

HOUSING COMMISSION OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019, 5:00 PM
MUNICIPAL PLAZA “C” ROOM
114 WEST COMMERCE, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205

Members Present: Pedro Alanis for Nicole Collazo, Member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Member
Marianne Kestenbaum, Member
Richard Milk for David Nisivoccia, Member
Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, Chair

Members Absent Sarah Sanchez, Member
Dr. Paul Furukawa, Member
Keith Hom, Member
Robert Abraham, 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 5:07 PM by Lourdes Castro-Ramirez
- **Citizens to be Heard** – None.

1. **Welcome and Introduction** – Lourdes Castro Ramirez reminded public that if anyone wished to speak, to please do sign up with staff. Vero requested that attendance be called.
2. **Roll Call** - The roll was called by Irma Duran; at the time roll call was conducted, five members were present representing a quorum.
3. **Deliberate and Provide Feedback on 2019 Housing Annual Report**–Castro-Ramirez introduced Lori Houston who described this item as a continuation of the October 1 meeting. Introduced Ian Benavidez who presented on the recap of the previous meeting and the Outline of the Report. Sara Wamsley was introduced as the scribe. The purpose of the report is to highlight success and challenges, accessible to all audiences in English and Spanish. The report would take the action steps from the Mayor’s Housing Policy Framework and provide metrics for the City’s Progress.

Marianne Kestenbaum asked if there were people representing various City departments at the meeting. Houston said not at meeting [Equity and Development Services were present] but Development Services, Housing, Center City and Planning would be involved. She stated the Framework is in the process [here], but there will also be an implementation plan. She introduced Victoria Gonzalez who outlined the plan 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.

Pedro Alanis introduced himself as the interim Executive Director for the San Antonio Housing Trust (SAHT). He stated it would be good to add to the report public engagement talks that are new to the process.

Castro-Ramirez stated it [report] is important for the progress being made. The City was selected through LHS to go through the progress being made but there is still more to be done; specific examples would be helpful in the report. She asked about the timeline of the 2019 Annual Report. If it will be finished by March 2020, what time frame will it capture? Benavidez responded it would be the previous fiscal year [2019] but is open to suggestions. Castro-Ramirez suggested the start of the framework would be good and it is important to not be too 'wordy' but to be intentional and concise.

Kestenbaum suggested the report be concise and graphic, using narratives without receiving data for every strategy. One thing she envisioned was to elaborate on page 11 of the Housing Policy Framework with 'summary statements' and 'plan to start' narratives about what was done. She added a conversation about being on target is a good start and the report would be a road map with what was learned through the year and a perspective on strategy.

Jessica O. Guerrero referred back to the first session where she discussed a check-in. Where would feedback on the piece fit here? Houston responded that presenting a draft at a housing commission meeting would be a good place [use as a public meeting]. Kestenbaum added the public should be given plenty of time to review. Castro-Ramirez stated that the draft should be presented to the SAHT board, and [related] housing boards. Houston stated it would also be presented to Council committees.

Kestenbaum referred to the context of the Point in Time county, what data does Haven for Hope have [that could be included]? She also stated about trying to balance this with the discussion about Public engagement because it can sometimes back fire. Personal stories, beginning with vignettes, show that anyone can be one paycheck away from homelessness.

Castro-Ramirez stated the importance of education and constituent building. The report would be an accountability report on where we are at, progress and challenges. The report would be used for education and awareness. Houston stated scenarios could be incorporated in the report and the implementation plan.

Kestenbaum requested an item for the 'parking lot': if educators could turn the report into lesson plans for social studies [in local schools]. Benavidez confirmed stated the purpose if for the community to understand the spectrum of affordability and about the individuals being served.

Soto responded that what she hears is everything on the presented outline is what is to be presented, but what is missing is to take a step back and show the previous year. A Preamble

can be done to talk about when the budget was set. In addition to town halls, feedback could be through action plans and be added to present at other agendas [boards and commissions].

Kestenbaum asked if the report could be incorporated into SA Speak Up. Houston responded that all public sessions are branded as such.

Houston then presented on the proposed key metrics and requested feedback. The goal is to gather 2019 in 2020 for the report.

Castro-Ramirez added that the 2020 census is next year and the commission should analyze why it is important to participate. She added that EPS [Framework and Coordinated Housing consultant] should be briefed to be consistent with the same census data.

Kestenbaum suggested a line item in the budget for research about an annual housing survey in order to not be limited to yearly data. Soto responded that this could be an action item.

Castro-Ramirez stated San Antonio Regional Alliance for the Homeless should be included due to their efforts in data collection and surveys. She added it would be beneficial to include national think tanks to describe how we are doing as a city.

Richard Milk stated that it would be beneficial to add early indicators of displacement. He stated that there is a disconnect between the reporting and the actuals, and if the reporting would be broken down by Area Median Income (AMI). Castro-Ramirez asked if there is a graduation level to measure people coming out of housing assistance. Alanis added if there was a metric showing why people leave and to have them leave? Milk responded this is a different question, as substandard units are part of the equation.

Kestenbaum asked if the commission or staff knew how SA 2020 collects on homelessness data. Houston responded that this data was attainable. Kestenbaum continued that the wait list expresses the need for housing. Milk added that it spoke to the fraction of the need. Family size, incomes are other gaps keeping people on the list.

Alanis asked if there is a look at 2019 to look back at accomplishments, efforts done to date, issues integrated.

Castro-Ramirez stated the challenge is to establish a baseline first as there have been no agreement on what is being tracked, why and the source. The first report to come out will establish the baseline.

Guerrero asked what the difference between this report and the taskforce report numbers were. Castro-Ramirez responded that when the taskforce report was released, it said that one of every three houses is cost burdened. Can we say the same still, or is it worse? Houston added that the cost burden is the only portion of the report that a reflection can be done on. All other measurements would have to be a baseline.

Kestenbaum asked if it was too specific to talk about homeownership. Houston stated that there could be a measure of homeownership versus rental. Soto added that the trends are several years in the making; it would take several years to see the needle move. It would be important to call out larger items that can be considered baselines to establish key metrics. The last point she mentioned is that there are qualitative things that can be added, such as

stories.

Guerrero requested a specific timeline of this piece and added there are other issues directly related to housing insecurity, such as domestic violence and wages. (Listed possible agencies to work with). Soto responded the baseline would have to be settled in January. Houston stated they would reach out to SARAH and review the truancy concept, as well as talk to other agencies. She asked if this item should be added to the commission meeting in 2 days.

Castro-Ramirez stated this could be discussed in November along with metrics.

Milk asked which geography the report wanted to capture, as difference points of the city have varied results.

4. **Briefing on the City's Affordable Housing Implementation Plan**

Houston presented the implementation plan and passed out a draft outline. The plan would occur through the Chief housing Officer, but did not want to waste time. The second phase of the plan would fall in line when the Chief Housing Officer is hired and will help create an action plan. This plan would be adopted by Council, but should come from the Commission with support from the Housing Trust and Authority.

Kestenbaum asked if this superseded the business plan. Houston responded the business plan if for budgeting, this plan was for measuring results on the many housing issues the commission is asked to weigh in on.

Guerrero asked to have staff repeat information on the AMI. Houston stated that the San Antonio AMI is reported out as HUD AMI (metropolitan area compared to city limits.) To put all the proposed goals in the HUD AMI measurement would be easier to monitor. Guerrero stated this translation should also happen with other departments and commissions as it is a point of contention and confusion.

Castro-Ramirez stated it is important for COSA to have a strategy and coordinate the move for various organizations in the same direction. Housing implementation also brings them [the groups] together and will adopt the metrics the commission will establish. Reporting on October to February aligns with the timing of the report and being organized before the Housing Officer steps in creates a road map for the person to figure out what else is necessary.

Houston stated the report should be adopted in June in time for the 2021 budget. Milk asked how the plan will handle continuity. Houston responded that would be the responsibility of certain entities. Alanis added it is important for entities to know what policies they need to move forward in the same direction.

Kestenbaum asked if the job description of the Housing Officer can state if they will serve as a board member of SAHA and SAHT. It will be an action item in the report.

Castro-Ramirez stated that from a commission perspective, it would be really helpful to schedule time for a retreat and plan for December. Soto stated that December would not be convenient.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned without contest at 6:17 PM