



## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Citizens Advisory Task Force Meeting #3**

**December 8, 2009**

One Texas Center (Room 325)

505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78704

## **MINUTES**

### **Task Force members in attendance:**

Carol Torgrimson

Cecilia "Ceci" Gracias

Cookie Ruiz

Donna Tiemann

Evan Taniguchi

Frederick Steiner

Greg Esparza

Ira Yates

Jack Gullahorn

Jennifer McPhail

Jerry Winetroub

John Langmore

Jonathan Ogren

Jose "Danny" Rodriguez

Juan Padilla

Karl-Thomas Musselman

Kent Collins

Lawrence Gross

Lori Renteria

Margaret Cooper

Mark Yznaga

Ora Houston

Patricia Dabbert

Perla Cavazos

Rebecca Melancon

Regina Rogoff

Rob D'Amico

Roger Cauvin

Scooter Cheatham

### **Members of the public in attendance:**

Randi Shade (City Council)

Dave Anderson (Planning Commission)

Teresa Agling

Jeff Jack

Jeb Boyt

Patricia Wilson

### **Members of staff in attendance:**

Marc Ott (City Manager)

Greg Guernsey (PDR)

Carol Haywood (PDR)

Mark Walters (PDR)

Matt Dugan (PDR)

Stephanie Etkin (PDR)

Sheila Balog (HRD)

### **Members of consultant team in attendance:**

John Fernsler (WRT)

David Rouse (WRT)

Task Force Chair Margaret Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

- a. Jeff Jack requested that the deadline for meeting in a box be extended to the end of January due to the Christmas holiday; David Rouse (WRT) agreed and said it could be extended to January 29. .
- b. Jeb Boyt from the Austin Urban Coalition offered his group to help and work with the task force on the comprehensive plan.
- c. Patricia Wilson from the University of Texas, Community and Regional Planning Program invited task force members to work with her and her students to design the meeting in a box for Community Forum #2.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the first two task force meetings were approved by majority vote.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. *Message from City Manager.* Marc Ott expressed his excitement for the new comprehensive plan, and emphasized that the development of the comprehensive plan will be from the ground up. When he started his job he was surprised at the lack of a current comprehensive plan, since the amount of growth in Austin emphasizes the need for a comprehensive plan. During his tenure with Ft. Worth, the comprehensive plan was part of everyday life and updated annually. He said Greg Guernsey is passionate about the new comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is one of the most important projects currently,, it will be a fundamental document, and form a basis for making decisions regarding capital improvements and land use regulations. He said it was important to manage expectations, decide what the comprehensive plan should contain, both short and long term. The comprehensive plan will be a dynamic document, nimble over time to match city priorities. It will require monitoring and evaluation. He talked about the importance of the task force and extended his gratitude to members dedicating their time to this project for the next two years. He offered his help as the process continues over time.

*Message from Council Member Randi Shade.* Randi Shade thanked task force members for giving their time and effort. She emphasized that the comprehensive plan is a “big picture” project. She talked about the role of the task force in that the members assess how all parts of the community are participating, and that they champion the planning process because the more they believe in it, then the more others will believe in it.

*Update from Dave Anderson (Planning Commission).* Dave Anderson offered the Planning Commission’s support to help the task force, noting that development of the comprehensive plan is a big and complex job. Planning Commission has worked for years to get to this point with the Austin Tomorrow update and now the new comprehensive plan. He stated the Planning Commission would nominate

two members and two alternates to attend task force meetings. He talked about the Speakers Bureau and the need for people to sign up as presenters. He said the Planning Commission and task force should push for more community involvement. He said the Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan subcommittee would talk about the roles and organization of different bodies for the comprehensive plan.

- b. *Results from Community Forum #1 (David Rouse, John Fernsler WRT).* David Rouse presented an overview of the schedule and process. He introduced the Common Ground Working Paper, and how WRT and staff went through all the comments (over 3,500), from the six public meetings for Community Forum #1. He went over the main categories/themes derived from the various forums and stressed they were not set in stone. He talked about the alternative views column, but found on the whole most comments aligned. He asked the task force to review the results of the Common Ground Working Paper, and to define common ground to shape a preliminary vision statement. David outlined an activity for each table to take the public input and use it to define elements of a vision statement. John Fernsler said this is the raw data from the public to be used to help create a vision statement. Roger Cauvin for confirmation that this is not the task force's vision, but the community's vision; David Rouse answered yes, because a charge of the task force is to help all members of the community articulate common values. Roger Cauvin asked about attributes of a vision statement; David Rouse answered something measurable and concentrates on "what, not how". Carol Torgrimson said the Common Ground working paper does not represent what she heard at her table during CF #1. Scooter Cheatham said he is uncomfortable interpreting other people's comments, and suggested that we should be getting more input. Ora Houston said she is uncomfortable without having the minority demographic represented. David Rouse said this is just a starting point, it is what we have heard so far, and more input is being collected so that any elements of common ground may and likely will change. Perla Cavazos asked if this exercise was worth our time, said we should set the Common Ground Working Paper aside until more community data is collected. Jerry Winetroub asked if this exercise was our spin or the public's spin. David Rouse answered that these conclusions represented issues suggested by the public comments.. Judge Cooper said the Common Ground Working Paper identified common themes already; David Rouse said the document is a first cut. Greg Esparza said this is not the best use of our time. Roger Cauvin said look at it as a statistician, you don't need the whole data set to start analyzing, it's a process and not the final result. David Rouse asked for a show of hands who wants to participate; about half raised their hands. David Rouse asked for a show of hands who thinks this is a dumb idea; nobody raised their hand. John Langmore said he is concerned with the low numbers of Community Forum #1, he's willing to do what is asked, but worries how themes from the African American community will be included. Jennifer McPhail said we need accessibility outreach. Regina Rogoff said the numbers are too small, the diversity is too small. David Rouse asked staff to give an update on outreach; Mark Walters provided a summary of outreach efforts. Frederick Steiner said it

seems that creating a vision statement at this point is a big step, and he's not sure the task force is ready to put a man on the moon. He noted that the main themes from the Community Forum #1 closely line up with the ten elements of the comprehensive plan required by the city charter; and asked if we should focus on what the public is saying related to those ten elements. Scooter Cheatham said people with whom we speaks have a great distrust, they distrust the city, the process and city staff; said he has nothing to say about comments from other people. David Rouse asked what the task force could do to reach out to the community. Scooter Cheatham said he is not taking a position. Regina Rogoff asked whether the results are different if they come from a different minority group; that we don't know the intensity of the comments. Kent Collins said all of us were selected to the task force because we represent some segment of the population, and it is our job to get the input, not just relying on city staff or consultants. He said to think about how many people vote, and that the only people who vote are the ones that actually show up, that we don't ratify based on income or zip code, that you can't force people to get involved; and it is the task force's job to involve people. Roger Cauvin said he agreed that it is the task force's job to involve people, and perhaps we need to spend time learning how to empower ourselves to go out and collect input. David Rouse said it sounds like were not doing the exercise suggested by the consultants. Jerry Winetroub said a productive use of time is to figure out how to go from 300 participants to 30,000. Once one starts producing a document, everything will be compared to the initial pass; and our job is to figure out how to get all walks of life involved. Perla Cavazos said we are not ready because we are lacking voices, asked how can she work with subconsultants on missing demographics; spend time on that instead of synthesizing public comments. Ora Houston said they need time to reach out to their own constituencies and communities; she is passionate about the disabled community, but they won't come out until I get them involved. Jennifer McPhail asked is there a simple way, not meeting in a box, to go out to the community, and asked about people who might have communication problems or just returned from Iraq, for example, and can't answer the questions or work within the format of meeting in box; and require other methods of outreach. Juan Padilla said we are confronted with instructions and a process to follow, but perhaps the task force's job is to create the process, not just given a document and told what to do; we should not use what the public said to create a vision, but that the task force members should create the vision. Greg Esparza said we need to figure out how to work, a couple of us met to discuss; this is not a good use of our time; let's move to next item on agenda on what Mark Yznaga has suggested for organization of the task force. Jerry Winetroub asked the consultants to suggest a good number for public participation, based on their experience; John Fernsler said he would not put a number on it; David Rouse said its not about numbers, but about representation, if you have 10,000 of the same type of people you get the same type of results, and the statistically valid survey will be done with a random sample representative of Austin. Donna Tiemann asked if we skip the exercise does that mess up the schedule of the project; John Fernsler said no, but we must set realistic goals, we are not going to get 30,000 participants, it's more important

to get broad representation not large numbers. Donna Tiemann asked if we should set up a subcommittee to figure out an outreach plan. Scooter Cheatham said let's hear what Mark Yznaga's subcommittee has developed.

- c. *Report on task force organization (Mark Yznaga).* Mark Yznaga handed out a document developed by a task force subcommittee on task force organization. He discussed the role and possible organizational structure of the task force and the establishment of five potential subcommittees. Judge Cooper said since this is the first time anyone has seen this information, that we should discuss it again at the next meeting. Scooter Cheatham said we need to speed up. Judge Cooper said everyone just received the report tonight, and it's not on the agenda to take action. Jerry Winetroub asked if there is a way to word items on the agenda so we can take action but not violate the open meetings act. Judge Cooper said to send any items you want on the agenda to Matt Dugan (PDR) and her. Carol Haywood (PDR) said to communicate through Matt Dugan (PDR), and he can send out any information to the whole task force so people will have the information before meetings. Rebecca Melancon asked if they could vote on subcommittees online; Judge Cooper said no, all actions have to take place during a public meeting. Lawrence Gross said he was concerned with creating subcommittees or an informal group because then not everyone is involved or represented. Jennifer McPhail said it's important to comply with open meetings act because it protects the minority voice. Scooter Cheatham passed out sign up sheets to indicate interest for different proposed subcommittees.
- d. *Discussion and action on meeting dates for 2010 (Judge Cooper).* Judge Cooper discussed meeting dates for next year, then asked the task force to vote on the best meeting date. The second Tuesday of each month was selected for meeting dates by majority vote.
- e. *Announcements and updates (Group).* Ora Houston said they did not debrief on facilitating the Community Forum #1 meetings to find out what worked and what didn't work. Patricia Dabbert asked the City Manager that since the environment is dramatically different from two years ago with the economy, war, etc, will this plan be put in the context of the current environment? Marc Ott answered that he hopes so, and that it has a lot to do with the task force and all the people they reach, and said the plan will not be a static but a dynamic document. He said perhaps the meeting should have commenced with the discussion on organizing to figure out how the committee is going to work; emphasized the importance of the open meetings act, and said the context of the open meetings act speaks to a very deliberate process to get work done. Greg Guernsey (PDR) said by charter that an annual and five year updates to the comprehensive plan are contemplated; and don't get overly concerned with how the current environment affects the plan, because there is plenty of room built in for continuing review. In Austin the process is as important as the product; keep in mind we do have an end date of 2012 and when plans drag on for years people fall off; and we want to keep people involved and enthusiastic. Regina Rogoff asked if we could get water and

coffee at the meetings, and felt that it was a sign of disrespect that there is no water; Greg Guernsey (PDR) said we can at least get water. Carol Torgrimson said the instantaneous nature of the input is a problem, because not everyone can work on the spot, she talked to people the day after Community Forum #1 and they had other ideas and answers to the questions, and people should have access to the questions in advance. Jonathan Ogren said he is excited about Community Forum #2, so let's get to work on it so they can have input to what it looks like. Greg Esparza gave an update on web presence and graphic artists, made contacts with design firms to work on/donate time for logo and look and feel of website and materials, has contacts with 14 firms, and is working with City to define how the firms could work with the city and task force to improve the look and feel and the marketing. Mark Yznaga asked if the task force had a party would they have to post it for the public; Matt Dugan (PDR) answered yes, that it could be posted as an event where a quorum may be present, but no business will occur. Kent Collins mentioned a recent presentation at UT by Fernando Costa from Ft. Worth on comprehensive planning.

## **5. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

- a. Mark Walters (PDR) gave a summary of the report City of Austin Growth and Development Initiatives, Policies and Ordinances: 1979-2008 previously sent to task force members. Rob D'Amico asked if there was a digital copy of the Austin Tomorrow plan; Mark Walters answered no.
- b. Matt Dugan (PDR) gave a summary of the December 4 update memo previously sent to task force members. He said he noticed a frustration from some task force members with documents that have already been done, whether they were done by the consultant, staff or council.
- c. Judge Cooper said the task force took action at the last meeting that they did not have the authority to take by appointing two members of the Planning Commission to be members of the task force; Mark Yznaga said city council has not discussed it; Judge Cooper said that since only the City Council can appoint members to the task force, that the most we could do was recommend the appointment of Planning Commission representatives and asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to recommend the Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Subcommittee that the Council be asked to add two members of the Planning Commission as non-voting members of the task force. John Langmore made the motion; Perla Cavazos seconded the motion, and it was approved by majority vote.
- d. Judge Cooper asked task force members to be careful not to individually represent that they are speaking on behalf of the entire task force, until the task force has discussed or adopted a particular position as a whole.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**ADJOURN**

Chair Margaret Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

For more information on the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force, please contact Matt Dugan, Planning and Development Review Department, 974-7665 or [matthew.dugan@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:matthew.dugan@ci.austin.tx.us).