

CAN Community Council Meeting

Minutes

9/18/06

5:30 – 7:30pm

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

Attendees Al Perez, Debbie Wise, Nancy Neavel Willie Williams, Leslie Hernandez, Mitch Sudolsky, Barbara Cilley, Amanda Arlitt, Bruce Elfant, Jenny Martin, Laurie Seremetis, Clint Smith, Pat Dabbert, Barbara Anderson, Amy Wong Mok,

Unable to Attend: Jessica Flores, Mary Wambach, , Penny Lichenstein, Clarence Bibby, Kathy Armenta, , Linda Murphy, Anne Harutunian, Barbara Smith, Dale Simons, Myrna Meza, Michelle Augustine, Susan McCormick, Glenn Gadbois, Terry Cowan, Joe Jerkins, Sandra Gonzales

Meeting Called By: Community Action Network

Facilitator: Al Perez

Note Taker: Fred Butler

Timekeeper: Fred Butler

Call to Order and Announcements

Al Perez

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

Announcements:

- Angel Del Rio was introduced as the new Program Director for CAN
- Lifeworks just completed a Home Improvement Challenge where organizations decorated the apartments of Lifeworks Youth who are in the transitional living program. Lifeworks also has a raffle for a Mitsubishi Eclipse. Call 735-2472 for more information.
- Barbara Cilley reported that the CAN Resource Council Meeting in August focused on a presentation by Capital Metro on their All Systems Go approach. More details can be found on the Capital Metro website. The Resource Council also reviewed the process for hiring the new Executive Director for CAN. The process will result in an Executive Director being hired before Fred's departure at the end of February
- Debbie Wise reported that the Ready by 21 Coalition is assisting in the creation of a Youth Council to advise WorkSource and hopefully other community leaders. If you know of young people who may be interested, please contact Debbie.

Citizens Communication:

Jackie Goodman reported that the **Council on At-risk Youth (CARY)** focuses on prevention and intervention. She outlined how their work relates to the recommendation from the 2001 CAN Public Safety report to balance public safety spending and prevention spending. Jackie recommended that CAN revisit the recommendations from the report and encourage the community to focus efforts on prevention. Rhonda, a Board member for CARY, stated that CARY targets youth who are beginning to get involved in the trouble and provides interventions so that they do not end up in the criminal justice system. They provide evidence-based interventions.

Francie Ferguson, Chair of the Board of **HousingWorks**, encouraged members to learn more about the \$55 million Affordable Housing bond and vote in the election. The bond is focused on creating safe and affordable housing. Francie invited members to participate in HousingWorks Housing Forum on Saturday October 7 from 8:30am-Noon at St Edward's University. The purpose of the forum is to dialogue about the spectrum of housing policies needed to create safe and affordable housing.

Review and Approve Meeting Summary

Al Perez

The August minutes were approved as presented.

Community Forum: Building Bridges: Brick by Brick -Mike Manor and

African-American Quality of Life Initiative & Building Bridges Brick by Brick Initiative: Addressing Diversity Issues in Our Community

Mike Manor, Chair of the **Building Bridges: Brick by Brick Initiative**, outlined how the group, which is led by Travis County Sheriff Greg Hamilton, intends to reach the objective of "fostering sustainable working relationships between criminal justice and law enforcement professionals and the faith community." The Action Goal is: "Bringing Law Enforcement and the Faith-Based Community Together to make the Austin-Travis County Central Texas Community a Better Place to Live". This is being accomplished through three bridge building action teams: 1) Law Enforcement – Faith Community Brick, *establishing relationships between law enforcement and the faith community* 2) Media Community Brick, *bringing media into the process of police communication and reconciliation and promoting positive stories* and 3) Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Brick, *developing more support systems and programs inside and outside of jails and prisons*. Mike reported that poverty and race relations are two

driving forces and that there is a need to create social equity and focus on assets. Members were invited to join the committees and attend the next full meeting on October 13. **Shannon Jones and Joe Barnes**, with the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department, outlined the results of the **African American Quality of Life Report**. The report, which was released in 2005, focused on the challenges facing the African American population in 5 areas: Police and Safety, Neighborhood Sustainability, Arts and Culture, Education and Health. Shannon focused his remarks on the efforts that have been made to close the health disparities. In 2006, the City Health Department put forth 9 recommendations to close the health disparity gaps:

- 1) Develop a clinic focused on the African American population - this is now open in Northeast Austin
- 2) Create a prevention team – this is up and functioning
- 3) Create a panel to review and make recommendations on the process for signing up for the MAP program – this is occurring in conjunction with the Healthcare District
- 4) Recruit more African American health professionals
- 5) Develop a prevention education plan – culturally appropriate materials have been developed
- 6) Engage Seton and St Davids
- 7) Develop Mental Health Strategies – mental health is being incorporated into the Prevention Teams' work
- 8) Establish a community wellness and prevention consortium – this will be implemented in October
- 9) Adopt neighborhood based education and screening model

DISCUSSION: It was suggested that people with disabilities be included in the discussions about health as many people of color are using outdated equipment. In response to a question about other communities' success with closing the gaps in healthcare, it was reported that Austin has used many elements of successful models, but is pioneering the way with the scope of local efforts. There were questions about using culturally appropriate drug regimens (this has been an issue especially in the Asian populations). It was noted that the City's health efforts target prevention including proper nutrition and exercise but that they are aware of the drug issues. In response to a question about the health of youth, Shannon reported that the City is working with the school districts but that they are seeing some real impacts from the effects of the youth's own or their families drug abuse.

In response to questions about the Building Bridges effort, Mike reported that the Austin Police Department is involved in their work and that they are inclusive in their approach. The group does have to deal with historical policies that have contributed to the current race and class challenges.

It was noted that the community has to address all areas of equity while still targeting specific inequities. This leads to creating targeted initiatives. There was discussion about the role of government in all these issues.

Hurricane Impact

Sam Woollard reported on the latest statistics and challenges related to the Hurricane Evacuees. There is a current challenge to assist evacuees who are eligible to recertify before October 31 so that they can continue to receive benefits until February 28. An additional challenge is that many households are exhausting the 12 month assistance with their utility bills. The majority of evacuees who are still in Austin, believe that they will be here for the foreseeable future as affordable housing and quality schools are not readily available.

Discussion: Members were curious about the availability of several services including how the federal Workforce funds are being utilized and the availability of trauma counseling. It was recommended that social service providers who are working with evacuees become trained in recognizing the signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Members were encouraged to review the letter that has been sent to federal and state officials asking for additional resources, especially Section 8 housing vouchers, for evacuees. The letter can be found on the Texas Low Income Housing website: <http://www.texashousing.org/>

CAN Executive Director Transition

Fred Butler

Fred reviewed the timeline for filling the CAN Executive Director position. He will be leaving at the end of February. Members were asked to review the job description and share with people who may be interested. The Search Committee will include a representative from the Community Council. Interested members were asked to send an e-mail expressing interest to Al.

Program Committee

Al Perez

Al reported that due to health considerations Dale Simons has resigned from the Community Council and her position as Chair of the Program Committee. In October, the Community Council will focus on mental health. Al will call a meeting of the Program Committee to plan for the rest of the year.

Executive Director Report:

Fred Butler

Fred reported that the Issue Area Groups will meet on Friday at WorkSource to identify common themes and cross-cutting issues. On Friday October 6, Envision Central Texas is hosting a forum on regional growth and there will be a presentation by state demographer Steve Murdock who will discuss the Texas and our region's changing demographics and the implications. Members were also encouraged to attend the CAN retreat on Friday October 13 at the Woodward Conference Center.

5:30PM

Adjourn

Al Perez

Next Community Council meeting: Monday October 16, 2006, 5:30pm, City Hall