

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Economic and Workforce Development Committee

#### 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8

Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4

Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | John Courage, Dist. 9

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**Wednesday, August 31, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**Municipal Plaza Building**

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The Economic and Workforce Development Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 10:12 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

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

**Members Absent:** Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

#### Approval of Minutes

1. **Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on August 12, 2022.**

Councilmember Courage moved to Approve the minutes of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on August 12, 2022. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

#### Public Comments

The following individuals spoke on Item 3:

Jeremy Roberts, Chair of the SBAC, spoke in support of the Item and funding allocated for the Strategic Plan.

Alexander Rodriguez spoke regarding the need for inclusion of union issues in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Charles Fuentes spoke on the need of new labor standards for union telecommunication workers.

Manuel Antu spoke in support of the need of digital broad band improvements for union workers and asked for consideration of improved labor standards.

Noe Maldonado spoke on the need of improved standards for union telecommunication workers and consideration on the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Sarah Carabias-Rush, Chief Economic Development Officer for Greater SATX, spoke in support of the recommendations and initiatives in the Economic Development Strategic Plan and partnership with the City of San Antonio.

Alejandra Lopez, resident of Council District 3 and SAISD Union Chair Representative, spoke of the need to address digital divide initiatives and requested additional funding for digital divide issues.

### **Briefing and Possible Action on the following items**

2. **Consideration of applicants to the Goal Setting Committee (2 seats).** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

The Economic and Workforce Development Committee interviewed three applicants for the Goal Setting Committee which included:

- Juliana Lopez
- Frank Munoz
- Dr. Liang Ward

Chair Pro-tem Rocha Garcia recessed the meeting at 10:48 AM enter into Executive Session to deliberate the appointment of Goal Setting Committee Board Member applicant appointments.

Chair Pro-tem Rocha Garcia reconvened the meeting at 10:58 AM and stated that no action was taken during Executive Session.

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

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

3. **Briefing and possible action regarding the City's Economic Development Department Strategic Plan.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Economic Development Director Brenda Hicks-Sorensen provided an overview of draft of the Economic Development Strategic Plan and noted the next steps in the development and finalization of the Plan. She indicated that the presentation would discuss the framework of the Plan and she introduced consultant John Karras with TIP Strategies, who reviewed the schedule of the plan's phased discovery, opportunity and implementation steps. He noted that the strategies included partner and stakeholder feedback and reviewed the process for community engagement. He noted that COVID-19 impacts and acceleration of existing economic trends were factors that would be considered in the Plan development. Karras also reviewed various data factors that would impact the development of the Plan.

Karras provided an overview of the Plan framework, guiding principle strategies and goals and associated pillars within each goal. Karras and colleague Katrina Parkey provided specifics of the goals which concentrated in the areas of innovation and industry development/retention, placemaking and real estate expansion, talent retention and workforce strategies, and capacity and resources alignment.

Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked if the Economic Development Department (EDD) had ever had the opportunity to develop a strategic plan such as proposed. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez confirmed that a strategic plan as proposed had not been created in the past. Chair-Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked if chambers of commerce had been engaged in getting feedback of the Plan strategies. Hicks-Sorensen confirmed that all chambers had been contacted and that many had provided feedback.

Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked if upward mobility had been considered for the Plan focus. Karras stated that the Plan would include the issue. Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia stressed the importance of including upward mobility and other factors. She expressed support of the Plan but noted that there were still other categories that needed to be addressed in the Plan to include gender wage issues and to include stakeholders that could provide feedback on those issues. She stressed the importance of providing specifics of challenges the Plan would discuss and needed to address and provided feedback on other stakeholder engagement recommendations to include Chambers, San Antonio River Authority and neighborhood hubs.

Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked that Opportunity Zones be included in the Plan. Assistant City Manager Lopez confirmed that Opportunity Zones would be included in the Plan development. Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia stated that it was important to address arts and culture initiatives and San Antonio's low wage perception. Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on the use of incentives and collaboration with other City departmental incentives. Assistant City Manager Lopez stated that it was important for all the departments to communicate available incentives and collaborate efforts in supporting economic development.

Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia noted that it was important to address education initiatives and challenges with school district standards. Assistant City Manager Lopez stated that staff was taking the Committee's recommendations to make adjustments to the Plan development and she would return to the Committee with updates and then ultimately brief the full City Council in a B Session.

Councilmember Castillo stated that it was important to include labor organizations to address disparity gaps and asked that it was important to include in stakeholder discussions. Hicks-Sorenson stated that outreach was conducted and included labor organizations and would provide the committee with the list of organizations contacted. Councilmember Castillo requested that the AFL-CIO be included in meetings.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she was pleased that land development and land banking was included in the Plan, but that more green land development needed to be included in the Plan.

Councilmember Castillo asked for clarification of the approval process of the Strategic Plan. Hicks-Sorenson provided clarification and that the Plan would be accepted by the City Council. She expressed support of the initial discussions.

Councilmember Courage acknowledged that a draft framework was presented but asked when the final Plan would be presented. Councilmember Courage stated that additional feedback was still needed from absent members and that more time was needed to obtain development recommendations to move forward. He stated that he felt more opportunity was needed for the Committee, City Council and stakeholders to review the final recommendations prior to going to B Session. Assistant City Manager Lopez stated that an additional meeting could be scheduled for the Committee to address and that individual meetings could be conducted.

Councilmember Castillo reviewed the union organizations that were included in discussions but asked that additional groups be included. Hicks-Sorenson stated that an updated list would be provided to the Committee for review.

Councilmember Courage stated that the topic of available incentives was why he requested more time to review the Plan's strategy and noted available incentives from the City of Austin had to create a more robust incentive package to businesses highlighting the many amenities in the City of San Antonio. Assistant City Manager Lopez stated that she would like to meet with Councilmember Courage to discuss the proposed strategies which were included in current goals. Chair Pro-Tem Rocha Garcia asked that the preliminary draft be shared with the entire City Council.

No action was required for Item 3.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

**Approved**

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*Manny Pelaez, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*