



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR  
(April 12, 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 12:30p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

<i>Janee Briesemeister, Chair</i>	<i>Natalie Cagle</i>	<i>Martin Kareithi</i>	<i>Patricia Bordie</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>Billy Jackson</i>	<i>Emily De Maria Nicola</i>	

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

*Karen Grampp*

**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 MARCH 8, 2017 MEETING**

- Commissioner Lugo identified a correction in item 4.C.iii.c. to change “Google mind maps” to “Google My Maps”
- Commissioner Varteressian motioned to pass meeting minutes for approval with the change proposed by Commissioner Lugo
- Commissioner Garcia-Pitman seconded the motion
- Motion passed 11-0

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Presentation and discussion on the demographics and factors impacting seniors (Ryan Robinson, City Demographer)

a. Executive Summary: Austin is becoming “the perfect place for retirees”

- i. Population and job growth: Projected population in 2017 for the Austin metropolitan area is 2.1 million. This is an increase of 400,000 since 2010. This growth is due to job creation. Even if the growth rate slows, which it is unlikely

- to do, the metropolitan area's population is projected to reach 3 million by 2030.
- ii. All Texan urban areas are growing but none are growing as fast as Austin.
    - 1. This area includes Travis, Williamson and Hays counties.
    - 2. Downtown Austin is the main hub for job creation but suburban areas are also creating jobs at a fast pace.
    - 3. Hays County is growing faster per year than Travis and Williamson Counties.
    - 4. Low gas prices make living in the suburbs more affordable and is leading to increased demand for suburban housing.
  - iii. Increased interaction with the San Antonio metropolitan area as families move to southern suburbs. While it is not projected that Austin and San Antonio will become like the Dallas-Forth Worth Metroplex, it is predicted that the area will become a "large mega-region".
  - iv. Data support the pace of job growth will continue.
  - v. By 2014, 18% of Austinites will be older adults (65+). How can the city be designed to support this population? There remains a racial divide between white and non-white seniors with respect to income.
- b. Housing: Median housing growth has hit an extreme slope. From 2010 to 2015, median home value experienced 95% increase.
- i. It is clear that the lowest income Austin residents are being displaced. Austin has the 18<sup>th</sup> most expensive housing of all U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). Nonetheless, housing is much cheaper than the coastal cities Austin's economy is compared to. As long as this housing price differential exists, Austin will continue to experience job growth.
  - ii. In the future, more seniors will become renters than are currently.
- c. Questions:
- i. Vice Chair Varteressian requested a copy of the data.
  - ii. Commissioner Kareithi asked where seniors are relocating if they are displaced. Mr. Robinson replied that this information is not currently collected but he is eager to gather more information. What is certain is that the Austin area is experiencing a "suburbanization of poverty".
  - iii. Commissioner Bordie asked if there has been an opportunity to communicate with San Antonio regarding these issues. Mr. Robinson replied that there has been little interaction between the two cities due to cultural differences and historically different and diverse economies.
  - iv. Chair Briesemeister asked if during presentations, the increase growth of the senior population was highlighted. Mr. Robinson replied that it was; the emerging market for retirees draws attention because of the possibility of new business. Seniors that transition-in-place will likely be lower income, non-whites.
    - 1. Transportation will become an even greater issue for the senior population within the city limits as it is currently.
  - v. Commissioner de Maria Nicola commended Mr. Robinson's work to highlight

senior-level data.

- vi. Commissioner Cagle asked if there was a reason seniors wanted to be in the urban area. Mr. Robinson replied that there is a draw to family. Seniors are moving to the Austin area from elsewhere to be with their adult children and their families.
  - vii. Vice Chair Varteressian asked how senior mobility is measured.
  - viii. Commissioner Van Sickle stated that when residents age, the tax rate changes. She asked how this will impact the future tax base. Mr. Robinson replied that there is not currently modeling being done to determine this, however a deeper dive into the effect of the growing senior population on the tax base could have a huge impact in city planning efforts.
  - ix. Commissioner Angel asked if there is an increase in services provided to seniors moving to Austin. Mr. Robinson replied that he is not aware of any.
  - x. Commissioner Van Sickle commented that the in-migration of senior households are the primary share of senior growth for the next 10-15 years.
- B. Discussion regarding a potential recommendation related of the development of an equity tool
- a. Commissioner De Maria Nicola motioned to pass a resolution, recommending that age be included as a demographic variable for consideration in terms of its intersectionality with race and that questions to address this intersectionality be included in the Equity Assessment Tool, as appropriate
  - b. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Sickle
  - c. Motion passed 11-0.
- C. Discussion regarding potential recommendation related to the FY2017-18 Annual Action Plan, the City of Austin’s application to receive formula grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- a. Chair Briesemeister identified the possible recommendations including:
    - i. NHCD include elements of Age-Friendly Action Plan
    - ii. Include data collected by age
    - iii. Home Repair: consider sliding scale for income eligibility
    - iv. City provide and publicize information on where seniors can obtain resources
    - v. Communicate with developers the benefits of working with seniors and making affordable housing options
  - b. Vice Chair Varteressian motioned to pass a resolution recommending that the FY 2017-18 Annual Action Plan reflect the goals and strategies related to housing identified in the Age Friendly Action Plan
  - c. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Angel
  - d. Motion passed 11-0.
- D. Election of Officers for May 2017 – April 2018 term.
- a. Vice Chair Varteressian motioned to re-elect Janee Briesemeister as Chair.
  - b. Commissioner Cagle seconded.

- c. The motion passed 11-0.
- d. Chair Briesemeister motioned to re-elect Peter Varteressian as Vice Chair.
- e. Commissioner Van Sickle seconded.
- f. The motion passed 11-0.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

A. Discussion regarding developing recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 City of Austin budget – Standing Item.

- i. Citizen Communication from Shubhada Saxena
  - i. Discussion of need for expanded senior transportation services, including need to balance individual vs congregate services.
  - ii. More vans are needed at Parks and Recreation to fulfill this need.
- ii. Citizen Communication from Teresa Ferguson representing AustinUP
  - i. Discussion regarding existing services for workforce development for older adults already occurring through Austin Community College.
- iii. Discussion regarding work to date by Housing and Outdoor Spaces Work Groups, who have voted many topics aside from specific dollar amounts
  - i. Would be good to get initial feedback on list to gauge interest before proceeding with additional background work.
- iv. Potential recommendation could include looking at RBJ redevelopment and possibilities for collocating senior services with senior housing
  - i. Would require funding for a feasibility study.
- v. Commissioner Garcia-Pittman suggested proposing a budget request for a data analyst to support City Demographer dedicated to planning for increased senior population growth and services.

B. Commission Work Plan – Standing Item.

- i. No updates.

C. Updates from Working Groups – Standing Item.

- i. Transportation (Commissioner Kareithi): During the meeting on March 16, the working group discussed the Parks and Recreation recommendation for an additional van and staff.
  - i. The working group discussed opportunity for Capital Metro to support older adults to spend more time in the community.
  - ii. The working group discussed 53 Formula Funding: funds for projects that go beyond traditional para-transit services to benefit individuals with disabilities and older adults. Discussed different ideas and innovations surrounding this.
  - iii. To date, there has been no specific request for funding.
- ii. Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: Larry Schooler has volunteered an intern to work on collecting data and metrics for each City department that was present at the

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previous meeting and disburse to the Commission. This will support working groups in efforts to measure success across the Age Friendly Action Goals.

- iii. Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion: This working group has been combined with the Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information.
- iv. Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information (Commissioner Lugo): During the previous working group meeting, working group members participated in a training on Asset Mapping software, which is user-friendly and can be used to help achieve strategy identified in Domain 4. It can also be used to support achieving the goals across all the Domains.
  - i. Development of Dashboard to track performance against goals. Can be used for all working groups.
  - ii. Initiatives that are being developed currently include: Austin Community College workforce development, Coming of Age with Travis County volunteer to work program and the development of the internship program.
- v. Community Health Services (Commissioner Bordie): Commissioner Garcia-Pittman and Commissioner Bordie are co-chairs. The previous working group meeting focused on regrouping with additional participants and new structure. Reviewed who is missing at table. Invited 5-6 more individuals. Commissioner Angel will join. Texas Alzheimer's, 211, Austin Resource for the Elderly have been invited. Will continue to work on the strategy.
  - i. Commissioner Garcia-Pittman informed the Commission that the working group has scheduled a regular meeting time which is every third Tuesday each month at 9am at Meals on Wheels.
  - ii. Next meeting will review all goals and strategies on Domain 8 with focus on potential budget requests.
- vi. Age-Friendly City of Austin (Commission Van Sickle): The working group has not met since the previous Commission on Seniors meeting in March. Once information on City-funded senior programs is received from Mr. Schooler, more can be discussed.
  - i. The meeting organized by Mr. Schooler was very well received which demonstrated the interest in Austin being an Age-Friendly City. A distribution list has been created for individuals within the City government working on senior issues. The existence of this distribution list can support cross-departmental work on the Age-Friendly Action Plan.

### D. Update on Joint Inclusion Committee – Standing Item (Janee Briesemeister)

- i. Chair Briesemeister informed the Commission that the Joint Inclusion Committee meets quarterly; May is the next meeting. Language access issues will be discussed.

## 5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

### A. Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors

- i. No updates

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. May meeting will focus on budget recommendations
- B. CodeNEXT is tentatively scheduled to present in May
  - a. Initial comments are requested by CodeNEXT by May 17.
- C. Request to move St. David's presentation to June
- D. Request to move Capital Area Foster Grandparent Program to June
- E. Staff to include the listing of previous future agenda items on minutes to retain items discussed.
  - a. Affordable Housing
  - b. Texas Veterans Commission
  - c. Hispanic Quality of Life
  - d. Veterans Affairs Office
  - e. Google representative
  - f. State Veterans Services
  - g. Foundation Communities
  - h. Austin Energy – Weatherization and home repair
  - i. Home renovation for seniors
  - j. Housing and resources for senior musicians and artists
  - k. Dell Medical School
  - l. St. David's Foundation Strategic Plan presentation, potentially in May
  - m. Capital Area Foster Grandparent Program (June)
  - n. Falls Prevention Course, possibly in June or after
  - o. CodeNEXT (May or June)
  - p. Diana McIver confirmed for June

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Commissioner Kareithi motioned to adjourn meeting.
- Commissioner Cagle seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 11-0
- Meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.