



African American Resources Advisory Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 4, 2018

The African American Resources Advisory Commission convened in a meeting on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 in the Executive Session conference room at Austin City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street, in Austin, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 5:40 by Chair Kenneth Thompson.

African American Resources Advisory Commissioners:

Present: Chair Kenneth Thompson, Vice Chair Chiquita Eugene, LaTisha Anderson, Jessica Faith Carter, Miriam Conner, Aaron Demerson, Clifford Gillard, Tam Hawkins, Daryl Horton, Marissa Jones, Nelson Linder, and Elaina Fowler

Absent: Gregory Smith and Ruthie Redmond

City Staff in Attendance: Economic Development Department (EDD) Acting Deputy Director Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, Assistant City Manager Mark Washington, Chief Equity Officer Brion Oaks, and EDD Development Services Administrator and Liaison Linda Hayes.

1. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the July 3 regular meeting were approved unanimously following a motion by Commissioner Gillard, seconded by Commissioner Anderson.

2. Chair's Report:

Chair Thompson combined his report with the budget report for Economic Development.

3. Citizen Communication:

- a. **Jose Vera** – Addressed the commission to make them aware that M/WBE contractors are being excluded from development on city land. At Mueller, which has been under development for eight to ten years, under the private third-party agreement, the developer is the MBE/WBE facilitator; SMBR is not involved. He is concerned that the City is collecting information on contractors and turning it over to developers to run their own program. Mr. Vera would like more information, and wants this addressed up front regarding future development on City land.
- b. **District 1 Council Member Ora Houston** discussed having read in the news about Bloomberg Philanthropies' recent award of about \$43 million to 26 local organizations, none of which is black. Black people make up 7% of Austin's population, but appear to be invisible to decision makers. Secondly, if the bond is approved in November, there will be money for the Carver, but it will be used for a master plan and for deferred maintenance that should have been done long ago. During this budget process, CM Houston will bring forward an amendment to add \$300,000 to the budget to do master planning for the Carver, in case the bond doesn't pass. She also gave Commissioner Horton a certificate to thank him for his long service on the Commission.
- c. **Latreese Cooke** – Two years ago she received \$250,000 from the City of Austin, but found it difficult to obtain the funding. Ms. Cooke requests that the Commission request multiyear funding for ME3LJ Center. It is not suitable for the organization to go from \$250,000 to a \$5,000 or \$10,000 request. This is inequitable compared to funding provided to non-black organizations that don't have to go before any commission and are not subject to any RFP process. Skillpoint Alliance has received over \$4 million since 2008. Southwest Key received a lump sum of \$250,000 up front. The City's process is inequitable.



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4. Presentations:

- a. **Discussion with City Manager regarding the Assistant City Manager recruitments – Spencer Cronk, City Manager** started by thanking the Commissioners for their service. City leaders combined many different efforts into six strategic outcomes, each of which has key indicators and specific metrics. The City budget has been aligned with the six strategic outcomes. The next step is ensuring that the City Manager's office is aligned with the six strategic outcomes, so he will be appointing a Deputy City Manager and Assistant City Managers with responsibilities based on the six outcomes. These will be open recruitments, so every appointment will be through an open process. He wants to hear from the community, and collectively from the Commission regarding the skills and characteristics he should be looking for in filling these positions, and shared the survey he has developed to collect input. He would be happy to come to a future meeting to discuss this further.
- b. **Jump On It Outreach Program and associated non-profit Joy Community Outreach Update – Charles Boyd, Founder and Executive Director** said there has been apparent misunderstanding about Jump On It. It is a university and community festival that encompasses financial literacy, job training, life skills, summer camp, and arts. It is directed toward youth but aimed at families. He has found it difficult to obtain security for participants because people say they feel unsafe when they hear black youth between the ages of 12 and 17. Many people in Austin don't know the history and culture of Austin, so Jump On Its concerts and festivals aim to get people involved in something that helps them stay out of trouble. This year they had to turn some kids away because of a lack of resources, but over 100 youth completed the Way to Happiness curriculum university program, 40 youth participated in the Summer Youth Program with the City, and job resources, including jobs and job training, were provided to over 700 youth and adults. This summer they also hosted a kickball and dodgeball game with APD, called APD vs the Hood that included a forum on improving relationships between youth and law enforcement. The organization ended this summer \$69,000 in debt because they couldn't turn their backs on what the community needs. He recognized Commissioner Linder for his work organizing APD vs the Hood. Commissioner Linder proposed an emergency resolution to assist Jump On It by eliminating their debt and providing resources to fund the festival annually. Chair Thompson recommended working through the Commission's Budget committee. Commissioner Gillard moved to create a working group to include community organizations to ask the City to fund Jump On It and return the festivals to either Givens Park or Rosewood Park. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Linder, and passed with 7 in favor, 2 opposed and 2 abstentions.
- c. **Proposed Austin Public Health Department Budget Briefing - Kimberly Maddox, APH Assistant Director of Administration.** Before Ms. Maddox spoke, Commissioner Eugene announced that she is employed by APH, and said that she doesn't anticipate any action, but if there is action, she will leave the table in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest. Ms. Maddox said Ms. Riley sends her regrets but was not able to attend the meeting. She gives this annual update regarding the proposed budget to several City commissions in order for the commissions to be engaged in the budget process. This year, feedback from commissions has come at the front end of the budget process, rather than the back end, which is an improvement. She gave an overview of the City Manager's proposed budget, which includes \$35.5 million for social service contracts in 2019. The bulk of this investment in terms of strategic outcomes is in Health and Environment, Economic Opportunity and Affordability, and Government that Works.



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APH addresses public health as well as human services that help people better their economic positions.

- d. **City of Austin Human Resources Fair Chance Hiring – Joya Hayes, Director of Human Resources and Rochion Gregg, Fair Chance Hiring Investigator.** The ordinance was passed in April 2016. HR is responsible for implementation of the ordinance as well as enforcement and outreach, both to businesses and to the community. Ms. Hayes described some of the community outreach efforts to the community and the annual Job Fair. She noted that some community outreach efforts had included references to Austin's Sick Leave ordinance as well as the Fair Chance Hiring ordinance, but since there is currently a temporary injunction against Austin's Sick Leave ordinance, she is not able to speak publicly about or answer questions about the Sick Leave ordinance. This year HR hosted its first Re-entry Job Fair, with all re-entry friendly employers. Over 700 men and women attended to apply for jobs. As part of HR's efforts to bring the job fairs into the community, a third job fair was held at the Asian American Center, with translators, including sign language interpreters. HR has also increased its outreach to the community about Fair Chance Hiring, including outreach to the Quality of Life commissions and collaborations with Reentry Roundtable, Travis County Sheriff's Office and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Ms. Gregg visits the prisons to work with people who will be coming out of prison. HR partners with several community organizations. Ms. Hayes introduced Ms. Gregg who spoke about what is required of employers under the ordinance and her work with formerly incarcerated people seeking jobs. Part of HR's outreach includes asking Council Members if would like HR to connect with any events they have in their districts. Council Member Houston is having an event at Givens Park on Saturday, October 27. HR will be there and will be bringing a few employers.
- e. **African-American Cultural & Heritage Facility Annual Report – TJ Owens Program Manager, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division – postponed**

5.

- a. **Proposed Budget Overview– Kenneth Thompson, AARAC Chair, and Sylvania Holt-Rabb, Assistant Director of City of Austin Economic Development Department:** Chair Thompson described the difference between the Concept Menu method used last year and the process this year, in which Quality of Life commissions had input early in the process. He noted that it is difficult to see that the budget actions taken by the City will necessarily impact African Americans in Austin. Based on the budget, it looks like a lot of money was allocated to African American Quality of Life in three categories, but those funds will benefit everyone. There are a few categories where AAQOL did not receive any allocation. He asked commissioners to consider budget amendments that would allocate funding under some of these categories. Commissioners noted that other commissions were more specific in their requests, and they seem to be getting what they requested. The amendment process can be used to request funding for groups such as Jump On It. Commissioners Linder and Gillard will write a resolution advocating \$69,000 in 2019 to Jump On It to erase their debt and funding in future years for programming. The Budget committee will consider additional resolutions advocating funding for other ME3LJ, Urban Fest and the Carver. All resolutions should be turned in to the City Manager before September 10.



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- b. Commissioner Fowler was elected to serve on the Mini Grants Review Panel after being nominated by Commissioner Demerson. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. Commissioner Gillard recused himself from the vote.

6. Special Presentation: African American Community Alliance Community Update

- a. The Austin Revitalization Authority – Greg Smith, President - absent
- b. The Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce – Tam Hawkins, President and CEO announced that the MECA Chambers are hosting their annual Career Fair September 12th at Goodwill at Norwood Park; Richelieu Dennis, founder and chairman of Essence Ventures will speak at the chamber's annual State of Black Business on October 4th.
- c. The Baptist Minister Union – Rev. Daryl Horton, President – No update
- d. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Nelson Linder, President provided information about an investigation of discrimination against African Americans by the City of Austin. The investigation has looked at the Equity Office and is looking at Code Enforcement now. An investigation that began in 2009 against AISD was concluded in August 2018. There will be a press conference tomorrow morning at 10 at Norman and Sims addressing the same issues: how to improve the quality of education in East Austin schools.
- e. The Austin Area Urban League – Quincy Dunlap, President and CEO said that the League is looking at some of the same issues Commissioner Linder talked about from a community organizing perspective. NAACP and AAUL are working together to address these issues. Also the League's annual Gala will be held on September 29th and is a celebration of the community honoring individuals for their work in the community.
- f. Cultural Arts – Clifford Gillard announced that Capital View Arts will be participating in EAST and partnering with the Chamber to do their Blackish East event at the Yellow House on November 10-11 and November 17-18.

7. Working Groups:

- a. Photograph Selection for Mural: Chair Thompson said he would like to nominate Mr. Alex Porter, the first FBI agent from Texas.
- b. Health and Mental Health: No update
- c. Public Safety: No update
- d. Expansion of the Carver Complex: No update
- e. Solar and Economic: No update
- f. Youth and Education: Information was received from AISD to help inform the Youth and Education Plan; they hope to get a draft out before the next Commission meeting.
- g. Urban Music/Other Cultural Activities: No update
- h. Affordable Housing and Equitable Planning Group: No update

8. Discussion and Possible Action:

9. Future Agenda Items:

- a. Carver Complex – Quarterly Update



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- b. African-American Cultural & Heritage Facility Annual Report – Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division Program Manager TJ Owens
- c. Chapter 380 Economic Development Policy and Program: Commissioners Redmond and Thompson

10. Announcements:

- a. Dunk Fest fundraiser for KAZI and the Austin Veterans Art Festival will take place this Saturday September 8. Chair Thompson will be in the dunking booth.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned following a motion by Commissioner Hawkins seconded by Commissioner Demerson.