



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR  
(February 8, 2017)**

**The Commission on Seniors convened a regular meeting at City Hall in the Boards and Commissions Room – 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas 78701**

**Chair, Janee Briesemeister, called the Board Meeting to order at 12:32p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

<i>Janee Briesemeister, Chair</i>	<i>Natalie Cagle</i>	<i>Martin Kareithi</i>	<i>Emily De Maria Nicola</i>
<i>Peter Varteressian, Vice-Chair</i>	<i>Erica Garcia-Pittman</i>	<i>Fred Lugo</i>	<i>Sally Van Sickle</i>
<i>Patricia Bordie</i>	<i>David Gray</i>	<i>Dan Pruett</i>	

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

*Thomas McDowell*

**Staff in Attendance:**

Laura Williamson, Austin Public Health

The board introduced themselves.

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

- i. Teresa Ferguson
  - a. Notification of AustinUP events including:
    - 55+ job fair to be held February 21<sup>st</sup> at Westminster Senior Living
    - Aging Seminar to be held on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Dell Medical School in the HEB Auditorium
  - b. Chair encouraged Commissioners to sign up for AustinUP Newsletter to stay up to date on similar community events

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 14, 2016 MEETING AND THE JANUARY 11, 2017 MEETING.**

- Chair Briesemeister noted that date for January date needs to be corrected
- Commissioner Gray motioned to pass both meeting minutes for approve with the date change mentioned by Chair Briesemeister
- Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion
- Motion passed 11-0

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Briefing and discussion regarding programming and services provided for seniors by Austin Public Health and identified unmet needs for seniors (Maria Allen, Manager for

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Neighborhood Services, Austin Public Health and Natasha Ponczek Shoemake, Homeless and Basic Needs Services Coordinator, Austin Public Health)

- Neighborhood Centers include:
  - Blackland
  - East Austin
  - Montopolis
  - Rosewood-Zaragosa
  - St. John
  - South Austin
- Outreach Sites include:
  - Turner-Roberts Recreation Center
  - Dove Springs Recreation Center
  - Santa Barbara Catholic Church
- Services Provided at Neighborhood Centers
  - Basic Needs:
    - Food (Pantry, Fresh Foods for Families, Healthy Options Program for the Elderly, Mobile Food Pantry)
    - Bus Passes
    - Clothing
    - Car Seat Education/Distribution
    - Notary Services
    - Fans
    - Tax Preparation through AARP
    - Benefits Application Assistance
    - Information and Referral
    - Seasonal Activities
    - Other onsite resources including computer labs, GED classes, WIC, Shots for Tots, Big Shots
  - Public Health Nursing
    - Screenings
    - Pregnancy testing
    - Health education presentations
    - Immunizations/flu clinics
    - Coordination and participation in health fairs
    - Coordination of wellness activities
    - Information and referral to medical, health and social service providers
  - Case Management
    - Self-sufficiency case management
    - Assessment and service plan
    - Employment support
    - Linkage to educational opportunities and other social services
    - Transportation and employment support assistance including limited rent and utility assistance
    - Budgeting and financial counseling
    - Crisis intervention
- Healthy Options for the elderly
  - Monthly supplemental food program offered in conjunction with Central

Texas Food Bank

- Serves persons age 55 and older
  - Must be at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Income Level
    - USDA Requirement
  - Enrolled and served 792 seniors in FY 2016
  - Total of 2,118 persons age 55 and older were served at Neighborhood Centers in FY 16
  - Social Service Investments
    - Investments in 6 issue areas including:
      - Basic Needs
      - Child & Youth
      - Homeless Services
      - Behavioral Health
      - Workforce Development
      - Health Equity
    - FY 2016 Investment - \$28,898,926
    - Programs across all 6 issues areas serve seniors; the following programs are specific to seniors populations
      - Family Eldercare
        - Money Management, Counseling & Living Well! Collaboration
        - \$372,243 funding annually
        - 609 individuals served in FY 16
        - 96% obtained/maintained public benefits
        - 68% improved knowledge through educational program
        - 74% improved mental health status
      - Helping the Aging, Needy, and Disabled, Inc. (HAND)
        - In-Home care
        - \$42,729 in FY 16
        - 30 individuals served
        - 100% maintained housing
      - Meals on Wheels and More
        - Meals on Wheels Program
          - \$510,339 in FY 16
          - 349 individuals served
          - 70% improved or maintained their nutritional status while on meals for six months or longer
        - Congregate Social Program
          - \$17,700 in FY 16
          - 171 individuals served
          - 97% maintained housing
- Austin Public Health Needs for Seniors:
  - Support and expand neighborhood center services
    - Help seniors meet their basic needs, prevent chronic disease, and link them to needed community resources
  - Workforce development initiative with focus on:
    - Soft skills training such as computer literacy, job readiness training,

and employment linkages

- Support and expand current social service investments for programs specific to seniors
  - Community-based services that focus on physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being of elderly people
  - Includes health education, resources, and social support to promote healthy outcomes
- Additional discussion regarding funding needs:
  - Could lease space to expand and/or include new neighborhood facilities in upcoming bond package
    - Dove Springs, Rundberg, and Colony Park are high needs areas
  - Large part of funding for department is grants that stay at constant level
    - Ongoing challenge of delivering services at rising costs without having increase in funding to offset those costs
- General discussion around presentation:
  - Question regarding concerns of decreased funding from grant resources
    - Austin Public Health said that it's possible state and federal grants could be impacted by new policies
    - Community services Block Grant usually has bipartisan support
  - Question regarding why centers are not distributed evenly across the City
    - Many were built several decades ago when highest needs were fairly central and central east
      - APH would like to build more facilities outside of the core as funds become available
  - Suggestion to have separate category for Seniors as the City currently does for early childhood and youth
  - Question regarding whether competitive process is effective given small portion of funding dedicated to seniors
    - Staff noted that seniors are served by contracts across all six issue areas and are represented at a higher level than is demonstrated solely by the programs included in the presentation
  - Request to have APH staff available for work groups
    - Staff said they would be happy to attend and/or provide additional information as needed by the Commission

B. Briefing and discussion regarding programming and services provided for seniors by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and identified unmet needs for seniors (David Crabb, Recreation Program Manager, Austin Parks and Recreation Department)

- David Crabb serves as the new Program Manager for Senior Services
- Parks and Recreation has 50+ enrichment programs and services for seniors which include:
  - 3 seniors activity centers
  - Congregate meal program
    - 72,625 meals served in 2016
  - Senior transportation

- Serves congregate meal sites within 6 miles
- Reserve-a-Ride program
  - Errands, medical appointments, and group travel
- 764 participants and over 14,000 trips in FY 2016
- Senior excursion activities
  - 190 total trips in FY 16
- Fitness programs available at all three senior centers
- Golden rollers
  - Tricycle program available at Conley Guerrero
- Senior softball program an Pan Am Rec Center
- Community gardens
- Special events
  - 40 events annually at senior centers
- 2017 goals:
  - Develop strategic recreation plan
  - Expand program services
    - Community engagement events
    - National trends
    - South Austin Senior Activity Center
    - Senior Games
  - Develop New Marketing Strategies
- Unmet Needs:
  - Staffing
  - Funding for Advertising
  - Fleet Concerns
  - Program Expansion Sites
- Presenter provided contact information to Commissioners
- Discussion regarding presentation:
  - Question regarding strategic plan regarding timeline
    - Should be a 6-12 month process
  - Question regarding whether Parks has considered partnering with Austin Public Health for shared facilities
    - Joint Use Facilities exist or in the process of being built in Montopolis and at the J.J. Pickle campus
      - Parks is also looking to expand senior services in existing Health and Parks centers for more intergenerational centers
  - Question regarding whether group transportation trips are planned to the same location or a shared ride structure
    - Usually 6 or more seniors going to the same location
    - Discussion regarding aging fleet
      - Fleet currently includes 9 vehicles; 2-3 consistently being repaired
      - Previous issues retaining driving staff but currently at full

capacity

- Chair requested that Parks keep the Commission on Seniors informed and engaged as the Strategic Planning process moves forward

#### 4. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Discussion regarding developing recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 City of Austin budget – Standing item
  - i. Discussion regarding utilizing working groups as much as possible in development of recommendations
- B. Commission Work Plan – Standing Item.
  - i. No discussion
- C. Updates from Working Groups – Standing Item
  - i. Transportation
    - a. No discussion
  - ii. Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
    - a. No discussion
  - iii. Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion
    - a. No discussion
  - iv. Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information
    - a. Chair and Vice Chair met with Larry Schooler in the City of Austin Communications and Public Information Office regarding interdepartmental group & website resources
      - Larry offered to pull together departmental staff
      - Will set up meeting with working group chairs and staff that Larry pulls together to coordinate efforts
      - Staff views Age Friendly City Plan as in line with the values of the City and are interested in providing support
      - Will aim to schedule meeting after Spring Break
  - v. Community Health Services
    - a. No discussion
  - vi. Age Friendly City
    - a. No discussion
- D. Update on Joint Inclusion Committee – Standing Item (Janee Briesemeister)
  - i. No discussion
- E. Update on Equity Action Team – Standing Item (Emily De Maria Nicola)
  - i. Meetings planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday monthly, initial meeting conducted
  - ii. Race/ethnicity driving factor in equity tool, age is a secondary factor that will be considered
  - iii. Action items/working group opportunities
    - a. Defining equity
    - b. Working sessions regarding drafting the tool
  - iv. Multiple City departments had representation at the meeting
  - v. Tool will be used in more limited fashion at the beginning until full implementation aligns with budget calendar for the City

**5. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

- A. Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors
  - i. Discussion regarding new staff liaison for the Commission on Seniors with full transition expected late spring or early summer
  - ii. Several new appointments have been made to the Commission on Seniors, and new members will be able to serve once training is complete
- B. Chair offered floor to Commissioner Gray for a point of privilege since this will likely be his last meeting serving on the Commission
  - i. Commissioner Gray talked about his previous experiences helping connect adopted individuals connect with their birth parents
  - ii. Discussed the joy of serving on the Commission and working with other Commissioners
    - Commissioner Pruett spoke of Commissioner Gray’s deep dedication and commitment to serving the senior population, and the pleasure of working alongside him
    - Commissioner Kareithi echoed comments and discussed nature of our community is being able to sit around a table together to discuss issues even with differing viewpoints
    - Vice-Chair Varteressian said while often of a different opinion on policy issues, that he also agreed many times with a lot of ideas that Commissioner Gray brought to the table, and felt Commissioner Gray enriched the Commission
    - Chair Briesemeister echoed comments of previous speakers and said she hopes Commissioner Gray will stay engaged with the Commission

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- i. No discussion of new items
- ii. Staff to include the listing of previous future agenda items on minutes to retain items discussed.
  - 1. Affordable Housing
  - 2. Texas Veterans Commission
  - 3. Hispanic Quality of Life
  - 4. Veterans Affairs Office
  - 5. Google representative
  - 6. State Veterans Services
  - 7. Foundation Communities
  - 8. Austin Energy – Weatherization and home repair
  - 9. Home renovation for seniors
  - 10. Housing and resources for senior musicians and artists
  - 11. Dell Medical School
  - 12. St. David’s Foundation Strategic Plan presentation, potentially in April

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Commissioner Van Sickle motioned to adjourn meeting.
- Vice Chair Varteressian seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 11-0
- Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.