

NETTIE HINTON,

District 2 member of the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods, **SPEAKS OUT**

I am 76 years old. I was born and raised on the east side of San Antonio. I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, taught 3 years at an SAISD elementary school on the west side then moved to Washington, D. C. for a career with the US Treasury Department/US Customs Service. Thirty years later, I returned to San Antonio to live once again on the east side. I was then, and am now, appalled at the deleterious effect on my community of the years of benign neglect inflicted by the City of San Antonio.

The east side has not been an "IN" place to live even though the culturally vibrant and diverse community is located a few blocks from the two most important tourist sites in the State of Texas—the Alamo and the Riverwalk. East side residents' tax dollars have not returned to the community in terms of infrastructure development and maintenance. Our students walking to school, our seniors trying to maneuver in wheel chairs or using walkers must travel to and fro in the pot holed streets because sidewalks are unavailable or they have telephone poles sitting in the middle of them. How sad! How inhumane!! How ripe for gentrification!

The heartless displacement of the long-time residents who lived in modest circumstances along the historically neglected Mission Trail was the genesis of former Mayor Castro's reason for forming his task force to PRESERVE dynamic and diverse neighborhoods. Had the possibility of a UNESCO designation not occurred, the wonderful families in the trailer park would NOT have been kicked to the curb in order for capitalistic greed to be served. Watch out when governance comes to you with relocation pittances declaring the action is to further your economic development.

At one point in the task force meetings a member sought to remind me that I grew up in the kind of mixed-income community that some are promoting as the panacea for low-income workers currently living in neighborhoods targeted for gentrification. Yes, born in 1939 on the corner of Olive and Center Street—in what is now called the Dignowity Hill Historic District—I lived in a mixed-income community. Jim Crow segregation mandated mixed-income communities. Once the post-emancipation laws prohibiting free people from buying property that was not in an alley was lifted, restrictive

covenants on deeds prohibited owners from selling homes to blacks or even allowing black maids, nannies and cooks from living in or staying overnight in the residence. As a result, black doctors, teachers, lawyers, clergy, etc. lived right next door to their neighbors who toiled in San Antonio's low-income service industry jobs. They had income disparities, but they were ONE community facing the SAME legally mandated discrimination.

Today, city-wide, San Antonio, a minority majority city, has the highest income disparity in the state. Fifty-one percent of San Antonio citizens are renters who still labor in service industry jobs. The best schools are on the north side or in the

suburbs but infrastructure development is in the north and northwest sectors of the city. Transportation goals are not aimed at alleviating the necessity of bus dependent low income workers having to transfer two or three times in order to get from their modest homes to their work places.

In order to become the 5th largest city in the USA will the City of San Antonio annex land on the east and south side in order to bring city services to underserved families? No! Plans are to annex multiple rooftops in areas where people who want no part of the city but who represent big tax dollars.

There are parts of this city staff-driven task force report that are people driven

and are supportable particularly those that thwart displacement, offer low or no interest loans to eligible homeowners to repair or rehabilitate properties, land bank programs to protect infill from being developed for high rent apartments or condos, and incentives for developers to produce workforce housing. **I still can not support the final report because it does not in totality recommend that the people's interests be protected.**

It has been rushed to City Council in order to schedule a "Housing Summit" & to assume consideration by the current Mayor & council—not a newly elected one that may reintroduce Mayor Castro's vision. I truly believe that Mayor Castro's task force vision has been high-jacked and perverted. The task force was intended to address displacement and to assume that City policies, ordinances and zoning procedures protected our most vulnerable citizens from exploitation—both, cultural and economic exploitation. ❖

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