

Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

Community Development Commission

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Historical Background

- Change in composition of the Community Development Commission from a 17 member commission to 15 members.
- CSBG Act Tripartite Board Requirements – 7 members represent poverty sector, 7 members represent public sector and 1 member represents the private sector
- The 7 geographic seats currently representing the poverty sector approved by City Council in 2002.
- Responsibility of designating the geographic areas moved to the City Manager from the City Council..
- Written City Manager Rule established for designating CDC geographic areas and the selection process to be followed for nominating and electing a representative.

Neighborhood Representation

There are 3 elements related to the neighborhood representation -

Geographic designation

- Who is responsible for designating the geographic areas?
- How are geographic areas determined?
- When are geographic areas changed?

Responsible organization

- How is a responsible organization defined?
- Who is responsible for designating a responsible organization?
- When is a responsible organization changed?

Election process

- Who is responsible for conducting the nomination/election meeting?
- What process needs to be followed in announcing and conducting the meeting?

Designation of Geographic Areas

What is currently in place?

- Section 2-1-127(B) of the City Code states “The City Manager shall designate from time to time seven geographic areas of Austin having either a Health and Human Services Department neighborhood center or a Parks and Recreation Department recreation center, and shall designate a seat on the commission to represent the poor in each designated area.”
- The geographic areas are currently defined in the Manager Rule but the process for selection of the areas is not defined.

Recommendations:

- City Council will designate the 7 geographic areas represented on the commission based on the recommendation of the CDC and HHSD staff.
- Every 5 years, after the Community Needs Assessment is completed, HHSD staff will analyze the results of the assessment and, if necessary, make recommendations to the Community Development Commission for geographic area changes.
- CDC to forward their recommendation to City Council.
- City Council to adopt the geographic areas by ordinance.

Responsible Organization

What is currently in place?

- The City Manager Rule identifies the organization within each of the 7 geographic areas responsible for conducting an election to nominate a resident to serve on the CDC.
- The existing responsible organizations are either a neighborhood center advisory board, neighborhood association or a non-profit organization.

Recommendations:

- City Council will designate the organizations responsible for nominating commissioners from the 7 geographic areas based on the recommendation of the CDC and staff.
- A responsible organization can be a neighborhood advisory board, neighborhood association, community organization or a non-profit.
- Establish criteria to ensure organizations operate continuously and efficiently to represent the community.
- If an organization doesn't comply with the criteria or it chooses to discontinue with this responsibility, HHSD staff will conduct a search for another organization. If during this search more than one organization is interested, HHSD staff will review each organization utilizing the criteria and make a recommendation to the CDC as to which group has the broadest community representation.
- CDC to forward their recommendation to City Council.
- City Council to make final approval.
- HHSD staff will conduct an annual review of the responsible organizations to ensure they are still active and in compliance with the established criteria.

Election Process

What is currently in place?

- The selection procedures for appointment of commissioners to a geographic seat on the CDC is outlined in the City Manager Rule.
- Organization responsible for conducting the nomination/election meeting is outlined in the City Manager Rule.

Recommendations:

- The designated organization for the geographic area will conduct the nomination/election meeting.
- The Office of the City Clerk will continue their role of providing written notification to the responsible organization requesting a nomination/election meeting be held to fill a vacancy.
- The selection process must be incorporated into the bylaws of the responsible organization.
- HHSD staff will not direct the selection process, but will monitor the responsible organization to ensure it conducts the nomination/election meeting and forwards the name of the person receiving the plurality of the votes to the Office of the City Clerk for final Council approval..
- A Health and Human Services Department Rule will be established outlining the selection process for CDC members representing low-income communities.

Requested Action and Next Steps

Requested Action

- Support approval of an ordinance modifying City Code Section 2-1-127 (Community Development Commission) relating to the selection of the CDC geographic area members.

Next Steps

- Prepare Ordinance and RCA for Council action on August 19, 2010
- Present draft Ordinance and HHSD Rule to CDC on August 10, 2010