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Community Action Network Community Council 12/17/07 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Al Perez, Amy Wong Mok, Anne Harutunian, Nancy Neavel, Pat Dabbert, Terry Cowan, Marquis Williams, Penny Lichenstein, Sandra Gonzalez, Vanessa Sarria, Laura Morrison, John Michael Cortez, Kevin Coleman, Amy Arquilla.

Unable to Attend: Clint Smith, Barbara Anderson, Cynthia Colbert, Linda Murphy, Barbara Smith, Willie Williams, Laurie Seremetis, Amanda Arlitt, Barbara Cilley, Bruce Elfant, Jessica Flores, Kathy Armenta, Leslie Hernandez, Michelle Augustine, Mitch Sudolsky, Maureen Siu, Susan McCormick, Shawn Lemieux.

- I. **Call to Order, Introductions & Announcements:** Pat Dabbert, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:40PM.
- II. **Review & Approve Community Council Minutes:** Meeting minutes from November 19, 2007, were reviewed and approved as presented.
- III. **Citizen's Communication:** Rhoda Montgomery, from the Basic Needs Coalitions of Central Texas (BNC) presented on the upcoming January 2008 Poverty Awareness Month. The BNC is having a cocktail party and photography exhibit at the Caswell House on January 10, 2008. Please see more about Poverty Awareness Month at the Basic Needs Coalitions web site. <http://www.caction.org/basicneeds/index.htm>.
- IV. **Tim Brown, Project Liaison with Paratransit Education and Advocacy Collaborative (PEAC),** presented on efforts to: enhance community awareness regarding resources by launching a new website, expand outreach efforts in several large communities in Texas including Austin, and train riders about transportation options. PEAC would like CAN to assist them in engaging customers in need of Paratransit services in the Spring of 2008. PEAC is planning to conduct a survey and/or focus groups to better understand the needs of customers. PEAC wants to engage and support persons with Disabilities who use Para transit services, develop Customer-centered tools that help identify services and technical assistance, and implement projects largely led by Para transit Customers. For more information, visit www.ParatransitTexas.org.
- V. **New 2008 Community Council Members and Representatives to the CAN Resource Council:** Pat Dabbert, Chair, announced that the Nominating Committee nominated five new Community Council Members for 2008 including: Ms. Tara Dixon, Ms. Ruby Roa, Ms. Kathie Tovo, Dr. Monica Beckford, and Mr. Eric Blumberg.

Terry Cowan opened the discussion on nominations for the CAN Community-at-Large members who would represent the CAN Community Council at the CAN Resource Council in 2008. He indicated that Anne Harutunian and Pat Dabbert had expressed an interest in continuing to represent the Community Council at the Resource Council. Cowan then asked the Community Council if others would be interested in serving; no others indicated such an interest. Cowan then asked if they would accept his nomination to serve on the Resource Council as a Community-at-Large member. With Amy Wong Mok making the first motion, the nominations were accepted. Vanessa Sarria then indicated that it would be important for Terry, Pat, and Anne to ensure that Cynthia Colbert be given an opportunity to attend the Resource Council meetings as a proxy should they be unable to attend meetings. Vanessa indicated that it is important to ensure that the Community Council leadership understands the issues being addressed at the Resource Council so that the workplans of the two councils are related to the overall workplan of the CAN.

- VI. **Equity in Opportunity Forum on Transportation – Presenters for Transportation** John Michael Cortez (Capital Metro), Stevie Greathouse (Regional Transit Coordination

Committee), and Glenn Gadbois (Texas Citizen Fund / CAN Focus Groups): John Michael Cortez presented on CapMetro's mission, vision, role, successes and initiatives to address equity in opportunity. CapMetro has a 500 square-mile service area that includes Austin, Jonestown, Lago Vista, Leander, Manor, San Leanna, Point Venture, Volente and portions of Travis and Williamson County. CapMetro also has the highest per capita ridership in Texas with over 140,000 one-way trips daily and 35 million total annual boardings. Local bus service includes 3,300 bus routes (12 park and rides), 400 buses, and 114 routes. Other services include paratransit, rideshare, vanpools, special event shuttles, and a 162 mile rail freight services. Cortez reported that CapMetro's new vision is to double the ridership by 2020. Request for support from the CAN included coordination and communication with other organizations to address gaps and increasing public awareness of issues and challenges to closing transportation gaps. Challenges include the cost of providing high quality services while maintaining current levels of ADA compliance; CapMetro will inevitably need to increase bus fares in order to keep up with current public transportation demands and costs. CapMetro indicated that it currently surpasses current ADA standards and provides one of the highest levels of service in this area in comparison to others. CapMetro would also like to educate the public about the benefits of using public transportation and living close to already established bus routes. Cortez encouraged planning organizations to consider proximity to already established bus routes when considering where to locate facilities and services for the public.

Stevie Greathouse presented on initiatives of the Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC). The RTCC is submitting an application to be designated as a CAN Issue Area Group in early 2008. Stevie presented their goals and future planning efforts along with the current barriers to coordinating transportation initiatives in the region. Stevie discussed the RTCC 2007-2008 Workplan. She asked CAN partners to: support the plan and help identify opportunities for improved coordination between rural and urban transit services; assist with developing partnerships between social services agencies and transit providers to build new services that compliment existing services and fill in existing gaps; and to assist with identifying potential projects for funding through currently available FTA grants. For more information, please visit their web site: www.CapitalAraRtcc.org

Glenn Gadbois provided an overview of the transportation focus groups convened in the summer of 2008 by CAN Intern Brandy Carroll and presented on major findings. The report and findings can be found on <http://www.caction.org/reports/TransportationFocusGroupRpt.pdf>.

Key concerns from the Community Council related to transportation included issues concerning folks having their needs met and what the transportation systems are planning in the community.

VII. Update from the Programs and Response Committee – Al Perez stated that the Program and Response Committee meeting was canceled for the month of December 2007.

VIII. CAN Executive Director's Report: Vanessa Sarria presented the **2007 CAN End of Year Report** to the Community Council which included highlights of CAN Issue Area Group initiatives in 2007 as well as highlights on the work of the various CAN committees (including the Community Council). The report will be posted on [caction.org](http://www.caction.org) to enhance awareness about the various CAN and Issue Area Group initiatives. Issue Area Group and CAN highlights were featured on television monitors at the CAN End of Year Event.

IX. Meeting Adjourned at 7:38 pm. Next Community Council meeting: Monday, January 14, 2008, 5:30 pm, City Hall.