

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 2019, 4:00 PM
SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE VICTORY CENTER
1819 NORTH MAIN, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78212

Members Present: Pedro Alanis for Nicole Collazo, Member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Member
Marianne Kestenbaum, Member
Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, Chair
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member
Keith Hom, Member
Sarah Sanchez, Member
Robert Abraham, Member
David Nisivoccia, Member

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Lori Houston, *Assistant City Manager*;
Verónica R. Soto, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Mike Etienne, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Melody Woosley, *Department of Human Services*
Edward Gonzales, *Department of Human Services*;
Morjorie White, *Department of Human Services*
Ian Benavidez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;
Berta Rodriguez, *Government and Public Affairs*;
Laura Salinas-Martinez, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Sara Wamsley, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Irma Duran, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Kristin Flores, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Allison Shea, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Munirih Jester, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Azza Kamal, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Anabel Marroquin- Villa , *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*; Lizeth Guzman, *Neighborhood & Housing Services Department*;

-
- **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 4:09 PM by Lourdes Castro-Ramirez
 - **Roll Call** - The roll was called by Irma Duran; at the time roll call was conducted, all members were present representing a quorum.
 - **Public Comments** –Duran announced five (5) residents signed up to speak on consent and 15 for item #3. The sign in sheet was provided to Castro-Ramirez.
1. Terri Castillo: Historic Westside Resident Association speaking on behalf of the Alazan Residents. She asked to imagine not being able to not have guests over without being

placed on a list, like an inmate (in Bexar County Jail or 'Dominguez'). She asked to imagine going to eviction court and finding this was the San Antonio Housing Authority's (SAHA) justification for eviction, then meeting the SAHA CEO admitting the justification and being told 'respect is a two way street.' She continued with imagining having an infant, being elderly and not having heat in 32° weather and afraid to submit a maintenance request for fear of being a target of the Alazan team.

She claimed SAHA's Alazan team leads an authoritarian culture, leaving residents in debt, fearful and homeless. She stated it was a predatory team that forced residents to hand over keys and tell residents to not appear to court, which is a method to keep eviction rates low.

She stated she attended a City Council meeting the night before on homelessness. She cited that the Department of Human Services (DHS) shared a large percentage of homelessness is due to having an eviction record, making it impossible to find housing.

She states the CEO denies claims the obvious documentation of evidence is clear. She requests a thorough investigation by the City and an audit to reflect how SAHA is profiting from the fees. She believes management and appropriate actors need to be terminated for negligence.

2. Yaneth Flores: stated she signed up to speak on item #3.

Castro-Ramirez stated the commission would go through all speakers at once. [Flores stated a comment, not audible at meeting or through recording]. Soto replied that the Chair was able to call all public comments at one time. Castro-Ramirez stated two things are really important: 1) The San Antonio Housing Commission was established to work on affordability issues across the city and help direct and implement the Housing Plan used to preserve and expand affordable housing. The commission appreciates hearing from the public and listening to concerns and suggestions to carry out responsibility. Public comments are asked at the beginning to receive feedback prior to the agenda in order to deliberate the items. She stated due to the large quantity of speakers for item #3, it would be moved to the first item. She stated that if the public was to speak on item #3, the Commission wants to hear it prior to presentation. 2) Because the topic concerns SAHA, and they are on the commission as a body entrusted with responsibility and oversight, Commission feels it's important to be respectful. Castro-Ramirez asked the public to think over if they want to go now or during item, and called the next person on the list.

3. Pancho Valdez: He has lived in a SAHA property for five (5) years) this month in a building for the aged and disabled. He stated one thing that is concerning his fellow residents in a particular building is that there is a member of the Ku Klux Klan [resident] that has assaulted a woman, threatened another resident with a knife and used the 'N' word, yet nothing has been done. The residents feel there are in danger.

He stated the Blanco Apartments have out of control mold, leading to illness of residents. He stated that at the Chatham apartments, both African American and Anglo residents have been discriminated against with full support of the building manager. He claims this was 'supposedly' discussed by the SAHA CEO and representatives. He stated they [unknown parties, assume residents] have gone before the board, management always to be neglected and ignored. He states that if it had not been for KABB TV, the issues would not have been exposed, only to have SAHA refer to 'us' as liars. He stated City Councilman Roberto C.

Treviño visited the Blanco Apartments and sided with the residents. He asked if the councilman was a liar as well.

He continued the Attorney General reprimanded SAHA to attempting to obstruct a resident's discrimination case. He states that since residents pay rent, which in turn pays SAHA salaries, they [SAHA] works for them [residents], not the other way around. It is time they are held accountable.

4. Kayla Miranda: [Amalia Valdez, Natalie Guerrero, Cathy Garcia, and Edward Garcia ceded their time to Miranda.] Alazan resident that spoke last month of her personal experience; now she was to speak for those who cannot or are unable to. She referred that in the late 1700s, a group of people stood together to fight oppression against taxes and an unfair regime; by 1776, they started a revolution. She then read lines 1-18 of the Constitution of the United States.

She declared that the residents of the Alazan courts, residents of SAHA, stand today to receive rights, proposing alterations in management, procedures and how SAHA is allowed to operate. She proposed a taskforce of residents, high level SAHA personnel, representatives from 'these agencies' [unclear if commission or other agencies] to decide these matters.

Proposes education of both staff and residents, in addition to removal of employees that have violated policies. She secondly proposed an investigation into the cases, including the notices to vacate in the past year. Thirdly, she proposed the findings to the violations and how they are applied. She cited SAHA statistics that claim only 3% of SAHA residents have evictions and the rest leave. They cite unpaid rent for these violations, criminal action. She claims this is false, that unpaid rent is due to the fines. She states that employees can and do write up violations, citing pets without proof, ignore their own procedures for pills. She claims staff provides false information to tenants and evict tenants illegally. She stated she personally witnessed her neighbor being harassed to turn in her key without a court order. Lisa Schultz is her friend, and left without knowing a notice to vacate is not an eviction. Residents are told not to go to court, to pay up or get out.

She stated the majority of issues are not with the policies, but the execution of them. Staff uses the 'twisted policies' as weapons.

She cited SAHA claims fair market value. State and federal agencies state residents cannot pay fair market rent, therefore fund the difference. She wants to know who is regulating these fair market values. The square footage of her 3 bedroom apartment is the same as a one bedroom in other areas. Her brother rents an apartment in a 'nicer neighborhood,' pays \$1,182 with amenities such as a swimming pool, center, club house and are well kept. Rent for her apartment is the same. She cited that several years ago, gas stations were fined for price gauging, so why is SAHA allowed to do this? She replied that \$15 might not be a lot, but it can break a resident. It can be the difference between paying rent, paying light or taking their children to school. She stated that SAHA's response is that this does not happen to those that follow the rules. She states that it is occurring to innocent people and why are case workers able to write up residents, hearings, without informing or having proof. She claimed she had copies of the violations, where the photographs are not the same as the statement made, pictures attached have no bearing on the violation. She states she had received violations in the mail past the tenth day of the appeal period. She says she has

appealed, told she won, and still have penalties. There are plenty of policies in place that are not being followed as management does what they want. She knows how things work; she has worked as a postal worker, paralegal, retail manager and small business owner. Just as she has been held responsible for her employees, SAHA should be held responsible for their actions. She claims she wants change and action, not just empty promises.

5. Mia Loseff: [did not come up to speak]

6. Miranda Barron: SAHA Resident for four (4) years. She has lived with her grandmother since she was 6 months old. She was not prepared to come to the meeting. She stated that just as everyone is saying SAHA is unprofessional, rude and lack sympathy. Her mother has been struggling with them for years as they have been intimidating her and her mother is a nice person that scares easily. She states everything they tell her she believes, and that is not possible as she has rights.

She states that to be evicted for no reason, such as for small things she is not allowed to have. They received fines for no reason, without proof and are told if they can't pay by the next day, rent will double.

She wanted to reiterate staff is unprofessional, neglect others and something should be done about that.

7. Sandra Barraza: [Barron spoke on behalf of both]

8. Graciela Sanchez: Representing Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, two (2) blocks away from the courts. Also a member of Rinconcito de Esperanza, Westside Preservation Alliance, Mi Barrio no se Vende Coalition and the Historic Westside Resident Association. She stated all these organizations have banded together to save the neighborhood, culture and the people and to support the most vulnerable.

She stated the Courts have been talked about for a while and they are nervous about the demolition of the Courts. With the current evictions and dislocation it is a push to demolish the courts. She responded they want to save the community. Without it, the schools will close down as the majority (50% of the children residents) go to Tafolla Middle School and Lanier High School.

She stated that through support of Lori, Sara, and others in the commission, she had the first meeting with David Nisivoccia, residents of the Alazan and community groups. She claimed that he seemed unaware about many things, and is concerned that he does not know a lot of what is occurring. Based on the numbers of evictions and notice to vacate increasing, horrible treatment by staff, it is concerning he was unaware. The two and a half (2.5) hour conversation they held on Monday was devastating, they can't have this happening.

She cited that when the Mission Trail people were pushed out, that was 300 people (too many). One woman stated she would die if she moved, and she did pass way within the year. Many were left homeless or pushed past [Loop] 1604, out of the city. With the [Alazan] that will be 1,200 people that will be pushed out. She provided two hand outs. She cited that SAHA stated that they only had 44 [Alazan] evictions in 2019, which is 25%.

In 2016, it was 16%. Involuntary termination went down to 24%. In regards to voluntary transfer, the numbers increased from 14 to 19%.

She asks the commission to help the most vulnerable, as they are being pushed out to Haven for Hope, the streets, overcrowded homes. If they go to SAHA, they won't be heard, so they are using the larger commission for assistance.

9. Judith Vega: Speaking on behalf of Mi Barrio no se Vende. She stated she is in support of Alazan residents, urging the commission to think of policy to address this [eviction issues]. Fees and fines disproportionately affect people of color; from justice system, tickets get and fees received. She cited two examples that address equity from the City. 1. The Library Department (SAPL) found overdue fees disproportionately affected children of color, so they removed fees to minors. 2. The Municipal Court system changed the way truancy court ran as they found families of color were disproportionately fined. The court hired more case workers to bring down truancy. It is counterproductive to give fees that are 'absorbent,' compounding in interest that will never be paid off. This is another stressor of living in poverty. She looks to the commission for ways to change that.
10. Amy Kastely: A retired law professor, she now owns a private practice and provides pro-bono work for Historic Westside Residents and meets with residents of the Courts. She cited a meeting the evening before with the SAHA CEO and saw clear, consistent problems. She claimed there are improper (pet) fees without evidence of documentation, maintenance fees for repairs that lease states are SAHA's responsibility, all which amount to nonpayment of rent since this is allocated to outstanding fees. She claims the system is horribly flawed, characterized by misinformation and a radical lack of documentation.

She stated they talked the night before with Nisivoccia, and he stated eagerness to investigate problems and take some steps. They urged him to have a moratorium on notices to vacate and evictions, which have led to voluntary terminations, as staff has told tenants they must turn in keys. She states tenants are willing to consider criminal evictions as an exception to moratorium until SAHA can investigate and work out problems with staff. She urged commission to support this request.

11. Alexandra Sandoval: Speaking on behalf of her cousin, who has Down syndrome whom has multiple issues with going upstairs. She states that he lives on the second floor despite falling several times. Family has expressed concerns to staff about him living on the second floor, as he likes to go outside. He has slipped about 4 times, including slipping where the AC leaks. She claimed he cries in his sleep due to his legs hurting and the family had expressed multiple times to be moved downstairs while SAHA said 'take it or leave it' [apartment].

She feels it is not right to treat people like that, especially with Down syndrome; it is expressing that they can do what they want. She states that if SAHA or anyone on committee had children with Down, they'd understand more and take it to heart. She claims SAHA is blaming residents though it is not his fault he was placed upstairs. He does not know better. He now will not go outside or play due to his legs hurting. The stairs are too much. She felt that SAHA should be more considerate of the residents, especially children and those with disabilities. She continued that SAHA is supposed to helping the community, be a community and friendly. Instead it is telling children, especially those with disabilities, showing them that it is ok to do what they want. That needs to be looked

at. If the parent put a notice stating he has a disability, the parent should not be questioned, especially if it is a visible one.

12. Francisco Perez: Spanish speaker has lived in his home for 13 years. He stated the Alazan residents became a family because they are all close. The issues for everyone, not just himself, started when the people [staff] at SAHA came. He stated he saw a woman with four (4) young children put on the street because they couldn't pay rent. Instead of helping those that can't pay rent, they give them fines.

He stated he was kicked out, and given three days to vacate. They [SAHA] moved him to Mirasol but wanted to throw him on the street. He feels he will be kicked out because he was amongst the first to complain against them, but he is not afraid. He was moved on October 24 and on November 19 received another notice to vacate due to \$66.99 of fees that he is unsure of what they are basing it on. He feels like he is being robbed, he even owes his friends money due to borrowing from friends. He claimed his rent went up to \$662, with a fee of \$198.

He stated his daughter is 20 years old, studying medicine and wants to be a doctor. Instead of getting help for her, they keep raising fees. He lived 13 years in the same apartment with a broken kitchen stove, roaches, and a bathroom that needed to be fixed. He claimed he had problems with the toilet and bathtub and SAHA wanted to charge him \$100 repair fee.

He claimed the current administration will not do anything because there are monetary transactions occurring, and the elderly are all aware. He is there to speak up for the good families living in the Alazan that are being mistreated.

13. Leticia Sanchez: Historic Westside Resident Association speaking on behalf of the Alazan Residents. She stated that she attended the October meeting to talk about number of evictions, notice to vacate, bogus fees and fines. She claimed that since that meeting, the number continues to grow.

She referred to the meeting with Nisivoccia and is certain he will look into the cases of the residents he heard from, but is concerned for the residents that did not speak up or have received notices to vacate. Unless Nisivoccia stops handing out non-criminal notices to vacate, stop issuing of fees while doing an investigation, the problems will continue and the stability of housing for residents will be threatened.

She continued to state that he referred to the policies and procedures in place, but she feels they are not being followed by staff. She visited with two former residents already transferred and were told they had 3 days to move out. She claimed the lease states it is 15 days. She claimed this was not only Alazan management stating it, she also heard it at SAHA main office.

She claims several residents have complained about unfair treatment by staff, but the employee guidebook says to "demonstrate compassion during interactions." In the customer relations handbook, it stated that all employees are to act competent and treat customers in a courteous and respectful manner. She continues that if staff are not following policies, policies mean nothing.

She added that NHSD staff has been working diligently and expressed gratitude. Alazan case workers have refused to sign off on paperwork requested by NHSD that will help residents.

She stated that Nisivoccia referred to the low eviction numbers. This does not count the many residents that receive notices to vacate. She claimed that she received many calls from frantic residents that received a notice. Case workers have told them to turn in their keys and move out to not receive eviction notices. These notices were for fees as low as \$58 for unsubstantiated claims the office used.

She claimed many were not trained or informed of their rights. She thanked Nisivoccia for his time but demanded a moratorium on non-criminal evictions and fees until there is a thorough investigation.

14. Veronica Compean: Former Alazan resident of four (4) years, currently homeless. She claimed that in August she received an eviction notice. The day before she was to go to court, she paid her balance. A staff member told her there was no need to go to court since the balance was paid, so she did not attend, unaware it was mandatory. Judgement ruled against her. She filed an appeal, and did not hear until October when staff asked for her rent. She paid her rent, and was still evicted due to \$58 late fees. She is now homeless and suffers from anxiety, PTSD. She is thankful to NHSD for the support; otherwise she would be on the street.
15. Jessica Salas: SAHA resident of seven (7) years. She claimed that in 2015 she was a victim of the notice to vacate. She started selling her things [to make a payment], and when the day came, nothing occurred. She is frustrated with SAHA for that. In October, she was evicted again and is now in the appeal process. She is a mother of four (4) and grandmother to eight (8) and instead of thinking of thanksgiving, she is worried she will be homeless. She stated that SAHA needs to get their act together since that has been occurring since 2015.
16. Rich Acosta: My City is My Home. He claimed that in the past year he helped hundreds of residents for free; arguing property taxes and working to find homes for section 8 voucher holders. He felt there should be an immediate freeze on notices to vacate until there is an independent study, starting with Alazan courts. If at any point in the investigation, merit claims are found, all properties should be investigated to ensure no others endure the same fate.

He stated that it is difficult to find a home if the person makes under \$2,100 (three (3) times more than rent, at \$700). It is very slim to find homes, especially more than one (1) bedroom. It is then that people sign up for public housing, which is up to a year waiting time. He claimed he found 18 homes for under \$700 rent, only 4 accept section 8 vouchers. There are 2,366 homes currently on the market, and 146 accept a section eight voucher.

He claimed it is impossible to rent a home with an eviction on the record. With respect to section 8, he claimed that anyone that says they provide a section 8 voucher instead of providing public housing does not understand the realities and hardships.

He is grateful to section 8, and SAHA has a long way to be a housing choice program. She has worked with several agencies to find apartments that will accept people with section 8,

felonies and evictions. There are 242 apartments that are known to accept section 8. If they have an eviction, the number drops and the rent is \$500. He claimed that being evicted from public housing is a sentence for homelessness.

He continued that the fourth priority of the Framework is to Protect and Promote neighborhoods. He added the risk mitigation fund is used to pay fees. He thanked NHSD staff for their work, but the fund is not there to pay for SAHA's unfair evictions.

He asked the commission as they are in charge of oversight and implementation of the Mayor's Housing Taskforce, to call for an investigation and be true to the mantra that everyone needs a place to call home.

17. Diana Perez: Resident of Alazan from 1980-1997, president from 1990 to 1997. She stated that she represented Alazan and the entire Housing Authority and heard these stories previously. It makes her upset because the residents are spinning their wheels. Attending the meetings is a waste of time because the residents will be retaliated against. The eviction numbers are down because they have already been removed; the management and case management are over using their powers to retaliate.

She claimed that she is tired of this, she studied it, she lived it from 1990 to 1997, she is an activist and LULAC member 612. The board of commissioners, directors know what is going on; there is no excuse and should do something to the managers. She continued that it is empty promises and needs an independent group that includes the City, Senator, State reps and the board. She is tired and demands action; these charges will be kept being put on and fund the eviction process. She stated that it should be taken up with HUD; Castro was secretary, our congressman, and he should be here. She stated this is a waste of time and residents need to band together and take action with the elected officials and continue the fight.

18. Yaneth Flores: Wished to challenge the comments that Nisivoccia has made, that he was unaware of concerns. She had attended countless meetings he attended where the issues were addressed and it is in the media. She seconded a moratorium. She stated that she is here due to lack of response from other channels, including the SAHA board. She knows the Mayor is aware of these issues and nothing is done. She hoped the Commission can be an adequate channel to resolve this.

19. Kristal Puente: Mi Barrio no se Vende and UTSA's Mexican American Student Association. She asked for a moratorium on notices to vacate. Being college students, they know families are on the streets. She shared a story: an student acquaintance has been homeless off and on. He is an Ivy League student suffering from PTSD and instability. He cannot produce due to trauma. His family is still homeless, when they have enough money, they stay in hotels. The student has been hospitalized for a week due to PTSD. She asked why SAHA was selling property on Culebra road that can be used for section 8 housing. She stated a friend had been taken by a realtor to view the homes, and was told it used to be for section 8 housing—the home was updated. Why fix it up to sell for profit, and not put a family in there? She stated SAHA is in the business for profit, not for people, comparing it to a predatory business. SAHA is responsible for accumulating fees and needs to do something about it.

Castro-Ramirez recommended to staff to review the issues addressed during public comments.

Veronica Soto stated that at the previous [October 23] meeting, they heard from the public, that is why Item #3 was on the agenda. Item #3 was moved to be presented first.

1. **San Antonio Housing Authority Briefing on Evictions**-Nisivoccia apologized for not being at the previous meeting, as he was meeting with HUD in Washington, DC. He presented on the prevention measures with a goal of successful tenancy and self-sufficiency. He touched on the program called early engagement, which is part of the process for Section 8 **and Public Housing** clients. Though it is not mandatory, clients are recommended to participate to get an idea about training.

He continued that the primary concern from tenants are the fees. He claimed there are opportunities for payment schedules, and staff was willing to work with clients such as late fee exclusions and repayment agreements. He continued that there are opportunities for residents experiencing financial hardships, as well as case management for elderly to help with the process.

He claimed that in regards to eviction, Nisivoccia believes SAHA does what no others do and that is working with the clients to ensure housing stability. Clients can repay through plans, and receive written notice prior to receiving notices to vacate. Residents are allowed three (3) lease violations in a 12 month period before SAHA moves to terminate the lease.

He stated that in regard to process itself, there is a guide for financial assistance, and they follow the Violence Against Women Act. Staff also provides grievance policies and an eviction brochure in both English and Spanish.

Nisivoccia presented on the 3, 14 and 30 day Notices to Vacate. In regards to aggravated assault, trafficking and drugs, SAHA takes an aggressive approach to remove the tenants. Having no utilities falls under the same category due to this being a safety issue (three day notice). Staff provides notices in advance when it is discovered utilities are out.

In regards to the 14 days' notice to vacate, HUD stipulates there are strictly for non-payment of rent. SAHA is one of 39 Moving to Work agencies that are allowed greater flexibility program design, which could include notice-to-vacate processes.

He continued that on the discussion of documentation, he has demanded receipts for all documentation to keep on file. The policies will be under review for the next thirty days and will make sure staff is trained better, reducing misinterpretations of the lease, and policy updates. He continued the policy language will be updated to not make it so 'draconian,' while educating both staff and tenants.

He claimed that in regards to the fee schedule, he will look at the back rent and fees being charged, take a look at best practices and give calls to housing authorities across the state. The process has been streamlined, with the least reduced to seven (7) pages. He requested commentary from the audience,

Commissioner Pedro Alanis asked about the moratorium through the holidays, would that

just be for Alazan? (it is across the board) and would it be for 60 days (it is through the New Year).

Alanis asked what the avenue was to get comments to SAHA during this time. Nisivoccia responded that there was a meeting on Monday, and comments would be provided by Friday. It would be brought up at the SAHA meeting the following day [which may not have quorum].

Alanis asked if there could be a presentation back to the commission for review or public process of the comments. Nisivoccia was open to both and they have at least a 30 day public comment period.

Alanis asked about the properties and their structure. Nisivoccia stated that SAHA has three generations of construction from the 1940s, 1970s and 2000s. A needs assessment came out 5 years prior, with a new one coming within the next 6 months. The assessment revealed the need of \$500 million for the apartment maintenance/repair, while SAHA only received \$8-9 million. In regards to the single scattered site housing sales, the properties were three times more expensive to manage; the profits of sales went back to the apartment maintenance.

Alanis asked about the bad actors, what is SAHA's response? Are they outsources or SAHA employees? Nisivoccia responded that he takes that seriously, that employees should provide value to the organization, partners and clients. If resources need to be provided, he will give them. He is not afraid to terminate employees that need to be removed.

Commissioner Jessica O. Guerrero stated she had several comments, so Nisivoccia could respond all at once. She first requested Nisivoccia put what he stated in writing to ensure tenants, the board and commissioners can receive the proposed changes. She asked if Nisivoccia had thought about who would oversee the progress of the changes. She also requested to refer back to the commission in order to have a role in communication.

She asked how the fee removal for tenants with no proof will be addressed. Nisivoccia responded that all will be reviewed. Guerrero continued that when it comes down to whose burden this is (tenants, landlords), that question of proving innocence has to be at the center when addressing issues. Nisivoccia replied that having a proof of receipt is a good solution. Guerrero continued that she will reiterate solutions from tenants are key such as creating a [advisory] body with tenants and housing staff. She added to consider asking tenants to approve suggestion. What she saw at Mission Trails, and the work she did at Fuerza Unida, it is important to check in with residents.

Castro-Ramirez reminded commissioners that it is 6:15 PM and there are other members in attendance to present some items.

Commissioner Marianne Kestenbaum felt it is absurd to know the physical needs of the properties are \$500 million and the federal government only provides \$9 million. She stated there are courageous people who came to speak while there are suffering because society repeatedly tries to strike on the cheek, especially the state. She continued that those that are lucky enough have to speak out for those that have to work various jobs to make ends meet.

Commissioner Keith Hom asked if SAHA would investigate all complaints heard about erroneous fees. Nisivoccia committed to it and urged to consider a moratorium to eliminate fees to create a clean slate, and implement policies. He requested these policy changes would be brought back to the commission.

Commissioner Robert Abraham asked what the actions for bad actors were. Nisivoccia answered that staff is given every opportunity in being successful through training and guidance. He understands all are human and can make mistakes, but he does not want to see numerous mistakes. He committed to putting employees in a position of success but is not hesitant to remove employees. They have a responsibility to the organization and communities, and will set the same standard for years to come.

Castro-Ramirez underscored Kestenbaum's point of not losing site, advocating for and elevating public housing dollars. She commented that she appreciated the questions asked, looking to solve issues along with SAHA and see what issues need to be scaled up to the City. One of the focuses is addressing displacement and gentrification. How we shape policies is the intent [of the commission]. She felt it is important the SAHA board that is appointed by the Mayor should work through the issues and use the commission as a tool to report back.

Finally, she commented on appreciated NHSD was through and that each resident from the last meeting was followed up with.

2. **Homelessness Strategies**- Department of Human Services Director Melody Woosley presented on the Homelessness Strategic Plan and the process to create and implement the plan and the priorities of the plan. She continued that her department worked closely with NHSD to identify housing options, such as lead abatement and fair housing.

She presented on the state of homelessness, meeting with various stakeholders through engagement meetings. The planning process would go on through March of 2020. She discussed hiring "Homebase," a national expert focused on homeless strategies. She introduced Patrick Whigmore and Alicia Elena of Homebase who have met with various agencies during their week stay in San Antonio.

Kestenbaum asked the group to think about the definition of stakeholders. She noticed commerce, organizations and agencies; why is the community, users, not met with except for January 14 during community meetings. Woosley clarified that they do think of the users, the homeless. There have been meeting with homeless consumers and will continue to meet.

Castro Ramirez asked to define 'homeless consumer.' Whigmore stated these were residents that were currently homeless or in a program.

Castro-Ramirez continued that the Framework speaks for prioritizing service enriched housing, including chronically homeless and recommended DHS to use as a guide. She asked for the County's role and how did the plan envision SARAH with the continuum of responsibilities. Woosley responded that SARAH is in every step and there is a steering committee that includes them and former homeless to guide it.

Guerrero wanted to add conversations about stakeholders and asked to add other

stakeholders not usually included. She asked to consider things to facilitate participation, such as transportation vouchers and child care.

3. **Census Briefing-** Berta Rodriguez of Government and Public Affairs (GPA) presented on the City's strategies to increase participation in the 2020 US Census. She acknowledged Richard Milk in the audience and the committee. She continued on the impact of the census to local representation and funding. She concluded on the demographics they were attempting to access as they are the hardest to reach (immigrants, children under 5, renters, youth, LGBTQ, homeless, disabled, seniors, veterans, language issues, low internet access, multi-generational households, young and mobile) This will be the first time the census is 100% online, Seniors will not be able to fill it out. There will be paper copies available.

Castro-Ramirez asked what the process was. Rodriguez responded that on March 12, every family will receive an official invitation to go online. The census will be using real time data. By the fourth invitation after no response, the form will be in invitation. The goal is to self-respond. Castro-Ramirez asked how long the form was (nine minutes that does not save if you don't complete), if there are options for other languages (online and on phone it is 12 languages, on the form it is English and Spanish), and will there certain sites to complete counts and a map to encourage clients. The University Health System sees 300,000 visitors. Rodriguez stated they are working with UHS and all 29 branch libraries to not only fill out but receive help.

Abraham asked to clarify if the State of Texas did not give any funding? (It did not, but other states gave \$100 million and more).

4. **Minutes** – Castro-Ramirez moved back to the approval of minutes. Abraham motioned and Kestenbaum seconded with the move to remove a duplicate section of the October 21 minutes.
5. **2020 Housing Retreat**-Ian Benavidez presented on the housing retreat, location and proposed agenda and requested what the needed to be incorporated into the agenda.

Kestenbaum asked if the renter's commission could be incorporated. Benavidez said the appropriate place is in the structure and governance.

Guerrero asked if it is only one day. Benavidez responded all day, Castro-Ramirez asked for a stretch break. Benavidez stated this could be accommodated.

6. **Commissioner's Report**-Soto stated that the commissioners report is to refer to the committees they serve on. Guerrero asked if she could send a document to staff to receive feedback [from commission].
7. **Director's Report** – Soto thanked Guerrero for her work on risk mitigation policy and reminded the Commission that during the retreat the implementation policy plan will be discussed more. Staff will follow up in upcoming weeks. The annual report (information and feedback) are part of the retreat.

The San Antonio Housing Trust officially sent a letter with comments and asked the PFC and FC to weigh in, but they had not had a meeting yet. Nicole Collazo (stepping in for Alanis) stated a letter would be sent to Lori Houston by the end of the week.

Soto briefed the Commission on the Chief Housing Officer; the discussion with recruiter and that the posting will be live soon.

Castro-Ramirez asked if Terri Lee, Chief Housing Officer of Atlanta had been contacted yet, as she was helpful during the Atlanta conference. Soto responded that she believed so, but would follow up, Human Resources asked for contact information of several people.

Guerrero stated the recruiter highlighted public community meetings to meet finalists, will this still occur and she wanted a report back to the commission.

Castro-Ramirez asked for an updated timeline of the recruitment process

Closing-Castro-Ramirez thanked NHSD for the hard work.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 7:18 PM.