



AGENDA

Resident Services
Committee Meeting
May 27, 2014



SAHA | SAN ANTONIO
HOUSING AUTHORITY
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Board of Commissioners

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Resident Services Committee

Yolanda Hotman, Chair; Stella Burciaga Molina, Member; Charles R. Muñoz, Member
President & CEO

Lourdes Castro Ramirez

**San Antonio Housing Authority
Resident Services Committee Or
Special Board Meeting of the Board of
Commissioners** May 27 2014**

The San Antonio Housing Authority's Resident Services Committee is one of three committees of the Board of Commissioners and meets monthly at various housing communities. The committee maintains an item on each agenda called Public Comment during which time attendees may voice concerns or share comments with the committee.

The Resident Services Committee will convene for a meeting at Villa Hermosa, 327 N. Flores, San Antonio, Texas 78205 on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 12:30 p.m. for discussion and action on the following matters:

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Introduction of officials, guests, CEO and Community Manager.
3. Update and discussion regarding the 2014 plan for voter outreach and dissemination of information regarding elections. (David Nisivoccia, Chief Operating Officer; Vanessa Chavez, Ombudsman).
4. Update and discussion regarding public housing management improvements. (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
5. Update and discussion regarding Customer Care Specialist Certification. (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
6. Update and discussion regarding San Anto Cultural Arts project. (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
7. Update and discussion regarding Texercise . (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
8. Update and discussion regarding Olive Park/Village East xeriscaping. (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
9. Update and discussion regarding Unified Application Center. (David Clark, Director for Public Housing).
10. Update and discussion regarding the 2014 Resident Council Training. (Adrian Lopez, Director of Community Development Initiatives).

11. Public Comment.
12. Briefing on Villa Hermosa and tour of property.
13. Adjournment.

Note: Whenever the Texas Open Meetings Act (Section 551.001 et seq. Of the Texas Government Code) provides for a closed meeting in matters concerning legal advice, real estate, contracts, personnel matters, or security issues, the Board may find a closed meeting to be necessary. For convenience of the citizens interested in an item preceded by an asterisk, notice is given that a closed meeting is contemplated. However, the Board reserves the right to go into a closed meeting at any other item, whether it has an asterisk or not, when the Board determines there is a need, and a closed meeting is permitted under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code that permits the closed meeting.

** Note: If a quorum of the Board of Commissioners attends the Committee Meeting, this meeting becomes a Special Meeting of the Board, but no Board action will be taken other than recommendations to the full board, unless the full Board is present.

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee

From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO

Presented by: Adrian Lopez, Director of Community Development Initiatives
Vanessa Chavez, Ombudsman

RE: Update and discussion regarding the 2014 plan for voter outreach and dissemination of information regarding elections.

SUMMARY:

SAHA continues to actively encourage housing program participants to let their voices be heard by exercising their right to vote. Only 7% of the voting population in San Antonio traditionally votes in municipal elections. The Mayor's SA2020 initiative has identified Civic Engagement as a major priority, including moving the needle on voter turnout, with a goal of increasing voter turnout to 15.07% for municipal elections and 37.4% for midterm elections. SAHA staff will continue to attend meetings related to voter outreach efforts in our community.

The following is an update of SAHA's efforts since the last Resident Services Committee meeting, to encourage voter registration and voter turnout:

- Staff posted informational posters at all SAHA properties, which provided detailed information on the election and early voting for the upcoming May 27, 2014 Joint Primary Runoff Election
- Staff created flyers that provide detailed information on early voting and voter ID requirements and were distributed prior to early voting
- Staff posted sample ballots at every SAHA property
- Staff provided a briefing to all Resident Council Officers at the May 21, 2014 Resident Council Training Meeting
 - Informational materials were handed out to all Resident Council Officers

Staff will continue to work with the SA2020 Voter Turnout Committee to review and implement recommendations. Staff continues to distribute voter registration cards at SAHA related meetings, and will continue to provide information on the Volunteer Deputy Voter Registration class provided by Bexar Elections Department to SAHA employees and residents. The next Volunteer Deputy Voter Registration class will be held on June 10, 2014

The next scheduled election is the May 27, 2014 Joint Primary Runoff Election. Early voting will be held May 19- 23, 2014. The Housing Authority cannot advocate on the behalf of any particular candidate for public office, and individual staff members are barred from advocating when they are performing their duties as SAHA employees.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Public Housing Director
RE: Update and discussion regarding Public Housing management improvements

SUMMARY:

In the past year, the Public Housing Department initiated several improvements to its management.

For several years the department collected key data on its monthly "Scorecard." In January 2013, the Scorecard tracked 12 data items; today it tracks 22. Management identified a number of inconsistencies in the Scorecard and has corrected them. For example, occupancy was counted using a different method than HUD uses. In some columns on the Scorecard, the average for the column was calculated as an average of averages—a method that will not work with the wide variance in the number of units at our properties.

Another recent change on the Scorecard was to start tracking Net Operating Income rather than cash flow. Net Operating Income includes all the factors that managers and maintenance supervisors can control, and therefore can be used to more effectively hold staff accountable.

Management has prioritized rent collection, in part through a tighter, more consistent eviction process. In January 2013, the delinquency rate was 22%. In April 2014, it was 6%. The goal is 5%.

Another means of increasing income is to concentrate on residents who claim to have little or no income. By the systematic review of a resident's finances, income can be identified that the resident knowingly or unknowingly did not consider income. At Alazan, this effort has resulted in higher income, even though occupancy is lower.

The department leadership has met with management teams quarterly, to review performance as shown by the data. The review includes the Scorecard, PHAS scores, data on the types of work orders performed, variance reports, and the amount of work performed by maintenance and administrative staff.

Management has also focused on improving the turnaround time for making vacant units ready for re-rental. Currently, SAHA buys the materials and assigns a make-ready contractor to perform the work. The turnaround time using this method is 11-17 days. In the past few weeks, a pilot program began in which a supply company brings not only supplies but its own make-ready staff. A similar program at the Dallas Housing Authority has reduced the turnaround time to five days.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Director for Public Housing
RE: Update and discussion regarding Customer Care Specialist Certification

SUMMARY:

To improve the consistency and quality of work performed by the Public Housing Customer Care Specialists (CSSs), SAHA issued an RFP for certification training.

Several industry organizations offer such training, including NAHRO, Nelrod, and Nan McKay.

The training addresses the skills and knowledge of all tasks and processes associated with the public housing occupancy cycle. It includes effective interviewing and screening, evaluating eligibility and income, accurately calculating rents and utility allowances, and information about leases and grievance procedures.

It also addresses technical income verification procedures, community service, disability rights, the Violence Against Women Act, Fair Housing, resident fraud, and Public & Indian Housing Notices.

At the end of the training, attendees must pass an examination to receive certification.

Currently, 37% of staff have no certification and another 32% were certified over five years ago.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Director for Public Housing
RE: Update and discussion regarding San Anto Cultural Arts

SUMMARY:

SAHA is partnering this summer with a non-profit, San Anto Cultural Arts, on a mural to be painted by 45 teenage residents of Alazan, Lincoln, and Cassiano. The painters will be using Novacolor acrylic paint on Polytab fabric—sometimes referred to as “parachute” fabric--a commercial product used in the garment industry that is lighter in weight than canvas and will not stretch or distort. They will paint sections of the final mural at each development, and when finished in mid-August, the sections will be affixed to the Alazan-area walls facing Guadalupe Street, just west of the bridge over the railroad yards.

The staff from San Anto will be holding community meetings in May to get community feedback on what they would like to see in the murals, and to recruit participants. Typically San Anto’s murals address themes of: recognition of community leaders; documentation of traditions; neighborhood history; and social issues.

San Anto was established in 1993 by community youth as an Inner City Development project. It operates two programs: El Placazo Community Newspaper and Mentor Program, and the Community Mural and Public Art Program. It has created 44 murals and published 150 issues of El Placazo.

Professional artists will work alongside the SAHA youth, teaching them 2-D design, drawing, painting, problem-solving, and the importance of creativity. In 2012, San Anto served 186 youth, who painted two murals, and in 2013, increased the participants to over 500. It has four staff members, including two Master Artists.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Casiro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Director for Public Housing
RE: Update and discussion regarding Texercise

SUMMARY:

SAHA is partnering with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to bring its "Texercise" program to SAHA's Elderly/Disabled properties. DADS' vision is for older Texans and people with disabilities to receive services that enhance individual well-being, dignity, and choice. The Texercise program was developed to educate and encourage healthy habits and to improve the quality of life.

Fitness research indicates that a timed fitness program with related incentives is a successful model for promoting healthy habits. The Texercise program is a 12-week program in which participants are provided with motivation, coaching, and an end event to celebrate their achievements.

DADS does not provide a Texercise coordinator. It supplies the tools, resources, timeline, tips, fitness approaches, and incentives that SAHA can use with its own coordinator to implement a successful program. The tools include an exercise CD. SAHA is recruiting a coordinator from among its existing partners.

Lack of exercise is a significant contributor to disease and obesity. Texas ranks 14th in the nation in obesity, with 29.2% of adults considered obese. The leading cause of death in Texas and Bexar County is heart disease. Among all Bexar County residents, 11.8% of adults have been diagnosed with diabetes; among African Americans, the incidence is 16.5%, and among Hispanics, 11%. Diabetes affects the elderly disproportionately: 26.9% have diabetes.

Exercise also promotes mental health. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 20% of people age 55 or older have some type of mental health concern, such as anxiety, depression, mood disorders, or cognitive impairment.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Director for Public Housing
RE: Update and discussion regarding Olive Park/Village East xeriscaping

SUMMARY:

Several months ago, the Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association approached SAHA with a request to improve the curb appeal at Olive Park and Village East, two small SAHA family communities, with 24 units each, on the City's near east side. Within the boundaries of the neighborhood lies the Dignowity Hill Historic District. The neighborhood is currently experiencing a surge of revitalization, as investors and property owners are restoring some of the grand old homes in the area.

SAHA's properties were both built in 1970. Their architecture does not blend well with the houses in the neighborhood, which are of Victorian and bungalow style. SAHA is planning to extensively modernize Olive Park in 2018. In the meantime, to show good faith and participate in the neighborhood's activities, xeriscape gardens have been installed at the two sites.

The xeriscaping includes flowering, drought-tolerant plants, including Bush Sage, Esperanza, Texas Lantana, Flame Acanthus, and Pride of Barbados, as well as ornamental grasses. A few large accent rocks were also installed. The plants are in beds of red bark mulch.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee
From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO
Presented by: David Clark, Director for Public Housing
RE: Update and discussion regarding Unified Application Center

SUMMARY:

The Unified Application Center (UAC) has begun processing applications for Public Housing as well as the Housing Choice Voucher program. One of the changes in this year's Moving to Work Plan was to add a preference for 200 working families.

Out of about 9,000 applicants, 2,814 claimed the working preference. As the UAC began meeting with applicants to certify their eligibility, only 15% of them actually qualified for the working preference. The UAC had to re-code those who didn't qualify and put them back on the regular waiting list.

This presented a challenge, creating a growing number of vacancies. SAHA therefore mailed letters to all applicants who had claimed the working preference, requesting them to mail in documentation of their work history within a certain time period. Those who do not will have their preference removed. Once the 200-family program threshold has been met, regular processing of applications will proceed.

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MEMORANDUM

To: Resident Services Committee

From: Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO

Presented by: Adrian Lopez, Director of Community Development Initiatives

RE: Update on upcoming Resident Council Training

SUMMARY:

The Resident Council Training series is designed for those residents elected into officer positions at their community. It is an interactive program, facilitated by case managers, where officers receive information on how to maintain a Resident Council (RC). Topics include: Understanding Your Role, Developing a Plan, Community Involvement, Conducting a Meeting, Completing a DPUY request, Communication, Managing Your Budgets, Coordinating Elections, and Documentation and Record Retention, and Leadership. The objective was to increase the number of Resident Councils, retain active officers by providing them with more education and support, and to improve the administrative paperwork. Today, we have 21 active Resident Councils and 33 that are engaged but not presently active, representing over 3,500 households.

This interactive training utilizes team building, visual aids and workshops that are provided to officers. Ten content areas were identified and presented during the quarterly scheduled training sessions, hosted since 2012. In order to improve internal accountability and processes, staff has added additional topics such as maintaining proper backup documentation, bank reconciliation and others, to provide the skills needed to properly administer Resident Councils. Further, the trainings have also been utilized as a platform to promote large initiatives such as:

- Affordable Healthcare Act
- Voter Registration and Civic Engagement
- Pre-K for SA

RC officers receive a certificate after each training session, specifying the type of skills/knowledge acquired. RC officers who complete all four quarterly sessions will receive "level 2" status. Level 2 status officers will: 1) receive advanced training opportunities, 2) serve as mentors for new RC officers, and 3) serve as facilitators for future RC training.

The most recent training was held on May 21, 2014 at The Convent. Topics included:

- Bank Reconciliation
- Leadership
- Update on MTW Plan
- Update on special topics (upcoming elections, Pre-K for SA enrollment)

PROPOSED ACTION:

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

MTW funds are utilized to support the ongoing trainings.

ATTACHMENTS:

None