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SENIOR AFFAIRS
COMMISSION



City of Dallas

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CITY SECRETARY
DALLAS, TEXAS

Senior Affairs Commission

Monday, May 16, 2016 – 12:00 p.m.

Dallas City Hall, Conference Room 5ES

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Trini Garza, Chairman
Carmen Arana (Dist. 1)
Lydia Simpson (Dist. 2)
John Johnson (Dist. 3)
Johnny Rodriguez (Dist. 5)
Cannon Flowers (Dist. 7)
Minister Chiyoko Douglas (Dist. 8)
Mary Ann Sparks (Dist. 9)
Armand Christopher (Dist. 10)
Irwin "Bill" Gart (Dist. 11)
Marlene Cohen (Dist. 12)
Syl Benenson (Dist. 13)
Sara Wick (Dist. 14)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Barbara Record (Dist. 4)

VACANT POSITIONS

District 6

SENIOR SERVICES STAFF

Cobbie Ransom, Administrator
Valencia Hooper Alexander, Manager
Ana Camacho, Caseworker
Myckycle Hart, Caseworker
Lynn Jenkinson, Caseworker

GUESTS

Zachary Noblitt
Rosa Rios
Janice Thomas
Bert Vandenberg
Susan Williams

CALL TO ORDER

Trini Garza, Chair, called the Senior Affairs Commission (SAC) meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Johnson made a move to approve the previous minutes. Carmen Arana seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with two corrections.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Zachary Noblitt, Senior Assistant City Attorney will be providing a series of presentations to the SAC. His first presentation focused on categories of motions in parliamentary procedure. Each Board and Commission will follow Robert's Rules of Order if they do not have their own rules. The most important purpose of parliamentary procedure is to allow everyone to decide on an issue and to allow minority opinions to be heard. The second reason is to make meetings efficient. The third reason is a quote: "Common sense is the essence of parliamentary rules". Fair play is the guiding principle, reasonable discussion, followed by prompt action. An advisory body like the SAC is more of a collaborative discussion. This is the most important thing to take away from my presentation, stated Mr. Noblitt.

Mr. Noblitt defined the different types of motions, gave examples of each motion, rules for the motions and referenced frequently asked questions. The main motion is the main idea the body is working on. A subsidiary motion is a motion that modifies, delays or disposes of the main motion. Privileged motions are those not related to the main motion but urgent for the body to consider. Incidental motions are motions relating to the manner in which the body conducts business. Motions for reconsideration are motions that bring a question back before the body. Chapter 8 of the City code outlines rules required of every Commission Member when interacting with other individuals including City staff, the media and the public.

Sara Wick inquired about rules regarding abstaining from voting. Bert Vandenberg, City Attorney, stated that the rule of abstentions at the City of Dallas is that you are not allowed to abstain unless you have a conflict of interest. If you leave the room, you are presumed to have voted in the affirmative. Therefore, if you do not have a conflict and you do not vote, your vote is presumed to be in the affirmative.

Marlene Cohen asked about quorums and people who are excused to leave the room. Mr. Vandenberg said that if you have a quorum established at the beginning of the meeting and someone leaves the room, excused or not, and you fall below a quorum, the meeting ends by loss of quorum (a simple majority).

Syl Benenson inquired if you can give written permission for someone to act in your behalf. Mr. Noblitt stated that the City does not allow proxy votes.

CITY OF DALLAS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rosa Rios, City Secretary presented the duties and responsibilities of City of Dallas Boards and Commissions. She encouraged the Commissioners to maintain direct communication with their council members because the Dallas City Council relies very heavily on their appointee to keep them informed about what the SAC is doing. The City staff is available to provide support to the Commissioners in their endeavors. The staff is the main focal point in putting things together to communicate to the Council.

Ms. Rios advised the Commissioners to talk to their council member if they are interested in continuing to serve as an officer or to serve on another board. She informed the Commissioners that they do not have to live in the council member's district to serve as an officer. They must have a very good attendance record on the boards they previously served on, be a qualified voter and a resident of the City of Dallas. They cannot owe any money to the City library, parking citations, property taxes, or utilities. She emphasized the importance of maintaining those qualifications throughout their appointment. Regarding the attendance requirements, if the SAC meets once a month, a Commissioner cannot miss more than three consecutive meetings or they automatically forfeit their appointment. Attendance is based on regular meetings. If the SAC cannot meet one month, she advised them not to reschedule their meeting but to cancel their regular meeting and hold a special meeting. Their attendance is not affected if a special meeting is held. The City Secretary is required to report their attendance record to the City Council. Commissioners are limited to four consecutive terms or eight years and cannot be reappointed at that time but can be appointed to another board. Ms. Rios stressed the importance of contacting their council member if they have not been reappointed and want to continue to serve.

It is also very important for SAC members to be officially excused from the meeting by the Chair so that their attendance is not affected. If a Commissioner is present at a meeting and something comes up and they have to leave after five minutes, for example, they are still considered to have attended. Their attendance is affected only if they miss the entire meeting

even if they arrive late or leave early. If the Commissioner has a conflict of interest, Ms. Rios advised them not to not leave the building and to remain close to the meeting room. If they decide to resign, she encouraged them to submit their resignation in writing.

Carmen Arana inquired: Can you serve on more than one board?

Rosa responded: You are limited to serving on only one City or non-City Board at a time.

Mr. Johnson inquired about serving on the treasury committee of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature and eligibility to serve on a board. Rosa responded: You cannot be a Treasurer for a candidate or a political action committee.

Ms. Rios continued: At any point in time, if you decide or announce publicly to run for elective office, you forfeit your position on the SAC. If you make a public announcement, you automatically forfeit your seat or position. Once you announce your candidacy or you become an official candidate, you then automatically forfeit your position on any Board or Commission. The exception is if you are a City employee. You do not have to resign from being an employee, but you would forfeit your position. You are required to file a couple of forms every year: the financial disclosure report due on April 30th and the gift policy only if you have something to report. If you have any questions about the gift, we recommend that you call us. If you resign, then you are no longer required to file it. You are allowed to file a short form for five years if there have been no changes since last time you filed the long form.

Carmen: If, for any reason, I have to leave the building, will I be counted as absent?

Rosa: No, but you have to get permission from the Chair. You need to get an excusal from the Chair.

Mr. Garza asked Ms. Rios if there is any conflict of interest with my seasonal business at the State Fair? She responded, no, as long as you do not represent yourself as a member of this Commission when you are there unless you feel that there is a possible conflict about the role the business plays with the fair because it is City owned, then you should consult with the attorney.

Cobbie Ransom asked Ms. Rios if there are any absences that are excusable. She responded: If you are not here, whether excused or unexcused, your attendance is still affected. You could submit a request to be exempted from that rule after talking to your Chair and Coordinator.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Garza asked Bill Gart to brief the Commission on the budget adjustments being made and the housing meeting. Mr. Gart believes that it is the responsibility of each Commissioner to listen to what goes on in this meeting and then when we take a vote and we move forward with a major project, we speak with one voice as a Commission to get things done. This is the strongest and probably the finest Commission that the City has seen in the last 25 years without a doubt. We have a lot of things in the fire. We are working on a lot of major programs. Our budget, I'm sure, is going to be expanded. We have to be thinking one way, that is, how to better the lives of our senior citizens. That's who we are and that's what our priority is. The seniors in the City of Dallas are in our hands. As we put these programs together, we have to think, senior citizens.

Syl Benenson added that we support our recommended budget when we go to our City Council persons and anyone else to support it but we also let the council know that we support all programs that affect seniors whether it is in our budget or anybody else's budget. Johnny

Rodriguez requested a list of the 52 programs that the city council is looking to cut back. Mr. Ransom stated that the budget committee will be meeting at 2:00 p.m. today and that the Council will vote on the consolidated plan budget on Wednesday.

Carmen Arana learned that out of the CDBG money, the funds for dental were scrubbed and that the Commission can advocate for an increase in funding for dental care. As a group, we can ask the Council not to scrub the dental funds but to increase them. We need more money for this particular project because the need is very big.

Age Friendly Communities

Susan Williams announced, next Tuesday, we are going to have our first transportation work group meeting on transportation at AARP on May 24th at 1:00 p.m.

Age Well Live Well

Lydia Simpson reported that we are planning for the State Fair of Texas.

Office of Senior Affairs

Myckycle Hart stated that Housing 101 had a great turnout. We had approximately 130 people to attend. We received the surveys back. Everybody enjoyed the event. People were really impressed. Mr. Gart stated that he did an outstanding job.

NEW BUSINESS

John Johnson, Chair of Elder Safety Committee, invited the Commissioners to a meeting on June 20th at 10:00 a.m. Transfer on Death Deeds is a law passed last year where seniors can transfer property without a will and not have to pay the nursing home fees or other facilities.

Cannon Flowers read the 2016 planning goals and metrics for performance established at the SAC planning session in November of 2015. He would like to include these goals in the agenda and chart the progress made on each goal. Mr. Flowers believes that the SAC is making huge progress on these goals. Mr. Ransom suggested working on a scorecard.

Valencia Hooper Alexander provided an update on MayFair and announced that Syl Benenson was nominated by Jennifer Gates, her councilwoman, and other people to be honored at the MayFair. We have a waiting list for people to attend MayFair. We are over the limit. We have more than one thousand people interested in attending and they are still calling. We have approximately 55 vendors. I did no advertising other than Celebration Magazine.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Janice Thomas talked about the abandoned building that she mentioned at the last meeting. The building is going to become a hotel. She attended Earth Day in Oak Cliff and at Fair Park. Most of the recreation centers have a Zumba class for seniors.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adjourn at 1:35 p.m. Ms. Arana seconded the motion.