

CAN Community Council Meeting

Minutes

2/21/07

5:30 – 7:30pm

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

Attendees Al Perez, Amy Wong Mok, Barbara Anderson, Barbara Smith, Bruce Elfant, Clint Smith, Cynthia Colbert, Debbie Wise, Kevin Coleman, Laura Morrison, Linda Murphy, Maureen Siu, Nancy Neavel, Pat Dabbert, Penny Lichenstein, Sandra Gonzales, Shawn Lemieux, Terry Cowan, Willie Williams

Unable to Attend: Amanda Arlitt, Anne Harutunian, Barbara Cilley, Jenny Martin, Jessica Flores, Joe Jerkins, John Michael Cortez, Kathy Armenta, Laurie Seremetis, Leslie Hernandez, Marquis Williams, Michelle Augustine, Mitch Sudolsky, Ronnie Mendoza, Susan McCormick

Meeting Called By: Community Action Network

Facilitator: Pat Dabbert

Note Taker: Angel Del Rio

Timekeeper: Vanessa Sarria

Call to Order

Pat Dabbert

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Chair, Pat Dabbert.

Citizens Communication:

None

Review and Approve Meeting Summary

Pat Dabbert

There was no January meeting. The December minutes were approved as presented.

Community Forum: Key Findings of the 2005 American Community Survey – Its Impact in Central Texas. Marissa Churchin and Ana Almaguel, from the Travis County Research and Planning Division presented major findings of the 2005 American Survey. Highlights of the presentation as follows:

- Hispanic and Asian populations are growing.
- There is an age dependency ratio growing as the number of children and elderly are growing.
- The Travis County poverty rate is higher than the national percentage of individuals living in the poverty line, but significantly lower than the Texas estimate.
- We are the 6th in poverty rate in the nation.
- Population in Texas has accelerated growing as well.
- Largest population is between 25 to 44 years of age.
- By 2015, and if the growing conditions continues, the Latino community will be the majority in Texas.
- 32% of families speak other than English at home.
- There is a high rate of the population that do not have a high school diploma
- Travis County experienced an increasing in income in the workforce. As the job demand gets more specialized there will be a decrease of workforce.
- The household income has remained the same while the cost of living has become higher.
- There is a higher risk of poverty for single females head of household with children under 5 years.

This presentation was very well accepted. Community Council members engaged the presenters in a dialogue that included the following questions: Who was included at the time of the survey? Was it the entire population including undocumented migrants? Is there a margin of error? Who was left out? Presenters affirmed that there is always an undercounting for this type of surveys but still the Federal Census Office tries to employ people who know the community. This way the Census department tries to reduce the margin of error in the counting.

There was an emphasis on the impact of education in the demographics and the rate of dropouts in high schools. What are the actions currently being taken by the school district to maintain drop out levels to its minimum? How does race relationship is reflected in the drop out levels? What about school violence and gang related activities? Are there any actions currently being taken to minimize violence at schools?

Poverty Awareness Month. Cynthia Colvert – Catholic Charities and Ellen Balthazar – Any Baby Can – were the presenters of the Poverty Awareness Month Update. The Basic Needs Coalition has as its mission to eliminate the effects of poverty and promote self-sufficiency by securing resources to the neighborhoods. One of the tools that Basic Needs worked on this year was a Survey of Food Providers. This survey helped identify gaps of food pantries in the city of Austin. As a result of this survey the BNC made

recommendations to various community organizations for finding solutions to this situation. As a result of this, there are various faith-based organizations currently collaborating together to supply with a food pantry where there is no other community organizations providing with food service.

Most of the events for the Poverty Month were moved to the end of January and the month of February due to bad weather. This situation did not affect the impact these events had in the community. There was a successful summit on the impact of poverty on business and education. The poverty fact sheet helped to raise awareness in the community. Some of the highlights from the Poverty Fact Sheet are as follow:

- One in six people live in poverty in Austin.
- 6% children lives under poverty.
- Almost half of single mothers with children under the age of five are living in poverty.
- Almost 5,000 of our senior population live under the poverty level.
- People with mental disability are twice times more ready to live in poverty.

Focusing on Social Equity. Fred presented the framework from which CAN will focus its energy this year. He emphasized the importance of connecting social equity with every action taken by every one of CAN bodies. The main areas that CAN will concentrate its efforts through the Social Equity report are: Wages, Education, Workforce Development, Affordable Housing, Early Education & Care, Community Health, Transportation, and Leadership. These areas are essential to the work of CAN and will be aligned to CAN's goals, values, role, and focus areas. Vanessa Sarria, the new ED will present this framework in more detail at the February meeting.

Community Council Workplan 2007 – Continuing the December Dialogue

Pat Dabbert

Pat encouraged council members to continue planning on what will be the framework for this year. Community members expressed the need to update CAN's presence with technological tools such as blogs and e-mail groups. They also suggested finding ways to make the CAN website to be more interactive with its audience, and also find ways to include an e-mail address or contact number where the TV audience can leave their input/feedback about the Community Council sessions.

Al Perez encouraged community members to volunteer in various committees and groups during this year. The following are opportunities Community Council members has to engage in a more proactive action: Programs Committee, Response Committee, Good Community is Good Business Planning Group, Nominating Committee, and as Liaison of an IAG.

Executive Director Report:

Fred Butler

Fred thanked the Community Council members for the work of 2006 and for making the Community Council such a great forum for the community at large. Community members thanked Fred for his outstanding work as CAN Executive Director for the past 11 years. Pat Dabbert presented Fred a *medal of honor* for his dedication to improve the quality of life of the community through CAN.

Vanessa Sarria was introduced as the new CAN Executive Director. Community members welcomed her and assured her that the Community Council will collaborate closely with her as they did with Fred.

7:30PM

Adjourn

Pat Dabbert

Next Community Council meeting: Monday March 19, 2007, 5:30pm, City Hall