

**HOUSING COMMISSION
OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019, 4:00 PM
SAN ANTONIO HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD ROOM
818 SOUTH FLORES, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204**

Members Present: Robert Abraham, Member
Nicole Collazo, Member
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Member
Keith Hom, Member
Marianne Kestenbaum, Member
David Nisivoccia, Member

Members Absent Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, Chair
Sarah Sanchez, Member

Staff Present: Lori Houston, *Assistant City Manager*; Irma Duran, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Veronica R. Soto, *Neighborhood and Housing Services Department*; ; Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood and Housing Services Department*; Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood and Housing Services Department*; Azza Kamal, *Neighborhood and Housing Services Department*

- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM by Keith Hom.
 - **Roll Call** - The roll was called by Irma Duran; at the time roll call was conducted, six members were present representing a quorum. Nicole Collazo entered the meeting at 4:20, bringing the total number of members to seven.
 - **Citizens to be Heard** – None.
1. **Welcome and Introduction** – Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager, launched the meeting with an overview of the expectations for the gathering. She indicated the goal of the workshop is to develop an outline and direction, with emphasis around the roles and responsibilities, the communication plan, and performance measurements and metrics.
 2. **Facilitated Discussion** – Ian Benavidez, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, began the facilitated session PowerPoint. He introduced Azza Kamal as the project lead and explained she would be a key resource moving ahead. The discussion began around guiding questions: What is the purpose of this annual report? What do we want this report to convey, and to what target audience? Depending on the target audience, the branding and language will be modified accordingly. Identifying the distribution timeline will be a key element, as it needs to align with the timing of the data release and the timing of NHSD program close outs/FY end. In an effort to ensure accountability to the public, we want to include both qualitative and quantitative milestones and metrics. Houston indicated that five key items were pulled directly from the report and we need to ensure we include those on an annual basis.

Benavidez discussed the need to develop strategies to define what success looks like for each of these deliverables and what are the key metrics we should focus on. Census data, in particular the timing of this data, will also be another important consideration moving ahead. Houston asked to initiate a discussion around each of the main questions posed. The first topic discussed was around, “what is the purpose of the report?”

Marianne Kestenbaum expressed her point of view that the purpose of these annual reports is to be a tool used to present to City Council regarding progress made on Taskforce recommendations. She reminded the group that measurements can be binary in nature, and should be defined by explanation of the goal. Kestenbaum suggested that the group consider the presentation of the report from both NHSD staff and the Housing Commission, alongside key stakeholders. The cross-reference of report and future annual reports will be vital so readers can easily follow from one publication to the other. Lastly, Kestenbaum concluded with an emphasis that we need to do this right, rather than fast.

Jessica O. Guerrero reaffirmed the comments made by Kestenbaum; it is a report for City Council and it is facilitating the Housing Commission’s oversight of the task force. Given the heavy work load of all involved, this will be a good tool provide an overview. She suggested surveying to identify any questions or any concerns so we can tailor it around what the audience wants to see, as well as making the document accessible to the community so they can track progress on the implementation of the report. She expressed that the report should be created by the Housing Commission, and be reflective of not only NHSD efforts but take a more comprehensive approach to highlight the efforts of other City departments. Guerrero concluded with a final thought that the target audience should really drive the timeline for distribution; with more information we can be more prepared to have another discussion around this in the future.

Robert Abraham explained the report should show both the strengths and the weaknesses; where we met the mark and where we fell short. The target audience would be the Mayor, City Council, and the City of San Antonio. Houston asked for clarification around goals not attained; Abraham provided the hiring of a housing official as an example.

Dr. Paul Furukawa echoed his support of the commentary from other members, and the need for clarification within the report. Some “real pluses” were referenced, like the cost of gas or food in the area, or instances of natural disaster; having these identified in the report will add further clarity and understanding around our goals. In terms of the targets, there are other constituencies that are worth considering, for example the Joint City Commission for Elderly Affairs. The JJC, knowing we are looking to incorporate their efforts on identifying housing for seniors into the Dashboard, are motivated and it is important for us to appear knowledgeable around their efforts. In research evaluation reports, the executive summary will be crucial for the report in general, but additionally citizens really appreciate a boiled down version. This can be conveyed digitally through a public face on the Dashboard or in print form.

Hom expressed that the report [framework] was done very well, and that should serve as the foundation for us to report on how we are progressing with the recommendations. The target audience would be the citizens of San Antonio, who deserve receive the fruits of the labor of the staff and various agencies/commissions working on these issues. He voiced that having a document that is a bit more accessible and a bit less technical than the framework report will be

important. Hom highlighted the framework provided good metrics and challenges for how we should be looking at issues in the community. He suggested it may be easier to report and measure on metrics if they are aligned on a fiscal year basis with the City, and gave an example of with the close of the fiscal year in September the report could be released in January. Hom reaffirmed the opinion that the report should be published by the Housing Commission.

Nicole Collazo expressed the full community would be the target audience. She asked to clarify if the report will be NSHD specific? Houston indicated the report would be broader, anything that is working to achieve the numbers, and that ultimately we want to demonstrate a coordinated effort. Collazo confirmed the framework is the guideline and we should work to meet those goals.

David Nisivoccia indicated the purpose of the report is to serve as an accurate accounting. We need an action plan for next year, we need to inform the greater community and we need to look ahead with two and three year metrics. The target audience is multi-faceted: City Council, staff, stakeholders and partners, and the citizen of San Antonio. The report needs to be layered, with language tailored to those audiences if the workload to do so is feasible. Nisivoccia reaffirmed the suggestion to follow the fiscal year and also that the report should come from the Housing Commission, but felt there are merits to having the report come from other entities.

Houston discussed the importance of data collection and data sources. If the report is distributed in Q1 of 2020, the data collection would be the prior calendar year and our accomplishments achieved would be outlined off fiscal year (as that is how our programs are budgeted). She sought confirmation from the group that releasing the report in Feb/March of 2020, the metrics measured would have calendar year data, but the accomplishments of the Departments would be fiscal year. Houston also suggested that staff prepare and the Housing Commission endorse the report. She also reminded the group that the distribution list needs to cast a wide net in order to hit all of the entities working in this arena. Houston wanted to make sure the implementation plan receives a nod, and the group include that it is part of the work for next year.

Victoria Gonzalez outlined the timeframe of February /March would make sense given the establishment of the Housing Commission. While an immediate challenge will be to focus on opportunities to streamline the data collection process, in particular around metrics that are not currently captured, the overall sentiment is that Q1 2020 is a realistic target. She also referenced the need to identify the distribution methodology, as that will influence their approach to creating an easily digestible format for the target audience(s). Lastly, the executive summary will be a significant element of the document along with the datasets that are used to support negotiations around budget allocations.

Guerrero asked to clarify if there is a timeline for the implementation plan. Houston expressed the goal of having the new housing officer be engaged in this plan so the focus right now is just on the pre-work and defining of roles to ease the transition over the next few months. The work will be divided into two phases: the first will be commission and staff driven, and the second once the housing officer is on board with a public component, with May 2020 as the deadline.

Nisivoccia emphasized the work around 30% of AMI needs to be collaborative, and cannot fall on a single entity. Houston confirmed her agreement on this, and stated implementation plan should also demonstrate the City's efforts at the 30% of AMI level.

Kestenbaum added a refining statement around measurements. She wanted to re-state that if we

are delivering as we thought they would on the goals and objectives; what have we learned, what would we amend, and what would we expand?

Furukawa stated that some annual reports just reflect on the past, and suggested we combine with some future perspective. Are there mechanisms available to make recommendations about next steps? Houston expressed that the implementation plan should cover that, and allow for tweaks as needed; it will be a living document.

Soto indicated that in many ways, this reports highlights what the Department has done, and the struggle lies in trying to help report what NSHD is responsible for alongside an acknowledgment of the work and efforts of the collaborative stakeholders. Soto specifically referenced page 11 in the report, and page 12 regarding the specific to-do items. She also suggested the report come from the Housing Commission.

Hom suggested using narrative around the foundation of the efforts: “here is what they have accomplished and here is how they helped to implement a broader goal/objective.” He also suggested using story boxes and the stories of individual and families impact by this to help cultivate the narrative.

Guerrero felt the annual report would refresh and recharge the Housing Commission to engage the community. She is looking for opportunities to actively engage in a meaningful way.

Houston expressed that this next stage in the discussion will be the more challenging part. She also discussed the mandates from page 11 of the document, and how individual efforts can be added in to each of those categories. Houston expressed a desire to identify two quantitative metrics to assign to each of those goals in an effort to show we are moving the needle. For example, increase City investment in housing; data could be pulled from the NHSD budget, Tax Credit allocations, Bond allocations, etc. Other elements might be more challenging to measure in a quantitative manner, and establishment of baselines will be critical to demonstrate success.

Kestenbaum expressed that it will be important to emphasize this is the first year, and are actively seeking to refine our measurements for the future. She also expressed the importance of qualitative measures should not be overlooked. As we grow and learn, we can further refine what is measured and how it is captured and continue to think around these concepts.

Nisivoccia provided an example; putting the systems and partnerships in place is a measure of success. Part of this challenge is simply being in the first year, we have to build momentum.

Guerrero highlighted that she views this as a progress report. She expressed the importance of acknowledging community engagement as a mechanism by which we improve policy, and using their contributions of their own data (both traditional and personal narrative).

Hom referenced the programs in place, what is spent and what is accomplished, but that the overall success of these things are part of the greater good we are aspiring for. The Dashboard would help, but we don't have that just yet. What are we trying to achieve and what can we be doing to get there?

Houston mentioned that one key metric that comes to mind is the annual homelessness count. Depending on the metric, what is it showing us and it is really tying back to our efforts?

Kestenbaum expressed this is reflective of the system; the progress towards the system doesn't necessarily get measured by production for example, but we tend more towards the tangible and in a sense the system really is not and this is where we need to do our homework. Could we have a metric like an increase in comfort with the City or increased awareness of the services that are there? It is not just tangible; it's that people feel they can come to the City and will walk away a little better off or a little more optimistic.

Nisivoccia asked to clarify on the PIT for homeless: the goal is to how can we incentivize housing development with wraparound services?

Houston indicated the metric could reference the five big picture items we could measure that could show we are moving the needle. Houston asked what would be more helpful: to have another meeting or to have staff come back with an outline? Houston asked to have another special work session in the near future to continue the work. She also discussed trying to gauge the community understanding of affordable housing and their level of awareness around the issue. The meeting discussion concluded around the community engagement and surveying aspect of analysis and input of affordable, quality housing.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 5:21PM.