

CAN Community Council Meeting

Minutes

11/20/06

5:30 – 7:30pm

City Hall, Board and Commissions Room, 301 West 2nd St.

Attendees Al Perez, Nancy Neavel, Willie Williams, Leslie Hernandez, Barbara Cilley, Kathy Armenta, Amanda Arlitt, Bruce Elfant, Laurie Seremetis, Clint Smith, Jessica Flores, Susan McCormick, Michelle Augustine, Pat Dabbert, Amy Wong Mok, Terry Cowan,

Unable to Attend: Penny Lichenstein, Clarence Bibby, , Linda Murphy, Jenny Martin, Anne Harutunian, Barbara Smith, Barbara Anderson, Myrna Meza, Mitch Sudolsky, Glenn Gadbois, Joe Jerkins, Debbie Wise, Sandra Gonzales

Meeting Called By: Community Action Network

Facilitator: Al Perez

Note Taker: Sam Woollard

Timekeeper: Fred Butler

Call to Order and Announcements

Al Perez

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Chair, Al Perez.

Announcements:

- The East Austin Economic Summit that was held recently provided an opportunity for small businesses in East Austin to discuss economic changes in the area and the impact on local businesses
- Project Recovery, which will provide 90 days of inpatient treatment for substance abuse followed by 90 days of case management, has opened. It will have the capacity to serve 200 people in a year
- The UT School of Social Work is developing the Vision and Valor Social Justice Awards
- AISD continues to celebrate its 125th Anniversary

Citizens Communication:

None

Review and Approve Meeting Summary

Al Perez

The October minutes were approved as presented.

Affordable Housing - What's Happening - What Can We do?

Paul Hilgers, Director of the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department, outlined the housing continuum, which includes: Homelessness - Emergency Shelter – Transitional Housing – Public Housing – Assisted Housing – Rental Housing - First time Homebuyers and Owner Occupied Housing. Currently, public funding tends to create competition amongst these sectors. In Travis County, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA), provides 10,000 families with subsidized housing through the Section 8 program and 2,300 families reside in Public Housing. In order to be successful, all parts of the housing continuum have to be addressed. Through its SMART Housing program, the City of Austin has supported the development of 3,500 affordable housing units. The City of Austin has three strategies for affordability:

1. Construction of new affordable homes and apartments
2. Repair and reconstruction of existing homes & apartments
3. Preservation of long-term affordability and protecting public investments

One challenge that the City did not anticipate was the rapid increase in housing costs on the City's Eastside. In order to address this, there are a couple of models that are being considered which include: 1) shared equity loans and 2) community land trusts. The City will also put an increased emphasis on increasing home-owner financing education. **Francie Ferguson, President of HousingWorks**, outlined the work that HousingWorks did to get the affordable housing bonds on the ballot. The goal of HousingWorks is to encourage a culture of housing affordability. Throughout the country affordable housing stock is being lost and getting older. It is estimated that 54,000 households in Travis County pay more than is federally recommended for housing. The areas of focus for HousingWorks are: 1) bond accountability, 2) Preservation of affordable housing, especially rental stock, 3) balanced development, and 4) budget priorities – finding additional revenue streams for affordable housing. Francie outlined some local solutions which include: 1) creating area wide inventories of available land, 2) creating programs to support preservation, 3) creating additional revenue streams for affordable housing, and 4) creating mixed use developments. **Susan McDowell, Executive Director of Lifeworks**, outlined the challenges for youth who need shelter. Lifeworks has street outreach programs, emergency shelter for youth ages 17 and under (currently 18 per night but increasing to 32 per night), transitional living (capacity 16) and supportive housing (25 apartments). The key challenges for housing youth are that capacity depends on funding and government funding only partially covers the costs of a quality program. Susan reported that increasingly funding sources that target youth are

disconnected from the real challenges of youth. She offered ways in which the community can be involved in this issue including : 1) participating in the home improvement challenge, 2) eat at and order catering from Lifeworks Ben and Jerry's ice cream on 5th, and 3) Participate in Holiday Help. For any of these opportunities, email: Emily.Schneider@lifeworksweb.org

DISCUSSION: Members requested that the slides from the presentation be posted to the CAN website. Members discussed how to identify the Return on Investment from investing in housing. There is evidence that stable housing promotes increases in school performance, reduces crime, offers the ability to increase assets, and reduces healthcare costs, but it is difficult to directly tie these to housing as there are so many other mitigating factors. It was stated that this is an area that needs further study. Several local organizations were cited for creating well run low income housing. The keys to success seem to be: 1) treat people with dignity and respect, 2) provide education and flexibility, 3) focus on personal assets and strengths, 4) create opportunities to build financial assets, including curriculums on personal finance, and 5) create a safe environment. In order to continue to fund affordable housing, alternate taxing structures, such as an income tax, may need to be considered. Members were interested in the land trust concept as well as building incentives that developers find useful but also include accountability so that affordable properties aren't "flipped". There was interest in exploring after-school models on-site at various apartment complexes. It was noted that there has to be a connection between where affordable housing is built and the transportation infrastructure.

Nominating Committee

Pat Dabbert reviewed the Nominating Committee's recommendations for new members, Community Council Vice-Chair and Representative to the Resource Council. The recommendation:

Consumer Services:

Shawn Lemieux

Manwah "Maureen" Siu

Marquis Williams

Professional/Experts

Cynthia Colbert

Kevin Coleman

Community Members

Laura Morrison

Ronnie Mendoza

Community Council Vice-Chair for 2007

Terry Cowan

Community Council Representative to the Resource Council (1 open slot)

Michelle Augustine

ACTION: Members unanimously moved and approved the slate recommended by the Nominating Committee. Note: the Nominating Committee is still seeking a representative with expertise in transportation.

Good Community is Good Business

Jessica Flores

Jessica Flores reported that she has participated both on the planning committee and as a pilot business for Good Community is Good Business. The purpose of this program, which is co-sponsored by CAN and Greenlights, is to connect small businesses and charities so that they can strategically partner. By using the toolkit, Jessica has been able to be creative and identify ways in which her paint and body shop can connect with a local charity and share their skills.

Supporting the Issue Area Groups

Al Perez

Al shared some initial ideas about ways in which CAN can more effectively support the Issue Area Groups. He outlined some potential roles and expectations for the IAG's as well as ideas about CAN's role. It was suggested that CAN staff compile a summary of the current Issue Area Groups.

Program Committee

Al Perez

The December program will recap the work of the Community Council over the last year and plan for the areas of focus in 2007. Members requested that a list of the programs from the last two years be available at the December meeting.

Executive Director Report:

Fred Butler

Fred reported that Executive Director search is going well and that the field is being narrowed to those who will receive phone interviews. He reminded members about the CAN End of Year Celebration on December 8 and reported that the Homeless Forum had over 250 people attend. CAN recently released FAQ's on Homelessness and Education.

5:30PM

Adjourn

Al Perez

Next Community Council meeting: Monday December 18, 2006, 5:30pm, City Hall