



## COMMISSION ON IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

MONDAY, April 4, 2022 6:30 PM

### Meeting Minutes

#### Board Members in Attendance:

<i>Krystal Gomez, Chair</i>	<i>Rennison Lalgee</i>	<i>Aditi Joshi</i>
<i>Nicole Merritt, Vice-Chair</i>	<i>Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch</i>	
<i>Karen Crawford</i>	<i>Joseph Ramirez-Hernandez</i>	
<i>Adrian De La Rosa</i>	<i>Juan Vences-Benitez</i>	

#### Board Members not in Attendance:

<i>Sara Becker</i>	<i>Karen Reyes</i>
<i>Glenn Rosales</i>	

#### Staff in Attendance:

Sinying Chan, Staff Liaison & Health Equity Unit Program Coordinator/Austin Public Health

### CALL TO ORDER

#### 1. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 7, 2022; March 7, 2022

- February Minutes Approved, Kate moved to approve, motion seconded, all in favor
- March Minutes Approved, Kate moved to approve, Karen seconded

#### 2. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

##### A. Updates from Rocio Villalobos on her work with the Equity Office

- i. Equity Office has been working with Austin Public Library and several other partners on creating an enhanced library card that can also serve as a photo ID. Other cities and counties have already created an enhanced library card program, including San Antonio, San Marcos, and a county in Dallas. The office of Councilman Fuentes hosted a townhall to gather feedback from the community. The feedback was that people were more interested in something more like a municipal ID than an enhanced library card. There is also a potential that the United way of Greater Austin could host the database, and could store and manage the data. They are currently looking to see which route, enhanced library card or municipal ID, would be a better option. Concerns are that a municipal ID could be used to target immigrants unlike a library card which is more common, and whether switching to a municipal ID would delay this project.



- ii. Naturalization ceremonies resumed March 11<sup>th</sup>. The City of Austin joined the campaign National Partnership for New Americans which is working to help two million immigrants become U.S. citizens. The Equity Office participated in a large press conference of about 300 people. The ceremony was hybrid due to weather restrictions. More ceremonies are planned.
- iii. The City of San Antonio and other major hubs have been experiencing a large influx of immigrant and are considering the option of having Austin receive and facilitate their travel to relieve some of the burden. Rocio will be going to San Antonio to learn more. Rocio will also be attending the Welcoming Interactive Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**B. Emi Johnson, Austin Public Library, updates on initiatives at the library**

- i. The focus of this past year has been on the impact of COVID. The library received a grant that was for outreach and also to develop community resource centers. Six local libraries have been made community resource centers for health, wellness, and digital access. The grant ends August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- ii. Equitable access has been a focus by reaching out to under-resourced communities. The new resource centers includes removing barriers for non-English speakers. They are hosting townhall listening sessions to direct the design of these programs.
- iii. Telehealth services will be available. They are currently researching, ordering equipment, setting up private rooms, and hiring digital navigators to fulfill these services.
- iv. Library cards are now available for all students within Travis County so areas without a library have access, including Manor, Del Valle, and a few charter schools. Austin Public Library also is now fine free to further remove barriers, and have already seen a return in customers.
- v. Austin Public Library has also focused on building community partners in order to help people holistically. They have also received a private 3-year learning grant from St. David in order to deliver mental health services through eight libraries.

**C. Max Horstman and Mandy DeMayo, City of Austin Housing and Planning Department, briefing and discussion on upcoming spending priorities for federal housing and community development grants as part of the Community Needs Assessment for the FY 22-23 Action Plan**

- i. Review of FY20-21 Performance: Served 3,552 people through federally funded projects. Of those, 2,688 were considered Extremely Low-Income. Spent \$9,765,175 through the Entitlement Grant and \$10,196,749 through the CARES Act.
- ii. Several programs exceeded their goals, but many did not reach their goals due to COVID restrictions preventing in-person interactions.
- iii. They are currently on year 4 of their 5-year grant and submitted their Action Plan for this year. They are waiting to learn what the confirmed budget will be.
- iv. Action Plan includes programs for Homelessness Assistance, Special Needs Assistance, Renters Assistance, Homeowner Assistance, Homebuyer Assistance, Housing Developer Assistance, and Other Community Development programs.



These programs are aimed targeted for senior citizens, people with disabilities, low-income populations, and more.

- v. The Community Needs Assessment began on March 7<sup>th</sup> and continues through April 15<sup>th</sup>. The Public Comment Period runs from May 3<sup>rd</sup> through June 10<sup>th</sup>. The Action Plan is due to the U.S. Department of Urban Housing and Development on August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**D. Annual Office Elections**

- i. Juan nominated for Chair, Nicole seconded. All in favor. Term will begin May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ii. Nicole nominates Krystal for Vice-Chair, seconded. All in favor. Term will begin May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**E. Quality of Life exploration**

- i. It is not clear what it means to be a Quality of Life Commission, even on the Joint Inclusion Committee, who are also discussing this possibility. It may or may not be of benefit.
- ii. Motion to create a working group, seconded. All in favor.
- iii. Juan, Karen, and Aditi volunteered to form an exploration working group to research the potential of being designated a Quality of Life Commission.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Budget updates - Karen**

- Submitted recommendations by deadline. Joint Inclusion endorsed all recommendations.

**B. Report back from ISNA and the RST quarterly consultations – Juan and Rennison**

- No updates that affect the commission.

**C. Joint Inclusion Committee meeting update – Karen**

- Joint Inclusion endorsed over 20 recommendations from the different commissions. Those should be forwarded to all Commission members as our recommendations did overlap some other commission's recommendations or were very similar.
- Agency should be reporting back on the submitted budget recommendations. The proposed budget will be released July 15<sup>th</sup>. Advocacy will have to be done between now and August.
- Will be writing a report as to why and how they made budget recommendations to help streamline the process in the future.
- Quality of Life studies cost about a quarter of a million dollars to do. Various commissions are allowed to do studies, but they then need to be revisited which isn't done consistently. Joint Inclusion is doing a proposal to say every commission a part of the Joint Inclusion Committee should get a Quality of Life study and regular follow ups. Some commissions have never had a study, others are over 10 years old.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Invitation is still open to tour the 911 call center. Will send follow up email for more details.
- Update on meeting with Lt. Chomout about the U Visa review process – Kate and Karen



#### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

- Reminder to all of the commissioners on WebEx to turn your cameras on during the meeting.
- Sin Ying Chan is separating the city and will no longer serve as Staff Liaison for the commission.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Kate moved to adjourn; Joseph seconded. All in favor.

**The minutes were approved at the June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting on Commissioner Karen's motion, Commissioner Krystal's second on a 7-0 vote.**

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