



## **SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Meeting Minutes**

WEDNESDAY, March 18, 2026

In Person Meeting: 12:00 Noon

Location: **Park de la Cruz Community Center**  
**3901 Landis Street, San Diego, 92105**

#### **Item 1: Call to Order**

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 12:00 Noon.

#### **Item 2: Roll Call**

Antoinette Alioto, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Jacqueline Jackson, Mary Scott Knoll, Michelle Matter, JB Robinson, and William Peetoom present.

Kasey Cheal, Marissa Feliciano, Bob Prath, and Rosemary White Pope absent.

#### **Item 3: Approval of the February 18 Meeting Minutes**

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. Antoinette Alioto made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Jacqueline Jackson. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 4: City Planning Department Presentation by Victoria Ortiz, Senior Planner – Neighborhood Homes for All of Us**

Victoria Ortiz provided an overview of the City's Neighborhood Homes initiative, a planning effort aimed at increasing housing affordability and expanding housing options. She noted that rising housing costs continue to make homeownership difficult, and that much of the current housing stock, primarily 5–7 story developments with studios and one-bedroom units, is not well suited for intergenerational living. The initiative introduces smaller-scale housing types on smaller lots, including cottages, duplexes, townhomes, and small multi-family developments, typically ranging from 4–10 homes per lot. These homes are intended to serve as starter homes or downsizing options.

Victoria explained that the project is part of a year-and-a-half planning process that began in November and includes extensive stakeholder engagement. Initial stakeholder interviews were conducted in November and December, followed by focus groups beginning in December and continuing through mid-spring 2026, engaging approximately 70 organizations and diverse populations, including homeowners, developers, students, young professionals, families, renters, and multigenerational households. Additional focus groups with the general workforce are planned for spring 2026, along with public workshops in the spring and summer.

She also shared that a feasibility study is underway to explore how these housing models can be developed at a more affordable cost, rather than \$700,000–\$800,000 per unit, including both traditional and non-traditional financing strategies in partnership with the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center of the San Diego Foundation. A technical working group, including affordable housing advocates and economists, is providing input to ensure realistic implementation. Preliminary architectural renderings were presented to help visualize how Neighborhood Homes could look and feel within San Diego communities.

Victoria noted that Phase 2, anticipated in late summer 2026, will focus on developing new regulations related to permitting, zoning, setbacks, and development standards. Draft regulations will be shared with the community for feedback, followed by a public hearing process including Community Planning Groups, the Planning Commission, and City Council. She also highlighted key themes from community engagement, including a strong desire for accessible and age-friendly design features such as wider doorways and grab bars, sufficient bathrooms for multigenerational living, incorporation of green space and parking, privacy considerations, clear and streamlined regulations, and collaboration with fair housing experts. A key takeaway from engagement efforts is that while there is strong interest in making these housing models work, community needs vary significantly, and a one-size-fits-all approach will not be effective.

During discussion, Michelle Matter asked about opportunities to incorporate aging-in-place design features such as wider doorways and grab bars. Mary Scott Knoll noted that certain accessibility features are already required under federal regulations, including Section 504 and post-1968 multi-family housing standards. JB Robinson raised concerns about financing challenges for multigenerational housing, including difficulty securing loans for multi-unit properties, limitations in accounting for dual-family incomes on a single mortgage, and barriers to accessing home equity for shared housing arrangements. JB also emphasized the need to better support families sharing housing, including financial coordination and caregiving responsibilities, and suggested focusing on improving existing housing stock.

William Peetoom highlighted that retrofitting homes for accessibility is often more expensive than incorporating universal design features upfront and encouraged a more proactive approach. He also asked about how the Neighborhood Homes model compares to ADUs. Victoria clarified that Neighborhood Homes represent a distinct housing type and noted limitations of existing state policies, such as SB 9, in San Diego, while indicating that this initiative may provide additional flexibility. Antoinette shared challenges related to modifying properties and financing, including the need to restructure occupancy arrangements to qualify for loans. She also noted interest in shared housing models and emphasized the importance of home modifications such as wide doorways, reinforced walls for grab bars, and hand-held showers. Gwenmarie Hilleary suggested exploring coordination with the County Assessor's Office regarding property tax

implications, and Mary referenced HUD design standards and schematic models for senior housing as a potential resource.

Next steps include continuing public workshops through spring 2026, completing the feasibility study by spring 2026, and developing architectural drawings and site plans by summer 2026, followed by Phase 2 regulatory development and public review.

#### **Item 5: Action – Change SAAB Meeting Time**

Following discussion at the previous meeting, the Board revisited a potential change to the SAAB meeting time. Gwenmarie Hilleary shared observations about scheduling considerations, including overlap with lunch times at senior centers. After discussion, Michelle Matter made a motion to move the SAAB meeting to 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning April 15. The motion was seconded by Antoinette Alioto and approved unanimously. It was noted that if the current meeting room is not available on April 15, Kristi Fenick will secure an alternative.

#### **Item 6: Information – Chair Report**

Gwenmarie Hilleary reported that a meeting has been scheduled with Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera's staff to discuss cryptocurrency-related concerns. The meeting is scheduled for April 10 at 2:00 p.m. at the Park de la Cruz Community Center. Kristi Fenick will distribute the invitation as an optional meeting for SAAB members. The discussion will be limited to 30 minutes, with a focused agenda outlined in advance, aligning with the approach and recommendations being advanced by AARP.

#### **Item 7: Information – Legislative Report**

JB Robinson provided an update on the Bridge to Home initiative, noting that the City of San Diego recommended an allocation of \$15 million to support the development of 528 new affordable homes in Redwood Village, Grantville, Hillcrest, and East Village.

JB also raised the upcoming City budget cycle and asked whether the Board should provide recommendations during public comment. Kristi confirmed that SAAB can submit feedback. Discussion included drafting a letter on behalf of SAAB focused on senior center operations, including recreation programming and operating hours. Based on current demographic data and community need, the recommendation is to maintain existing hours. JB will draft a letter for Board consideration and vote at the April meeting.

JB also shared [SB 707](#) regarding teleconference and agenda translation requirements beginning July 1, 2026.

#### **Item 8: Discussion by William Peetoom – You Are Not Alone**

William Peetoom shared information on the "You Are Not Alone" program led by the San Diego Police Department, which focuses on addressing elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. He noted that this initiative aligns closely with SAAB's priorities related to senior safety and

well-being and emphasized the importance of ensuring consistent messaging across City departments. The committee expressed interest in inviting SDPD to provide an informational presentation on how the framework operates and to identify potential opportunities for collaboration with SAAB. It was clarified that this would be an informational discussion rather than a policy-focused item. Kristi Fenick will coordinate arrangements for a future presentation.

#### **Item 9: Discussion – Letter to Councilmembers Regarding Older Adults Month in May**

Gwenmarie Hilleary suggested sending a letter to Councilmembers in recognition of Older Adults Month in May, noting that it would serve as a reminder of the work SAAB has undertaken. It was agreed that Gwenmarie will draft the letter for Board review and vote at the April meeting.

#### **Item 10: Discussion – SAAB to host Listening Sessions**

The Board engaged in a brief discussion about the potential for SAAB to host listening sessions to better understand the concerns and priorities of older adults. JB Robinson suggested promoting existing SAAB meetings as an opportunity for community input. Michelle Matter noted that it may be more effective to host separate sessions at a different time, allowing for a more focused, roundtable-style discussion, and then invite participants to attend future SAAB meetings to ensure their voices are heard. Gwenmarie Hilleary recommended adding this topic as an agenda item for further discussion at the next meeting.

#### **Item 11: Staff Liaison Report**

Kristi Fenick noted that she is working on scheduling a meeting with District 7. Once the date and time are confirmed, she will coordinate scheduling and reach out to SAAB members for availability to participate. This meeting will complete SAAB's goal of engaging with all City Council offices.

#### **Item 12: Update – County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services**

Antoinette Alioto provided an update from a recent County meeting with Aging & Independence Services (AIS). She shared that the County has established a budget subcommittee, which presents an opportunity for SAAB to provide public comment by June 11.

A community survey is currently open through March 22 to gather input on budget priorities. Antoinette noted that safety net services, including CalFresh and Denti-Cal, may be impacted in the next fiscal year. She also highlighted a need for additional volunteers for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program and provided clarification on the roles of the Public Administrator and Public Guardian.

JB Robinson suggested that SAAB may consider drafting a letter to the County outlining budget priorities, aligned with the letter being prepared for the City of San Diego.

#### **Item 13: Discussion – Board Member/Officer Discussion (topics for future SAAB meetings)**

Mary Scott Knoll highlighted the growing housing crisis impacting older adults, noting increasing rates of homelessness and limited housing options. She emphasized that April is Fair Housing Month and shared the importance of increasing awareness among older adults about their housing rights, including reasonable accommodations, which many may not have previously needed to navigate. She expressed interest in developing outreach and education efforts, including the potential assignment of an intern to help identify senior centers for presentations on fair housing. She also shared that she will be participating as a panelist at an upcoming Fair Housing Conference on April 22.

**Item 14: Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

Michelle Matter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JB Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.