations.

Councilmember Pelaez inquired on the application process for artists to be considered for projects. Jones stated that there was a solicitation process for artists to apply for consideration and that the Public Art Committee interviewed artists and placed selected artists on an approved list so they could be considered for sites as identified. She noted that the Arts Commission would then approve the recommended list and had in the past requested that additional artists be considered to insure diversity.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if VIA Bus Stops were being considered within the Zona Cultural. Jones stated that staff worked closely with VIA Transit to identify possible bus stop installations taking into consideration right of way and shade issues.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if the Zona Cultural was being activated for events to include these projects. Jones stated that the projects were being considered for future activation and that an arts walk map was to be developed for the general public to be made aware of sites and other art organizations/attractions.

Councilmember Courage supported the art installations and asked if there was a fiscal allocation for the continued maintenance of the projects. Jones stated that there were built in anti-graffiti and anti-touch components to address tagging or graffiti incidents. She stated that since the projects were funded by debt, that debt funding was not to be used for maintenance but noted that City Council had approved funding for continued maintenance of all art installations and that a maintenance schedule had been created for maintenance of the projects. Jones added that partnerships with Centro San Antonio, Development Services and the Parks and Recreation Departments also assisted in the maintenance of the projects.

The Item was for briefing purposes only.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

Approved

Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk