



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR
(June 14, 2017)**

The Commission on Seniors convened a regular meeting at City Hall in the Executive Session Room, Room 1027 – 301 West 2nd Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Chair, Janee Briesemeister, called the Board Meeting to order at 12:07p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

<i>Janee Briesemeister, Chair</i>	<i>Natalie Cagle</i>	<i>Billy Jackson</i>	<i>Emily De Maria Nicola</i>
<i>Peter Varteressian, Vice-Chair</i>	<i>Erica Garcia-Pittman</i>	<i>Martin Kareithi</i>	<i>Sally Van Sickle</i>
<i>Patricia Bordie</i>	<i>Karen Grampp</i>	<i>Fred Lugo</i>	
	<i>Adam Hauser</i>		

Board Members not in Attendance:

Jacqueline Angel

Staff in Attendance:

Laura Williamson, Austin Public Health

The board introduced themselves.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

- i. Josue Guillen
 - a. Newly appointed Commissioner representing District 1 on the Commission on Seniors
 - b. Supports nonprofits and social justice groups with technology needs
 - c. Looking forward to serving on Commission beginning in July
- ii. Teresa Ferguson
 - a. Provided notification of luncheon summit to bring businesses, nonprofits, educators, and policy makers together regarding jobs and workforce efforts for older adults
 - b. Will be held on June 20, 2017 at the ACC Highland Mall campus from 11:30-1:30

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COMMISSION ON SENIORS MAY 10, 2017 MEETING

- Commissioner Van Sickle motioned to pass the minutes with minor corrections
- Commissioner Grampp seconded the motion
- Motion passed 10-0-2 with Vice Chair Varteressian and Commissioner Kareithi abstaining

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation and discussion regarding the Rebekah Baines Johnson Center (RBJ)

- Chair Briesemeister introduced the speaker and provided context that the Housing Working Group had heard the same presentation and thought it would benefit the full Commission to talk through the redevelopment efforts at RBJ
- Diana McIver, President of DMA Companies talked generally about their housing portfolio overall which is approximately half dedicated to seniors including properties across Texas and in Georgia
- Brief discussion regarding the history of RBJ
 - i. President Johnson decided before leaving office in 1969 to create an experimental campus where seniors could have independent living and care through nursing
 1. Included affordable and market rate for seniors plus a nursing home option
 - ii. Federal fish hatchery shuttered and contributed toward \$500,000 grant given to Austin Geriatric Center
 - iii. Nonprofit was created to buy land
 1. Favorable loan terms available from HUD at the time
 - iv. Facility named after President Johnson's mother
 - v. Designed after set of nursing home standards for Medicare
 1. Standards changed and facility was out of date within a few years
- Redevelopment efforts:
 - i. Selected team to work on redevelopment process through competitive solicitation
 1. Primary goal to double affordable senior housing
 2. Aiming to create mixed-use vibrant community
 - ii. Site permit expected by end of August
 - iii. As redesign occurs, will need to accommodate new accessibility issues
 1. New structure will include four story building around existing tower which will include 276 units
 - a. Renovations will reduce the number of units in the tower, but will be able to reach 500 total unit goal with new building structures
 - iv. Site will include some market rate units on the other parcels of the property that will help to fund the affordable units
 1. Overall will be a mixed income, mixed use development
- Discussion and questions regarding available social services on site
 - i. Family Eldercare will have an office in the new structure and provide broad and comprehensive social services
- City building is not currently part of the planned redevelopment
- Tower residents will be relocated to new building during tower renovations
 - i. Unclear where Section 8 residents will end up. Ideally would like for residents to have a choice of living in renovated tower or new units, but will depend on if Section 8 considers tower and new units to be comparable in a way that allows them that choice
- Discussion regarding space for other community organizations
 - i. A lot of areas will be available such as the community room and auditorium for events

- ii. Several offices for rent will be available for other providers that want to lease ongoing space
 - Construction expected to begin in late December 2017 or early January 2018
 - i. 18-month process plus another year for tower rehabilitation
 - ii. Likely 2020 before new residents will be able to move in
 - Discussion regarding possibility of having pharmacy on site for seniors to access
 - Approximately 75% of ground floor spaces will be utilized for retail and commercial
- B. Discussion and possible action regarding Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget recommendations
- Commissioner Briesemeister distributed revised budget working document
 - i. Edits from previous version based on feedback from Commission and Working Group discussions
 - Discussion regarding the importance of prioritizing recommendations based on critical needs given the anticipation of a tight budget year
 - Expectations that budget recommendations may be a two step process
 - i. Initial budget priorities will be recommended from Commission
 - ii. Additional recommendations may be made after the City Manager's budget is released depending on what is included and/or cut in that proposal
 - Would be ideal to have clear budget amount and number of FTEs (where applicable) for each budget recommendation item, but not possible for every item
 - i. Can be expanded on by Council or City Staff after initial recommendation is passed
 - Discussion of initial budget recommendation regarding City staff person for an Age Friendly Austin Project Coordinator
 - i. Discussion regarding whether Commission wants to request new FTE, reallocation of existing position, or assign tasks to multiple positions related to implementation of the Age Friendly City Plan
 - 1. Benefits to accountability and ownership if one point person is assigned
 - 2. Debate regarding most appropriate department to house position
 - a. Zoning and Planning Department seems like the best fit for this request
 - ii. Commissioner Garcia-Pittman motioned to recommend the city provide adequate personnel resources under the Imagine Austin Structure, or other appropriate department, for an Age Friendly Austin Project Coordinator that would focus on the successful implementation of the Age Friendly Austin plan, goals, and strategies.
 - iii. Commissioner Grampp seconded the motion
 - 1. Commissioner Varteressian indicated that while he supports the goals contained in the Action Plan, he believed the Commission should wait until additional support for the city staff is requested before voting on it.
 - iv. Motion passed 11-1-0 with Vice Chair Varteressian opposed and Commissioner Angel absent
 - Discussion of the second budget recommendation regarding surveys and data collection
 - i. Work could be done internally or by outside vendor
 - ii. Effective outreach often involves door-to-door efforts
 - iii. Would like robust survey(s) similar to those for the other Quality of Life

Commissions

- iv. Debate regarding amount needed for full efforts
 1. \$50,000 is conservative but likely the minimum needed
 - v. Commissioner Van Sickle motioned to recommend resources to develop a mechanism to survey the senior population on the issues that are most important to them and track and analyze population data based on age including a detailed breakdown of older adults
 - vi. Commissioner Nicola seconded the motion
 - vii. Motion passed 11-1-0 with Vice Chair Varteressian opposed and Commissioner Angel absent
- Discussion of the third recommendation regarding social service investments and community-based services
 - i. General discussion regarding need for services for vulnerable seniors
 - ii. Debate regarding the amount of increase needed compared to the increase in the number of seniors in the community
 - iii. Commissioner Kareithi motioned to support and expand current social service investment for programs specific to seniors, including community-based services that focus on physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being of seniors including social service contracts and neighborhood centers
 - iv. Commissioner Grampp seconded the motion
 1. Commissioner Van Sickle proposed a friendly amendment that funding be increased by “at least 3%,” which was accepted by Commissioners Kareithi and Grampp
 - v. Motion passed 11-0 with Commissioner Hauser recusing and Commissioner Angel absent.
 - Discussion of the fourth budget recommendation regarding vehicles for senior transportation through Parks and Recreation
 - i. Commissioner Kareithi presented a summary of this item including a discussion with Parks and Recreation staff confirming this as a demonstrated community need
 - ii. Commissioner Kareithi motioned to make a recommendation to replace three vehicles used by Parks and Recreation for Senior transport
 - iii. Motion seconded by Commissioner Grampp
 - iv. Motion passed 10-0 with Commissioner Hauser recusing, Commissioner Nicola off the dais, and Commissioner Angel absent
 - Discussion of the fifth budget recommendation regarding home repair services
 - i. Commissioner Varteressian motioned to recommend additional funding for home repair services, with an increase of at least 5% above FY 17 funding levels
 - ii. Commissioner Kareithi seconded the motion
 - iii. The motion passed 10-0 with Commissioner Hauser recusing, Commissioner Nicola off the dais, and Commissioner Angel absent
 - Discussion of the sixth budget recommendation regarding language access services available to boards and commissions
 - i. Commissioner Van Sickle motioned to make a recommendation for funding for language access (translation and interpretation services) for City boards and commissions for posted meetings, meetings, and community meetings
 - ii. Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion

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- iii. The motion passed 11-0 with Commissioner Nicola off the dais and Commissioner Angel absent

C. Discussion and possible action regarding recommendations for CodeNEXT

- Chair Briesemeister discussed meeting with Council Member Kitchen’s office regarding senior options for housing
- Working to arrange meeting with Housing Working Group and CodeNEXT staff
 - i. Need to identify senior housing needs to pass along
 - 1. Commissioners encouraged to send senior housing issues to the Chair and Vice Chair to be relayed to CodeNEXT staff

D. Discussion regarding annual Commission on Seniors report

- Report will be distributed before July meeting where draft will be discussed and potentially adopted
 - i. Mary Teeters put together initial draft

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion regarding developing recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 City of Austin budget – Standing item

- i. No discussion

B. Commission Work Plan – Standing Item

- i. No discussion

C. Updates from Working Groups – Standing Item

- i. Transportation

- a. Citizen Communication: Shubhada Saxena

- Congregate meal program does not have adequate transportation access for seniors, currently provided on an “as-available” service
 - Has not been available 4 out of the last 5 weeks due to driver shortage
- Service is supposed to be available to the community, but not able to provide as needed
 - Parks and Recreation staff currently looking into the issue
 - Commissioner Kareithi offered to follow up with Parks and Recreation staff as well

- ii. Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- a. No discussion

- iii. Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion

- a. No discussion

- iv. Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information

- a. No discussion

- v. Community Health Services

- a. No discussion

- vi. Age Friendly City

- a. No discussion

D. Update on Joint Inclusion Committee – Standing Item (Janee Briesemeister)

- a. No discussion

E. Update on Equity Action Team – Standing Item (Emily De Maria Nicola)

- a. No discussion

5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- A. Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- i. No discussion of new items
- ii. Staff to include the listing of previous future agenda items on minutes to retain items discussed.
 1. Affordable Housing
 2. Texas Veterans Commission
 3. Hispanic Quality of Life
 4. Veterans Affairs Office
 5. Google representative
 6. State Veterans Services
 7. Foundation Communities
 8. Austin Energy – Weatherization and home repair
 9. Home renovation for seniors
 10. Housing and resources for senior musicians and artists
 11. Dell Medical School
 12. Falls Prevention Course, tentatively scheduled for September
 13. CodeNEXT

ADJOURNMENT

- Commissioner Hauser motioned to adjourn meeting.
- Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 11-0
- Meeting adjourned at 2:03pm.