

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Governance Committee

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

10:00 AM

City Hall Complex

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 City Council Governance Committee meeting on January 11, 2022.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Approve the minutes of the January 11, 2022 Governance Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Briefing and Possible Action on

Item 4 was addressed at this time.

4. Briefing and possible action on a Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Manny Pelaez, District 8, regarding Local Protections for Users of Service Animals Regarding Housing and Places of Public Accommodation and Conduct Awareness Outreach. [Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Nicholas Dominguez, Interim Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion]

Nicholas Dominguez, Interim Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, provided information on the Council Consideration Request (CCR) submitted by Councilmember Pelaez as well as background on regulations related to the use of Service Animals. Dominguez provided an outline of the actions already taken by the Disability Access Office (DAO) and identified a capacity gap in expanding outreach and community education citywide noting there was limited budget and

staffing for this effort.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Pelaez provided examples of how City Council had tried to fill the gap in services to persons with disabilities and spread awareness of the rules surrounding the use of Service Animals. Councilmember Pelaez clarified that the CCR was not intended to expand the definition of Service Animals but was about outreach and education on existing laws.

Councilmember Courage expressed concern that there needed to be more clarity on the rules surrounding Service Animals, particularly for Veterans and spoke in support of the Item. Councilmember Courage requested that staff provide the Committee with a full report on the legal requirements. City Attorney Segovia committed to providing the report.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended to focus this program on a project recently approved by the San Antonio Housing Trust which could be utilized as a model for affordable housing for Veterans.

Mayor Nirenberg spoke in support of the Item.

Councilmember Pelaez moved to recommend and forward the Council Consideration Request submitted by Councilmember Manny Pelaez, Council District 8, regarding Local Protections for Users of Service Animals Regarding Housing and Places of Public Accommodation and Conduct Awareness Outreach. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

2. Briefing and possible action on Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, District 6, regarding Park Space and Pavilion Reservation Fee Removal for Military Veterans Groups. [David W. McCary, Assistant City Manager; Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation]

Parks & Recreation Department Assistant Director Nikki Ramos provided an overview of the Council Consideration Request (CCR). Ramos explained that City Code 22.6.1 authorized Parks Director to approve special promotions, rates and fees for facilities and that there was an existing policy that allowed the Director to waive the fees if the event met certain criteria. Ramos stated that the Parks & Recreation Department had already been waiving the fees for Veteran's Groups and the Department included this information in their revised policies and online within the application for use of the park. Ramos added that the Department had begun coordination with Bexar County.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the fees, the process and whether there were any fees charged to Veteran's Groups. Ramos outlined the process both online and in-person and confirmed that Veterans' Groups would not be denied the waiver. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested that the Parks & Recreation Department provide outreach to Veteran's Groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFWs) and American Legions. Ramos stated that the

Department would work with General Juan Ayala, Director of Military Affairs and any groups suggested by the Council District.

Councilmember Courage clarified that the groups may still need to pay additional fees that could not be waived such as Health Department Permits when they served food, security if they served alcohol or for insurance.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended marketing of the waivers at the VFWs and to other military groups. General Ayala recommended using the Commission on Veteran's Affairs Members to assist with communications as they represented almost every VFW in the City.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing and possible action on Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, District 6, on Public Opinion Surveys and Disability Demographics. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Laura Mayes, Communication and Engagement]

Laura Mayes, Assistant Director of the Communication and Engagement (C&E) Department, provided an overview of Public Participation Administrative Directive 10.1 which included the minimum demographic information that departments would need to include in their surveys. Mayes explained that in 2021, the C&E Department coordinated with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office to standardize the questions and these were revised and implemented in January 2022. Mayes stated that the questions helped the City better understand the responses, gather more information, provide real-time data to departments and City Council to better understand the needs of residents.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Cabello Havrda wanted to ensure that all questions were asked in every City survey and asked if the group "Disability SA" was consulted. Deborah Scharven, Manager of the Disability Access Office (DAO), confirmed that all the groups had provided input.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on demographics being "optional" to answer and noted that many people did not want to respond to questions due to privacy concerns. Mayes provided an example that the question of Council District was often unanswered because many people did not know their Council District but that many of the questions were very personal in nature. Councilmember Courage suggested those questions should be at the bottom of the list with a heading of "optional" for specifically disability status, transgender and sexual orientation as these were very personal in nature.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that one in four residents of Council District 4 had a disability and asked for more information on the marketing of surveys to persons with disabilities. Mayes provided some examples and explained that marketing for different purposes often utilized different strategies. Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested that providing further explanation on the survey as to the purpose of the demographic questions might make them more likely to respond. Councilmember Rocha Garcia was interested in the use of grassroots efforts and "streets

teams” particularly in areas lacking digital access.

City Attorney Andy Segovia stated that he did not want individuals to feel that some questions were not important by over emphasizing that they were optional. Councilmember Courage recommended an explanation at the beginning of the demographic questions to help individuals feel more comfortable answering those questions. Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager, agreed to add the explanation.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda reiterated that all questions were optional and expressed her concern that the explanation needed to convey that all the information was important.

Mayor Nirenberg asked when the new questions would be implemented and requested an update on the progress. Coyle stated that the results of every survey were posted online and that it would be reported annually by the Department of Communications & Engagement. Mayor Nirenberg noted his support for the Item.

No action was required for Item 3.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 10:53 AM.

Approved

ATTEST:

Ron Nirenberg, Mayor

*Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk*