

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2021, 11:30 AM
100 W HOUSTON & VIDEO CONFERENCE

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

Members Absent: *None*

Staff Present: Veronica Garcia, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Juan Valdez, *Mayor's Office*; Teresa Myers, *Mayor's Office*; Jameene Williams, *City Attorney's Office*; Melissa Ramirez, *Development Services Department*; Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Allison Beaver, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Mona Muro, *Neighborhood & Housing Services*; James McKenzie, *Neighborhood & Housing Services*; Jessica Lozano, *Neighborhood & Housing Services*; Siboney Diaz-Sánchez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services*

- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Shirley Gonzales at 11:41 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.
- **Public Comments** – Gonzales, announced there was (1) resident signed up to speak for public comment.
 1. **Agenda Item #2:** Celine Williams, San Antonio Apartment Association (SAAA) Interim Executive Director, stated SAAA represents over 223,000 apartments and rental homes and includes independent rental owners, property management companies, and local service companies. She expressed that working together would ensure everyone in the community would have a place to call home. Williams welcomed the opportunity to share lessons learned about owning and operating rental houses and advocating for solid housing policies and federal funding contributions. She stated SAAA recommends having solution oriented and consensus building experts on the Renters' Issue Subcommittee (RIS) to provide tactical results. Williams offered SAAA as a resource for the RIS and Commission.

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 meetings on March 23, 2022, and April 27, 2022.

Commissioner Pedro Alanis motioned to approve the Minutes from the San Antonio Housing Commission meetings on March 23, 2022, and April 27, 2022. Commissioner Jeff Arndt seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Item #2: Briefing, deliberation, and possible action related to appointments to the Renters' Issues Subcommittee (RIS) of the Housing Commission.

Gonzales requested Sara Wamsley, Housing Policy Administrator, present.

Wamsley noted that in June 2019, Councilman Treviño submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) to form a Renters' Commission to increase renter participation and representation in policy development. Staff began a public engagement process which gathered 3,600 responses from tenants and landlords. After much discussion, the Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee (CNSC) approved the subcommittee of the Housing Commission with a nine-member structure consisting of 4 renters, 3 property owners/managers, and 2 Commissioners. The Housing Commission officially formed the RIS on February 23, 2022 and appointed Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Davila to the subcommittee. Commissioners Johnson and Davila were also asked to lead the recruitment process. From the 58 applications received (42 renters, 10 property owners or managers, and 6 both), Johnson, Davila, and Chair Gonzales made the following recommendations:

| Renters | Property Owner or Manager |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Toni Cambria | Daniel Rossiter |
| Andre Greene | Tina Aranda |
| Kimbreley K Mora | Brian Birdy |
| Latoyia Coleman | |

Wamsley opened the floor to the recommended appointees to introduce themselves.

Toni Cambria, renter, works for SAMMinistries as Program Director for Homeless Prevention, Street Outreach, and Rapid Re-Housing.

Dan Rossiter, member of the Brooks Board of Directors, works for Southwest Research Institute and has been a landlord for about 5 years with a single digit number of units and was excited to provide a voice in that perspective.

Andre Greene, a renter with a disability, expressed his desire to bring the student voice into the Subcommittee.

Tina Aranda, Deputy Director of Alamo Community Group, expressed her excitement to be a part of the subcommittee process.

Brian Birdy, a broker/owner of Birdy Properties, has been in residential property management for the past 25 years and was excited to be a part of the subcommittee process.

Kimbrey Mora, SAHA resident/renter, highlighted her unique insight of the pros/cons of being a renter and hoped to bridge the gap between Housing Commission and renters' matters.

Commissioner Keammerer entered the meeting at 12:00 PM.

Wamsley stated if approved, the RIS' first meeting would be in June to discuss and establish logistical details and work plan. Future meetings will also be open to the public and RIS applicants not appointed to the subcommittee will be invited to attend and participate.

Johnson thanked all the applicants who applied and staff that helped in the process. She noted that Davila and herself were very thorough in their review of all the candidates to ensure their recommendations were focused on the charge of the subcommittee and could touch on multiple aspects.

Davila stated there were many applicants and a lot of information to review. Davila stated they made recommendations in the hopes of creating a diverse group with unique perspectives. She thanked the applicants and noted people can attend RIS and the Public Engagement and Outreach Subcommittee (PEO) meetings if they have any concerns.

Gonzales highlighted that as a former Council member, she had never seen 54 applications for a commission and thanked the PEO for their efforts. She stated she was excited to review the methodology that yielded these results. Wamsley noted that in the Commissioners' packet there was a report of the efforts taken for outreach. Gonzales inquired what venue RIS would use to host their open meetings. Wamsley noted that the members can request the City Tower conference space, but members could also request a different community space.

Alanis requested more information on the seven candidates and noted his preference for larger representation of multifamily rentals as it would be the larger community demographic. Johnson noted that Birdy managed multifamily units. Birdy noted that Birdy Properties is a part of the SAAA and NARPM (National Association of Residential Property Managers). He highlighted he was the National President of NARPM, Committee Chair of SABOR (San Antonio Board of Realtors), and a National Property Management instructor for both single family and multifamily settings. Alanis thanked Birdy for the expanded background. He appreciated the disability representation as SAHT would be having their first Sustainability and Universal Design Committee meeting and welcomed the additional perspectives.

Commissioner Sanchez inquired about the terms of appointments. Wamsley stated members would serve 2 years. Sanchez asked at the end of the term would the current members be given preference for reappointment and if there were applicants that were not recommended when would they be brought into discussion. Gonzales stated other candidate recommendations could be discussed presently. Sanchez inquired about Alen Ross, Arlene Garcia, and Allison McKay as property owner candidates. Wamsley noted that all were

abundantly qualified, and the Commissioners decided to recommend candidates with multifaceted perspectives. Davila stated the Commissioners weighed several factors of each candidate including district represented, demographic information, and diversity of background. She highlighted with Birdy's resume traversed 25 years of experience in single-family, duplexes, and multifamily. Johnson stated that the Commissioners also favored property owners that assisted in homelessness and eviction prevention. Sanchez recommended adjusting the RIS name to something more solutions oriented as "issues" has a negative connotation.

Arndt thanked the deliberating Commissioners, PEO, and staff for their hard work. Wamsley highlighted Crystal Grafft's dedicated reporting and coordination.

Commissioner Keammerer inquired what process would be needed to alter the RIS name. Jameene Williams, Assistant City Attorney, stated the renaming would need to be brought as a separate item as it was not noted in the current agenda. Wamsley stated the RIS could place the renaming as a discussion item to bring up to the Commission.

Commissioner Abraham also thanked the Commissioners and staff for their work.

Commissioner Jeff Arndt motioned to approve the appointees recommended by Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Davila, and Chair Gonzales as non-commission members of the Renters' Issues Subcommittee. Commissioner Robert Abraham seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Item #3: Briefing on proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code submitted by the San Antonio Housing Commission

Gonzales requested Melissa Ramirez, Assistant Director, present.

Ramirez stated since their last briefing in January, the Planning Commission's Technical Advisory Committee (PCTAC) considered 234 amendments. Seven amendments were received from NHSD. Of the seven amendments, five have been recommended by PCTAC, one was withdrawn as there was a similar amendment from the Tier One Neighborhood Coalition, and one was recommended for denial. The amendment recommendation regarding removing language excluding trees in the right-of-way from counting toward tree canopy for affordable housing projects was recommended for denial as the amendment language was considered vague. Currently, NHSD and DSD are working together to provide recommendations at the Planning Commission.

Ramirez noted the next step is to brief DSD's boards and commissions between May and June with action in July to move forward to the Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC) in September and final action by Council in October. Training on the approved amendments would be in November and December as the amendments would become effective on January 1, 2023.

Arndt inquired regarding Slide 20, Amendment 23-5, what changes were proposed. Ramirez stated initially the recommendation struck out language. NHSD and DSD proposed two points of clarifying language where the right-of-way tree exclusion would be applied to state the language would apply specifically to affordable housing projects, but PCTAC chose not to reconsider the amendment and the recommendation for denial stands.

She noted that DSD and NHSD will be bringing their amendment changes to the Planning Commission in July.

Alanis recognized work of the Removing Barriers Subcommittee (RBSC) members and staff and noted that most of the items made it for recommendation and welcomed the discussion for their proposed change in July during Planning Commission.

4. Item #4: Presentation and discussion by Leilah Powell, Executive Director of LISC San Antonio, on an introduction to systems-thinking and San Antonio's housing ecosystem.

Gonzales requested Leilah Powell introduce herself and present.

Powell stated that LISC, Local Initiatives Support Coalition, is a national nonprofit that reaches 37 cities and supports initiatives through other nonprofit organizations, advocates, policy makers, and officials and works towards better systems.

Powell noted that a system has several components working together in a set process, like when a person gets into an accident, 911 is called, an ambulance is dispatched, and the person can be taken to the hospital or transferred if a specific hospital is not able to continue care. She noted that Housing currently does not have a system in place. Powell stated the materials presented stem from research LISC is doing and there are no next steps on how to direct and create the Housing System from the items found. She mentioned that the challenges faced in San Antonio are similar to other large communities in that an overlying system has not been implemented. This system must have a list of prioritized actions that coordinates multiple projects from partnering organizations.

Commissioner Sanchez exited the meeting at 12:39 PM.

Powell stated that currently the Housing system is based on a political process which typically does not result in the best use of funding as distribution is based on demographics not a systems analysis of where the need is and most effective distribution of resources. She noted the Southwest Texas Crisis Collaborative (STCC) and Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) analyzed their regional response system and discovered a \$1.2 billion cost savings that was redirected to service providers and clients.

She noted that with systems thinking a conventional solution may ripple and effect the community unintendedly. A system solution must be well analyzed and mapped so the implementation will not have unintended consequences and will improve the effectiveness of funding. Systems actors fall into four categories: funding, financing structures, regulatory context, and capacity. Actors can also play multiple roles in the system. Powell stated Robert Reyna, Bexar County's Community Development Director, Commissioner Alanis, Commissioner Hinojosa, and Veronica Garcia, Interim Director, would share their understanding of the housing system and what role they play.

Wamsley stated Reyna was not able to be present but forwarded a reply to the prompt. Reyna noted the County's role is a funder of housing initiatives and administer of housing related grants through HUD programs to non-profit partners. Bexar also administers a utility assistance program through TDHCA (Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs). Reyna also noted that the County's work predominately takes place within City limits but also has programs for 26 suburban cities with earmarked funds. Powell noted the

County has a major role in the justice system, economic development efforts, and public health services.

Alanis stated SAHT's major role in the housing system is as a partner and owner as they facilitate and finance affordable housing. He noted they provide a supportive role for policy creation and housing goal setting, including with the SHIP (Strategic Housing Implementation Plan), tenants' rights, and universal design.

Hinojosa stated SAHA has been reevaluating its roles and decided to focus on certain areas, mainly as the provider for their existing 20,000 residents and coordinators to the 55,000 households on their waitlist. He noted tax credit developments have very few 30% AMI and below units and that the current rate would never resolve their waitlist. He noted a conversation of where to focus resources is important to address collectively.

Garcia stated that NHSD is far reaching in the housing system, from producing and preserving affordable housing to helping families facing eviction and partnering with DHS and external partners to address homelessness.

Gonzales noted that the Housing Bond's focus was for sustainability, resiliency, and connectivity. She stated that the bond could drive systemic change that outreaches all points. Powell noted the best way to implement the focus would be building the capabilities in the individuals they reach and assisting individuals holistically and efficiently. She stated not one role can take on all branches, but with partnerships, roles can be distributed effectively where an ecosystem can thrive.

Keammerer noted that resiliency cannot be built if the wages in the community are still low. The system is only as strong as the weakest link and there should be a collaborative effort to align wages into the housing ecosystem. She stated her belief that Mark Carmona, Chief Housing Officer, would assist in bringing all partners to the table and implement a common goal and the goal reflect in the community they are helping.

Commissioner Arndt exited the meeting at 1:08 PM.

Alanis responded that several organizations (SAHT, SAHA, SABOR, SAAA) went to Washington, DC to advocate for affordable housing being a top tier priority and their efforts will pay off down the road. Similar advocacy could be done for wages as it is linked to affordable housing and all housing should be inclusive and affordable and try to be disassociated from subsidized housing.

Davila stated another avenue would be the healthcare community as some are investing in affordable housing as they see the benefits long term. She suggested reaching out for potential partnership opportunities. Powell stated LISC is working as a convener for the different segments of the housing ecosystem so they can build relationships and collaborate about best practices. Keammerer stated a collaborative meeting space where all housing ecosystem could learn more about the other roles and build relationships would be beneficial for the ecosystem alignment.

5. Item #5: Director's Report.

Gonzales congratulated Veronica Garcia in her new position. She also thanked Commissioners in their support for the Housing Bond's passage. Gonzales requested Garcia present.

Garcia thanked the Commissioners for their warm welcome. She stated that in the last meeting, a panel discussion on increasing household wages was requested and staff is coordinating with Mike Ramsey, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Office, and his partners to present a panel by next meeting.

Keammerer recommended the panel also have economic partners as there is a community concern on workforce development due to additional budgeting needed to host the programs. Garcia thanked Keammerer for her recommendation and stated staff would look into additional panelists.

Garcia noted the Commissioners should have a highlight summary of the roundtable discussions in their packets. The summary will also be placed on the Housing Commission website.

Garcia introduced herself and noted she has worked in multiple capacities in the City for 17 years, previously as the Assistant Director for the Center City Development and Operations Department (CCDO) then Deputy Director of NHSD. She highlighted that a stable home is the foundation for a family and without it, a number of issues arise. She will continue to work hard with the NHSD team and the Commissioners to keep creating positive shifts forward. Garcia also noted Ian Benavidez's new role as Interim Deputy Director and mentioned he would continue his capacity partnering with the Commission.

Garcia thanked the Commissioners for their help with the passing of a Housing Bond that would greatly scale up efforts in production and preservation of affordable housing in the community. She noted that NHSD is partnering with other departments and organizations in developing methods to leverage the \$45 million for homeownership rehabilitation and preservation. Garcia noted \$40 million will assist in acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of single family and multifamily units for households making up to 30% AMI (Area Median Income), \$25 million for permanent supportive housing, \$35 million for rental housing production and acquisition for households making up to 50% AMI and prioritizing 30% AMI, and \$5 million for homeownership production for households making up to 80% AMI and prioritizing 60% AMI and below. Garcia noted that Council will be holding a B-Session on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, to discuss the next steps for all bond projects.

Garcia continued to the FY2023 HUD Annual Action Plan and stated that the HUD funded budget for NHSD totaled \$22.9 million. She stated that the public comment period will be held from June 13th to August 3rd to receive feedback on prioritization and budgeting. Garcia introduced Siboney Diaz-Sánchez, Community Engagement Administrator, that would help focus efforts in NHSD's community efforts. The draft plan will be presented in June's Commission meeting.

Garcia concluded with upcoming events such as the last Council meeting date on June 23rd before the July break, the upcoming PCDC meeting on May 26th, the next Housing Commission meeting on June 22nd, and noted the SASpeakUp budget survey is being conducted until June 30th.

Davila noted the Bond funds have less red tape than the federal funding most affordable housing projects have been accustomed to and challenged staff and Commissioners to find creative ways to use the funds in their respective categories. Gonzales stated a brief presentation on examples of potential types of creative funding methods might be helpful. Powell highlighted that the funding could be used as insurance for risky transactions. She stated that the funds could be leveraged when landlords are hesitant on housing lower income or higher risk tenants as the funds would pay for costs coming from damage or breaking the lease.

Closing-

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 1:33 PM.