



African American Resources Advisory Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

The African American Resources Advisory Commission convened in a meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street in Austin, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by Chair Kenneth Thompson.

African American Resources Advisory Commissioners:

Present: Chair Kenneth Thompson, LaTisha Anderson, Jessica Faith Carter, Miriam Conner, Vice Chair Chiquita Eugene, Clifford Gillard, Tam Hawkins, Daryl Horton, Marissa Jones, Nelson Lindner, Farah Muscadin, Ruthie Redmond, and Gregory Smith

Absent: Aaron Demerson

City Staff in Attendance: Economic Development Department (EDD) Assistant Director Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, Assistant City Manager Mark Washington, EDD Development Services Administrator and Liaison Linda Hayes and EDD Small Business Information Specialist Jackie Mayo

1. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the October 3 regular meeting were approved following a motion by Commissioner Gillard, seconded by Commissioner Muscadin.

2. Chair's Report:

Chair Thompson met with all the other Quality of Life chairs about the Mayor's resolution. Commissioner Thompson invites any commissioner interested in attending meetings with him to do so. The Commission agreed to own the Carver Museum and needs to track progress and plan. The Solar and Economic Work Group (Commissioners Thompson, Redmond and Smith) met with a film crew from California who wanted to see what is going on in Austin. Feedback is that the solar industry has been waiting to see involvement of black people. 2019 will be the 400th anniversary of Jamestown and he has been in conversation about that celebration. Spirit of East Austin will meet at the Carver Library at 11 a.m. tomorrow; try to attend the meeting.

3. Citizen Communication: Three citizens signed up to speak at Citizens' Communication, but all three want to speak about item 6, so they will speak when item 6 is taken up.

4. Presentations:

- a. **Roosevelt Weeks**, new **Director of Austin Public Library** introduced himself and invited the Commissioners to visit the new Central Library and to meet there; it is one of the top libraries in the nation.
- b. **Laura Esparza**, **PARD Division Manager of Museums and Cultural Programs**, gave a presentation about the **Cultural Arts Residency Program**. The program is a new opportunity, in partnership with EDD Cultural Arts Department, to use Hotel Occupancy Tax funds to open cultural centers after hours during the week so that creatives can use the centers after hours. The new program is being called the Artists Access Program, and will provide access to space and some technical theater and marketing support. Centers include the Carver Museum, Daugherty Arts Center, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, and the Asian American Resource Center. The program will be open to cultural contractors or artists who wish to become cultural contractors. Artists will be selected via a jury process using an impartial community



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panel. One criteria is alignment with the mission of each cultural center. Applications have started coming in and they are diverse. Use of the rehearsal space doesn't require the artist to perform at the center if they already have performance space.

- c. **Laura Esparza and Kimberly McNeely, Acting PARD Director** gave a presentation about the **Status of the Carver Museum Restoration and Capital Improvements**. Site Manager Bamidele Demerson has raised concerns and provided thorough documentation about needed improvements at the Carver. Ms. McNeely spoke about the bond program that can provide funding for expensive items such as roof repair. PARD is updating master plans to address needs at the Carver and other facilities. To date, the front doors have been replaced and repaired, all lighting in the galleries is being replaced with LED lighting, all theater chairs have been reupholstered and some improvements have been made to restrooms. The Commission requested and she agreed to provide quarterly progress updates on the maintenance repairs being done at the Carver.
- d. **Kimberly McNeely** made a presentation regarding the relationship between **Austin-Rosewood Community Development Corporation, and Millennium Youth Entertainment Center (MYEC)**. The relationship with MYEC started in 1995. MYEC is operated through a contract with a company called SMG; it is locally operated by Ms. Vanessa Silas. In 2013 the contract was renewed, so the current relationship will continue through 2019. Over time the budget has included cost driver increases for wages and utilities, but not for improvements. Through advocacy of the Commission and others, the MYEC received \$280,000 for sound and lighting improvements; this is in addition to the annual operating budget of approximately \$1 million. The relationship with the Austin Rosewood Community Development Corporation was established in 1995 as a requirement associated with the HUD Section 108 guaranteed loan that funded construction of the MYEC. In 2016 this relationship was allowed to expire for unknown reasons. The relationship either needs to be reestablished or this board can be unsettled in order to establish a relationship with another board; the City's understanding is that the desire of Ms. Silas is to reestablish the relationship with Austin-Rosewood CDC. Current repairs can be accomplished either by re-establishing the relationship with Rosewood CDC or PARD can work with MYEC to fund the improvements. Another role of the Corporation is overseeing the MYEC budget and ensuring that funds are spent expeditiously and appropriately.

5. Working Groups:

- a. Mural: The re-opening will take place on November 18 but installation of the tile is being postponed.
- b. Health and Mental Health: None
- c. Public Safety: None
- d. Expansion of the Carver Library: See item 4 above.
- e. Solar and Economic: See item 2 above. Discussion is taking place to prioritize solar at Colony Park.
- f. Youth and Education: None



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- g. Urban Music/Other Cultural Activities: EAST is in its second weekend. Capital View Arts is partnering with Carver and African American Cultural Heritage facility. Carver has also hosted workshops on Art and Business.
- h. Affordable Housing and Equitable Planning Group – Commissioner Redmond moved to form a new working group to align with Council priorities. Commissioner Anderson seconded the motion which was approved.

6. Old Business:

a. Speakers:

- i. **Kathy Mitchell** spoke about the need to oppose the new police contract. She said Austin has a history of disproportionate use of force and severity with respect to African Americans. Of 1,800 use of force incidents each year, approximately 6-8 result in discipline. The civilian oversight system has no subpoena power and no power to require APD to interview witnesses other than police witnesses.
 - ii. **Sukyi McMahon** asked for support to oppose the police contract. She discussed the 180-day rule that prevented APD from disciplining an officer for assaulting Breion King. Austin's contract was rated the sixth worst in the nation. African Americans are adversely impacted by the contract.
 - iii. **Chas Moore** referenced section 143.307 of the code regarding the police contract. He said that under the proposed contract, \$82.5 million will be paid to APD officers over the next 5 years. Mr. Moore asked the Commission to align to fund what is important to the community.
- b. Three Commission Budget Resolution: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Three-Commission Budget Resolution as it was presented at the October 3 meeting. Commissioner Redmond seconded and the motion was approved with Commissioner Gillard abstaining.
 - c. Discussion on the letter to council regarding the Budget: Commissioner Horton brought forward a recommendation to ask City Council to equalize funding in the budget for the minority chambers of commerce. Commissioner Smith moved approval and Commissioner Muscadin seconded. The resolution was approved with Commissioner Hawkins recusing herself.
 - d. Discussion on the Austin Justice Coalition Resolution: Commissioner Gillard moved to support the resolution. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Conner. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. New Business:

- a. Government Relations Office presentation regarding upcoming legislation: sponsored by Commissioners Demerson and Muscadin
- b. SMBR - Disparity Study (2018): sponsored by Commissioners Anderson and Muscadin
- c. Rose Fellowship: sponsored by Commissioners Muscadin and Anderson
- d. Budget Discussion: sponsored by Commissioners Muscadin and Anderson

8. Adjournment:



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The meeting was adjourned following a motion by Commissioner Smith seconded by Commissioner Muscadin