



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR  
(March 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 12:05p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

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

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

*None*

**Staff in Attendance:**

Laura Williamson, Austin Public Health  
Michelle Friedman, Austin Public Health

The board introduced themselves.

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

- i. No speakers present

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COMMISSION ON SENIORS FEBRUARY 8, 2017 MEETING AND THE SPECIAL CALLED JOINT MEETING WITH THE MAYOR’S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2017**

- Commissioner Lugo motioned to pass both meeting minutes for approval
- Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion
- Motion passed 13-0

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

B. Briefing and discussion on the FY 2017-18 Annual Action Plan, the City of Austin’s application to receive formula grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Erika Leak, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development)

- a. Jonathan Tomko presented on behalf of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD)
- b. NHCD’s Mission is to provide housing, community development, and small business development services to benefit eligible residents so they can have access to livable

neighborhoods and increase their opportunities for self-sufficiency

- c. Federal Funds & Requirements:
  - i. City receives four formula block grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help address affordable housing, community, and economic development needs
  - ii. Regulatory requirements include affirmatively furthering fair housing choice in Austin
  - iii. As a participating jurisdiction, the City is required to submit a 5 year consolidated plan, action plans (annually) and End-of-Year Reports called CAPER (annually)
- d. FY 15-16 expenditures:
  - i. \$38.8 million
    - 1. \$16.5 Federal funds
    - 2. \$22.3 Local funds
- e. Investment Categories:
  - i. Homeless/special needs assistance
  - ii. Renter assistance
  - iii. Homebuyer assistance
  - iv. Homeowner assistance
  - v. Housing developer assistance
  - vi. Commercial revitalization
  - vii. Small business assistance
  - viii. Financial empowerment
- f. Action Plan
  - i. Continued federal funding expected for FY 17-18
    - 1. Plan serves as application to access resources
  - ii. Plan outlines actions, activities, and resources used to address needs of low and moderate-income families
  - iii. End of year, CAPER report prepared including annual performance metrics
- g. Action Timeline discussed
  - i. Public comments through June 26
  - ii. Community Development Commission final recommendations July 11
  - iii. City Council final action August 3
  - iv. Action Plan due to HUD August 15
- h. Opportunities for input:
  - i. Online: [www.austintexas.gov/housing](http://www.austintexas.gov/housing)
  - ii. Email: [NHCD@austintexas.gov](mailto:NHCD@austintexas.gov)
  - iii. Mail: NHCD, ATTN Action Plan, P.O. Box 1088, Austin TX 78767
- i. Commission questions regarding programs available for seniors
  - i. Specific programs available through local funding and block grants
  - ii. Other programs available for all including seniors
  - iii. Home repair under home owner assistance program
    - 1. Experiencing reduced funding from federal grants

2. Any shifts toward seniors specifically would reduce services elsewhere unless additional funds allocated
  - iv. Discussion regarding availability and content of CAPER
    1. Looks at records to confirm households anticipated would receive services were served, or explains variances where necessary
    2. Demographic report included, staff will follow up regarding whether this includes age data
  - v. Questions regarding incentives for housing acceptable for adults
    1. Some projects geared toward seniors such as Wildflower Terrace
    2. All affordable housing projects must be accessible because of the visitability ordinance
      - a. Commission commented regarding the need for more intergenerational models
  - vi. Staff would like feedback prior to May 2, 2017 from Commissions
    1. Will send previous CAPER(s) to distribute to Commissioners for review
    2. Commission Housing Working Group meeting March 21, will consider discussion at full Commission meeting for potential action in April
- A. Briefing and discussion regarding the work and priorities of the Equity Office and the development of an equity tool (Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer, City of Austin Equity Office)
- a. Vision: We want Austin to be the most livable city for all in the country
  - b. Mission: To provide leadership, guidance, and insight on equity to improve the quality of life for Austinites and achieve the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the nation for all.
  - c. City of Austin’s Opportunity to Drive Equity
    - i. All about choice points – decision making opportunities that include outcomes
      1. The cumulative impacts of small choices can lead to big influence on outcomes and equity
      2. When conscious of choice points and the related impact, less likely to replicate implicit bias and the status quo and open new possibilities for equitable change
    - ii. Key areas of departmental choice:
      1. Planning
      2. Budgeting
      3. Personnel
      4. Policy Development
      5. Practices
  - d. Perceptions formed by framing
    - i. Example: Different impressions formed by the following statements:
      1. “Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and

- soda from a local grocery”
- 2. “A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans”
- e. Building a Framework for Equity
  - i. Normalize: A shared analysis and definitions; Operate with urgency, priority, accountability
  - ii. Organize: Internal infrastructure and capacity; Partnership with other institutions and community
  - iii. Operationalize: Racial equity tools; Data to develop strategies and drive results
- f. Developing a Shared Understanding
  - i. Completion of initial equity assessment by Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)
    - 1. Included source document review, stakeholder interviews, analysis of previous employee surveys, town hall meetings, workshops with City departmental representation, and engagement of City staff and community members
- g. Elevated findings and themes
  - i. The City of Austin’s communities of color must share in the City’s economic prosperity
  - ii. Economic development decisions have been questionable with regard to distribution throughout the City; not always reflected equity as priority of government
  - iii. All residents should have healthy life outcomes
  - iv. Residents have the right to remain in their neighborhoods in the face of escalating housing costs
  - v. Work remains to ensure neighborhoods are safe and that racial disproportionalities in the criminal justice system are eliminated
  - vi. Pressure on City to act quickly, thoughtful strategy for permanent progress imperative
  - vii. Community voices fundamental to success of effort
- h. Equity is about:
  - i. Access and opportunity
  - ii. Process and outcome
  - iii. Understanding needs and the distribution of resources
  - iv. Removing barriers and elevating the well-being of the entire community
  - v. Addressing institutional structures
  - vi. Advancing dignity and integrity
  - vii. Infusing with notions of justice and fairness
  - viii. Acknowledging the reality of race
  - ix. Ultimately dealing with the movement of power

- i. Building capacity for equity with Equity Action Team which includes:
  - i. City Staff core team
  - ii. City Manager’s Office Team
  - iii. Department Equity Teams
  - iv. Racial Equity Here Workgroup
  - v. Quality of Life Commissions
  - vi. Mayor’s Task Force
  - vii. Alliances
- j. Development of an Equity Assessment Tool – a protocol or equity primer that will systematically integrate deliberate consideration and consciousness of how our decisions as city government within choice points can have positive or negative impacts on equity
  - i. Utilizing strategic co-creation process
  - ii. Engage community stakeholders
  - iii. Pilot with five or more departments
  - iv. Utilize assessment with requests for unmet needs
- k. Key elements and questions for the equity assessment tool
  - i. Developing shared definitions of equity, oppression and institutional racism
  - ii. Integrating other oppressed social identity categories including: age, gender, sexuality and ability; with a focus on addressing institutional racism
  - iii. Work to develop “institutional empathy” of the living conditions of the people who are directly impacted
  - iv. Imperative that this be a community-led effort
  - v. Making sure that the Equity Tool is accountable to local affected communities on the ground with a mechanism for meaningful participation
  - vi. A focus on training, learning and development- ie: an Equity Academy
  - vii. Deep structural transformation is needed to change institutional practices and culture (incentivize behavior changes)
- l. Next Steps:
  - i. Getting involved:
    - 1. Join the Equity Action Team on March 24, 2017
      - a. Provide comment on first draft of Equity Assessment Tool
    - 2. Participate in an Equity Action Team workgroup
      - a. Community Engagement
      - b. Equity Academy
      - c. Evaluation
- m. Equity Action Team meets every third Friday and is open to all
- n. Pilot Departments for Equity Tool will likely include Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, Austin Public Health, Economic Development, and Libraries
- o. Commission questions regarding how age factors into equity and equity tool

- i. Action team has discussed using race/ethnicity as a starting point
    1. Reflects Quality of Life Commissions
      - a. Lots of disparities for seniors of color as well as youth
- D. Discussion and possible recommendation regarding paratransit services and other service and access issues related to Connections 2025
- a. Item was initiated in response to discussion during the February joint meeting with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
    - i. The Capital Metro Board voted on the plan, up to 100 Metro Access clients
      1. Still ability for public to provide input
  - b. Plan approved by Board, but any service changes will still go through regular process including a public hearing and Board vote
  - c. Innovation Zones included as part of approved Plan
    - i. Pilot projects with different models being compared
    - ii. Zones trying to address impacts of 2025 to core ridership
  - d. Board reserves right to make exemptions and/or changes to Metro Access
  - e. Discussion regarding moving conversation to Transportation Working Group and having access to all final language and numbers before making recommendations
    - i. No formal action taken
- C. Discussion regarding creation of a recognition by the Commission on Seniors for Austinites who have had a positive impact on the senior community and have reduced burdens on seniors; serve the need of seniors in the Austin Community; and/or contribute to the cultural, economic, and/or historic value of Austin
- a. Commissioner Lugo distributed document in honor of Commissioner Dan Pruett's service
  - b. Commissioner Kareithi thanked Commissioner Pruett for his efforts, and noted that he is a great friend to low income seniors and Capital Metro
  - c. Vice Chair Varteressian echoed Commissioner Kareithi's comments, and said Commissioner Pruett is an asset to our community
  - d. Chair echoed previous comments and said it is hard to imagine the Commission without Commissioner Pruett, and that he has given so much
  - e. Commissioner Bordie thanked him for his consistent strong voice on behalf of Seniors
  - f. Commissioner Pruett spoke about the phenomenal group groups of people he's worked with at Meals on Wheels and More, HAND< other commissions and nonprofit collaborations
    - i. Said that Commission on seniors is the most collegial and caring group he's worked with
    - ii. Thanked Mary Teeters for her love and support which made his work possible
    - iii. Thanked Teresa Ferguson for her work
    - iv. Commended Chair Briesemeister for her dedication and effectiveness as the Chair of the Commission

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- g. Chair Briesemeister motioned to adopt the recommendation commending Commissioner Dan Pruett’s contributions to the community
- h. Commissioner Grampp seconded the motion
- i. Motion passes 13-0

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Discussion regarding developing recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 City of Austin budget – Standing item
- B. Commission Work Plan – Standing Item.
- C. Updates from Working Groups – Standing Item
  - i. Transportation
    - a. Next meeting March 16
  - ii. Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
    - a. Next meeting March 21
  - iii. Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion
    - a. Next meeting March 28
    - b. Looking for opportunities for community engagement for seniors
    - c. Google My Maps may be an option, talking to state about potential resources
  - iv. Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information
    - a. Working out date for next meeting
  - v. Community Health Services
    - a. No updates
  - vi. Age Friendly City
    - a. Next meeting March 10
- D. Update on Joint Inclusion Committee – Standing Item (Janee Briesemeister)
- E. Update on Equity Action Team – Standing Item (Emily De Maria Nicola)

**5. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

- A. Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors

**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

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11. Dell Medical School
12. St. David's Foundation Strategic Plan presentation, potentially in May
13. Capital Area Foster Grandparent Program
14. Falls Prevention Course, possibly in June or after
15. CodeNEXT

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Vice Chair Varteressian motioned to adjourn meeting.
- Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 13-0
- Meeting adjourned at 2:04pm.