

**DOWNTOWN AUSTIN COMMUNITY COURT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 23, 2012  
7:30AM  
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, ROOM 1101  
CITY HALL**

Advisory Members Present:

William Kelly, Univ. of Texas  
Marshall Jones, DAA  
Lori Renteria--East Cesar Chavez N.A  
Bruce Mills  
Hugh Simonich

Advisory Members Absent:

Will Hancock, Lifeworks  
Tim Miles, Foundation Communities

Guest Members Present:

Cindy Finnegan, Travis County  
Jo Kathryn Quinn, Caritas  
Bill Brice, DAA  
Madge Whistler, 5<sup>th</sup> Street Community  
Abraham Minjarez, ATCIC  
Darla Gay, DA's Office  
Jack Darby, Krimelabb  
Dawn Perkins, HHSD  
Andy Garbe, City Attorney  
Marti Bier, NHCD  
Matt McCabe, City Attorney  
Bianca Bentzin, Law Department

Staff Members Present

Pete Valdez, Court Administrator  
Judge Michael Coffey  
Melanie Fletcher, Court Operations  
Supervisor  
Jennifer Abdallah, Court Operations  
Supervisor  
Gemma Mears, DACC Intern  
Kim Capobres, Case Manager  
Taylor Seyer, Case Manager  
George Maroukis, Park Grounds Crew  
Leader  
Anne Straka, Court Clerk Assistant  
Jordan Luminais, Court Clerk Lead

**I. Call meeting to order.**

▪ **Opening remarks and introductions.**

Marshall Jones called the meeting to order at 7:33 am. Marshall announced that he and Vice Chair, Bill Kelly will meet with Pete Valdez every other month when the Advisory Committee is not being held to keep everyone on the same page and provide support to Pete and staff. Marshall announced looking at a three and five year plan for the budget. Marshall and Bill Kelly have meetings with Council members to discuss five year plan.

**Approval of minutes from last meeting January 20, 2012.**

Bill Kelly moved to approve the minutes corrected with Hugh Simonich as a member, Hugh Simonich seconded. The minutes were approved.

**II. Citizen Communication**

Bill Brice, Madge Whistler and Darla Gay signed up to speak.

Bill mentioned the 2012 bond process that was currently happening and informed the Advisory Committee that the bond meetings had little focus on permanent supportive

housing. Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) was going to be present to encourage PSH and encouraged Advisory to do the same. DAA has been involved in a permanent supportive housing project being proposed by Foundation Communities and supported by the DAA and Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association (DANA). The project is 135 units with 20% being permanent supportive housing. Bill Kelly filed a motion to write a letter of support for permanent supportive housing, Bruce Mills seconded. Motion passed.

Madge Whistler discussed some criminal activity that was occurring in her neighborhood and proposed Community Impact Panels. Lori Renteria suggested making the community impact panel a part of Project Recovery. Pete informed Madge that we could let her know when individuals who committed a violation in her area are on the docket. Madge is willing to engage the offender in a way that is productive for the community.

Darla Gay spoke on prioritization of bonds and has found housing needs are low on the prioritization list. Darla reinforced advocating for the \$110 million bond for housing. Darla provided a chart about the bond processes where information can be found for advocacy.

### **III. Presentation, discussion, and action on the following items:**

- a. Update: Project Recovery. Abraham defined success in a variety of ways depending on where one sits at the table. Recovery starts with the person but also a place to recover which needs to be consistently there. Abraham reiterated the importance that Project Recovery plays for recovery. Project Recovery has served 26 individuals to date, 22 have completed the 90 day treatment cycle and 33 are in aftercare (city fiscal year). Abraham stated they finally have stable staff and recently has hired additional case managers and a new program manager and is now at a place where the programs can move forward. Marshall questioned about the licensed chemical dependency building and if that was the right choice. Abraham stated licensing was the right thing; however, there was an adjustment with the four separate programs having their own way of doing things (Road to Recovery, Competency Restoration Program, Treatment Alternatives to Incarcerated (TAI) persons program, 28-day treatment program to those with Medicaid). They are re-examining the competency restoration program – all other programs are working with the same group of people (co-occurring disorders). Marshall confirmed that they are able to serve women. Abraham stated that the first floor is all female. Bill Brice questioned how Project Recovery was doing in regards to the performance measures this year as it relates to success. Pete Valdez informed the group that the residential piece is excellent, but the aftercare piece is not at 50% completion as the Community Court would like, but rather around 30% and may be at risk in terms of funding for next year. Pete recommended that the advisory committee have discussions with the council members they represent. Abraham provided an open invitation to have Advisory Committee members to visit facility. Lori questioned if community impact panels could be combined in the 30 day program. Abraham said he would look into it. Bill Kelly questioned how the success rate of the aftercare program could be increased.

Pete stated it could have to be more PSH and intensive case management. Jo Kathryn questioned if people have a choice of where to go for aftercare. Abraham stated that they aftercare case manager is to be in the community and knows where the client is. Bill Kelly questioned if the aftercare program is structured and Abraham stated that it was not structured. Bill Kelly questioned how the success rate could increase. Abraham replied that the case manager role has been redefined as to what the expectation is (being in the community with the clients). Abraham stated that the norm for the transitional housing piece was closer to 6-9 months rather than 90 days. He stated that housing and treatment is critical to success.

- b. Update: Targeted Case Management Year 1 Evaluation. Jennifer Abdallah informed group that annual report would be sent electronically. Jennifer provided data on age breakdown, gender and ethnicity (of the 66 active). Of the 66, active clients had a 66% decrease in new cases which took into account the reduction of citations filed. Total number of bookings decreased, but there was an increase in jail bed days because offenders were incarcerated on higher charges. Updates were provided on housing, mental health and physical health. Overall, the program was popular with clients and moving forward outreach will be needed. All the community agencies that the Community Court collaborated with were recognized. Update on Housing: Six housed, the first four clients were admitted without having to appeal, clients 5,6,7, and 8 did need to appeal. One did not successfully appeal because more information was needed about his criminal history and by the time that information was available, the client had relapsed. Pete asked Jo Kathryn about the next ten units. Jo Kathryn stated there would be periodic updates. Bill Kelly questioned about LoneStar Circle of Care. Jennifer stated she would add that to the list of community collaborations. Bill Brice expressed concern that this is a housing ready model, not a housing first model and that there needs to be a shift in housing providers. Bill stated that it was a huge step forward, but still a flaw in the system. Marshall stated that we need to find a way to control the housing and make the rules. Jo Kathryn stated that there is no housing first provider in Austin. Darla stated that we need to focus on what people are doing across the country and how do we systemically change how our developers think.
- c. Advisory Board Year In Review. Marshall asked to read over the Year in Review and submit any comments.
- d. Preliminary Budget Discussion. Pete informed committee that the full budget will be presented on May 18, 2012 and the focus will be on increases in rehabilitation. A data analyst is being requested to collect demographic information and data on each client that comes into the court. Pete suggested acquiring resources outside of the general fund and a Grants Coordinator will be requested for that purpose. Additional funding is also being requested for treatment. Marshall stated that he, Bill Kelly and Pete are all in agreement with what the court is asking for.

#### **IV. No Executive Session held.**

#### **V. The next meeting was set for May 18, 2012 at City Hall. Staff will include all 2012 upcoming meeting dates on future agendas.**

**VI. Adjourned.**

Marshall Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Bill Kelly.  
Adjourned at 9:02 am.