

**MINUTES  
BLANCO APARTMENTS  
FEBRUARY 20, 2008  
MEETING WITH RESIDENTS**

**Time: 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.**

**SAHA STAFF:**

Henry A Alvarez III, President & CEO  
Melanie Villalobos, Chief of Staff  
Deborah Flach, Sr. VP of Operations  
Michael Bond, Dir. of Property Management  
Gavino Ramos, Dir. Of Corporate Relations  
Tony Pena, Lead Project Manager  
Dolores Mueller, Corporate Relations Admin.

**MEDIA:**

Ron Wilson

Channel 4 News

Community News Publisher

Henry Alvarez: Good evening, for those of you that I haven't met, I am Henry Alvarez. I am the President and CEO of the San Antonio Housing Authority. I wanted to come out myself tonight and have a conversation with you. Basically we want to share some information we have regarding Blanco Apartments. More importantly, I would like to answer all of the questions that you may have.

We are going to explain some of the concerns that we have and then we are going to let you tell us what you want us to do.

First and foremost, most of you know that we have been doing some exterior work on the building. We started that work back in December including replacing the HVAC system in the basement, the heaters and resealing the exterior of the complex.

We began just a few days ago to go inside your units. We need to resolve the air conditioning and heating problems before we begin to fix the issues inside.

If we had gone inside first and not dealt with the heating and air conditioning systems, it would have basically been doing good work that we may have had to come back later and redo.

One of the things that we have done while we have been doing the exterior work was to test the air quality inside of all of the units, all 100 of them.

Last evening, I got the first glimpse of the preliminary air quality reports on some of those reports. Today we got the remainder of those reports.

I do not have the complete report or the narrative of those reports for all of the units, but we asked the environmental scientist to give us a sense of what they thought is going on in the units with the moisture buildup that has occurred over a period of time.

The building is 40 years old. We have begun to remodel it, as we are doing to our entire inventory across the city. In some instances, we have torn buildings down and we have also bought new building to put families in. But here at Blanco, we thought we could do those repairs without disrupting the normal course of your daily routines.

What we are seeing from the preliminary reports, and having seen the air quality exams, that may not be possible for us to do. It is really going to be something that you are going to decide about.

But let me say before I talk about this, I am not a scientist and I am not a medical doctor by any stretch of the imagination. I am an administrator and I am going to convey to you what has been conveyed to SAHA at this moment in time.

Bear in mind that we do not have the full reports, but we expect to have the full reports with the next 7 to 10 days. The folks who did the environmental testing are working on these reports right now but I asked them to quickly give us some concerns of what they found.

Although, there are a few units that do not appear to have any real concerns, the majority of them do.

Based on our rules for housing quality standards for air quality, most of these units will have to have work done in the inside of them. While we were doing the exterior work, we managed to keep the dust and the noise fairly under control. That is likely not going to be possible when we begin the work inside each apartment unit.

Basically, this is a four-story, high-rise building, with 25 units stacked on top of each other. So when we do work in one unit, the units to the left and right and above and below are going to be impacted by the work in other units.

More importantly, we are concerned about the movement of air and although I have to tell you it looks beautiful, and we have made some upgrades to the exterior, the failure of the air conditioning units have caused us some serious concerns.

Unfortunately, it may mean that each family may need to temporarily relocate some place else while we do the work inside your apartment building.

That work is going to take a little bit of time. We don't have the exact timing right this minute because we don't have the full scope of work from the environmental testing company. But we wanted to give you an opportunity to talk with us as soon as we knew about it.

We got the last reports today about 3:30 but I had some of them yesterday for some of your units.

Let's talk about that. We are open to trying to make this as transparent as we possibly can so that we don't disrupt your normal daily routine.

For many of you, you will react to common fungal growth or mold, as it is called in the common lay term. It is an allergen and an irritant and for some of you it will affect you differently and for some of you it may have no affect at all on you.

We do know that it is something that we don't want you to be involved in. It is not something that we want to have to work around while you are in your unit.

We need to ask some questions. We are open to almost anything. This is our building but it is your home. We want to make this activity as easy and transparent as we possibly can.

Mr. Alvarez introduced Tony Pena – Lead Manager for this project.  
Melanie Villalobos – Chief of Staff  
Deborah Flach – Sr. VP of Operations  
Michael Bond – Director of Property Management

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**QUESTION:**

If you keep your apartment clean, will the mold still come?

**ANSWER:**

Some units may have more air quality concerns than others. We have a universal heating and air conditioning unit in this building. We have a general concern about every unit. The mold is not related to whether your apartment is clean or unclean. This has nothing to do with housekeeping. You may not see any evidence of the problems because it is in the air inside the building.

Where are the units located that we are relocating?

We have properties located in almost all parts of the city.

What if we want to stay here?

You will probably need to be relocated while the work is being done for your own health and safety, but you will be able to come back to Blanco and into the same unit that you were living in before.

How is it going to affect me? A while back some people were relocated and they got \$6K.

I am not aware of that situation but I will check into it.

I am having chemo. It is important that where I am located is close to my hospital.

We will find out where you work and where you receive chemo and possibly we can relocate you closer to your doctor's office.

Seniors sometimes have a set mind. They don't want to move. I would say, "Why stay here and let something kill you?"

We want to do what is the very best for our residents.

I don't want to move. I have been here since 1973. My apartment looks good.

The problem is not with your unit; it is with the air circulation system that is in the building.

Do we have to move? If we do, do we have first option over anyone else in the city when we move back?

Yes, everyone will probably have to move out temporarily, but you will be able to come back here to the same unit if you choose to do so.

What are the problems that you are trying to fix?

This has nothing to do with how you clean your apartment. It is just in the air from the central heating and air conditioning system.

Basically, we have more than a general concern in 28 of the units. They have air quality problems. The problem that we have

is from the universal air distribution system.

This building has a universal air system and when we start moving contaminated air around in other apartments it will flow into your unit through the air ducts.

Why are you asking us to move?

We believe that there is going to be considerable work that needs to be done inside your unit in order to maintain the air quality in the entire building.

When will we begin moving?

Representatives of SAHA will be here tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. and as soon as you can choose a new place, then we will move you. We will have folks here to do an assessment of what we have to do to get you relocated.

How long will we have before we move?

You can move as soon as tomorrow if we can get you ready to go. I don't know how long it will take to repair the entire building.

How long will it take SAHA to complete the work?

We don't know at this time.

Will I be able to move back to Blanco?

Yes, absolutely.

Will I have a preference over the other people who want housing when the repairs on Blanco are complete?

Yes, absolutely.

Will I be able to move back into the same apartment?

Yes, you will be able to move back into the same apartment.

If there is no mold in the unit, can a person still live there?

We would prefer you not be in Blanco Apartments when we start the remodeling. We will have a better sense of that when we get the final renovation plans and air quality reports.

We will be taking out walls; we will be taking out sheet rock; and dust will begin to circulate throughout the building.

Will I have to pay for any of this?

No, SAHA will pay for everything that we have explained tonight. Your rent will not change. Your rent will be the same as it is here at Blanco wherever you relocate.

Will I have to pay power bills or water bills?

You will not get stuck with water bills. No, because you are not paying them now. You will only be paying exactly what you are paying now.

What about the people who are disabled?

If you have medical disabilities, we will move you. We will hire movers to move you. We will also hire packers to pack you.

Who will pay for my moving?	SAHA will pay for moving you out of Blanco and we will also pay for moving you back in Blanco after the renovations are complete.
	Moving fees for an efficiency apartment are \$550, 1-bedroom is \$700, and a 2-bedroom is \$850. If you want to move yourself or get a family member to move you, then you get to keep the moving check.
Who will choose where we relocate?	You will be able to choose from a number of housing properties that we have available. We will provide a list of other public housing units.
What is the percentage of units that are highly contaminated?	We have considerate concerns in about 28 units. When we begin the work inside the building, we will be moving contaminated air through the central distribution system throughout the entire building.
Who will pay to move us back in?	SAHA will pay to move you out and SAHA will pay to move you back to Blanco.
Will Rueben still be the manager?	No. You will be getting a new manager.
Where are the units located where we will be relocated?	We have a number of units throughout the city. We have some near Blanco and we have some far from Blanco.
Do we have to remain in public housing?	No. You can use the voucher program to relocate from Blanco, which is public housing into housing that is not public housing. If you chose not to return to Blanco, you can keep your voucher.
What is a voucher?	A voucher is a program that allows you to use it anywhere in the continental USA and particularly in the city of san Antonio if the landlord will accept the voucher including buildings owned by SAHA.
	We can offer for you to use it temporarily and you can use the voucher if you do not want to move back.
	The only difference is if you decide to move somewhere else after the relocation project is complete, and then if the rent is higher there, you may have to pay higher rent. But we will address that issue if it arises.
Do we have to move back to Blanco?	No. If you want to remain on the voucher program, you can do that.
If I like where I relocate, do I have to	No. If you want to move to another housing unit and then move

move back to Blanco?

back to Blanco, we will pay for you to move. If you do not want to move back to Blanco, we will help you find another place.

Are we all going to have to move out?

That is our recommendation. There is going to be a lot of dust and in our senior facilities that is not a good situation. Not only because of the mold, but also because of the dust.

Can I get close to my mother?

There's a possibility for that. We can make every effort to help you achieve that. I cannot promise but we will certainly try.

If a resident is relocated to another apartment and they really don't like it there, will they be able to come back to you to find her another place? And will you pay to move her again?

We are going to consider every one of your specific needs to make this transition as smoothly as possible. We cannot move you ten times, but we will deal with everyone on an individual basis.

What is the name of the apartments on Hackberry and Nolan?

W.C. White apartments won't be ready for about 45 to 60 days. If we move you somewhere else now and that is where you want to go, then we will move you there (W.C.White) permanently. There are 100 of you. We are trying to make this as comfortable as possible.

I have chemo in Elmendorf. It is important as to where I am located.

We have buildings out in that area. Maybe you can relocate there. We will work on that.

Do all SAHA buildings allow us to have a dog?

I am not sure if all of them do, but we will allow you to pick somewhere that does allow dogs and other pets.

We are not sending anyone anywhere. We are going to allow you to choose.

W.C. White told us that we have to pay utilities there. Do we?

You will not have to pay anymore than what you are paying here. Your rent will be whatever it is here for as long as we have you out of the building because of the work being done on the building. For those of you who want to move back here, then your rent will be the same as you are paying now.

How will we know when our apartment is ready to move back in?

SAHA will keep track of all of you and you will be able to come back.

What about the disabled people who are in the hospital and not in their units all of the time?

Our staff will work with a designated person to get their keys and find out whom their representative is.

What if we want to stay where we relocate?

When we finish the building, then we will talk with everyone individually and see if you want to move back to Blanco.

If you decide to stay where you have relocated and the rent is

higher, then my staff will work with you to see if you can afford to stay there. There may also be a different utility schedule there. Your rent is based on your income.

Are more meetings going to be held here?

Yes, my staff will continue to have meetings here.

Will the residents receive any compensation for the problems that they may go through for inconvenience?

I would have to have a sense of what the compensation would be for. It determines what inconvenience you may have. We are going to pay all the moving expenses. You can move yourself if you want to and we will let you keep the check.

Can we get an approximate length of time that we will be out of Blanco?

I don't know yet. We don't know what all has to be done to the interior of the building. We do know that the air quality of the building will not be good air. We are getting with the experts to try to identify a time frame.

What about rent in other properties?

Your rent is based on your income. But as long as you are living in a relocated apartment, your rent will not go up. But if you chose to remain in the apartment that you relocate to, then we have to discuss new rent prices.

What if they require a water deposit?

We will pay your deposits for you. Such as power, water, etc.

I live in efficiency right now. Can I get a 1-bedroom?

Yes.

What about utility hook ups?

If you relocate from Blanco either temporarily or permanently, we will pay all of your hook up charges. If you move back to Blanco, then we are going to do that again.

What if the place where we relocate requires the first month rent in advance?

If they require a first month rent, then SAHA will look at that situation.

How about packing boxes?

We can pack your things for you or you can pack them yourself. We will provide the boxes.

Moving fees for an efficiency apartment are \$550, 1-bedroom is \$700, and a 2-bedroom is \$850. If you want to move yourself or get a family member to move you, then you get to keep the moving check.

Can we pack our own things?

Yes, but before you pack, we need to examine your belongings and if your furniture or clothing has mold, then we may have to clean it for you. The environmental experts will determine that.

When will we be able to move back into Blanco?

The period of time that we are talking about is the time that it takes to complete the work on this apartment.

When we complete the tasks, then we will come to each of you and find out if you want to move back.

When we move back to Blanco, what if the deposit is higher here at Blanco than it is now?

We are going to take care of that. We are going to make sure that your financial condition is the same as it is now.

The period of time that we are talking about is how long it takes to complete the tasks in this building.

When the work is complete, then we will begin talking about if you want to move back or not.

When will you have a list of the properties that we can review?

We will have a list of public housing units for you tomorrow.

---End of Questions and Answers---

Henry Alvarez:

I am going to give you a handout that gives you more information. I apologize that it is only in English and we will provide it to you in Spanish.

We will have other meetings to continue these questions and we will provide the answers. We are open to whatever you want to do. Talk about it with your neighbors and we can decide when we have upcoming meetings. I know that you have meals here and we can also have luncheon meetings. If you want to have them on Wednesday or Thursday, then we will work with you on that.

**Our goal: “We will take care of any actual and reasonable costs.”**

Mr. Alvarez gave the name of various facilities that will be available for the residents of Blanco will be able to choose from. He said that there is also a new complex named Alhambra located new Laredo Highway and SW Military Drive.

We will have an after-hours phone number where someone at SAHA can be reached if there is a problem.

The meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

---End---