



African American Resources Advisory Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

The African American Resources Advisory Commission convened in a meeting on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 in the Britton, Durst, Howard, and Spence Community Center 1183 Chestnut Avenue, in Austin, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 5:55 by Chair Kenneth Thompson.

African American Resources Advisory Commissioners:

Present: Chair Kenneth Thompson, Jessica Faith Carter, Miriam Conner, Aaron Demerson, Clifford Gillard, Marissa Jones, and Nelson Linder

Absent: Vice Chair Dr. Chiquita Eugene, LaTisha Anderson, Tam Hawkins, Daryl Horton and Elaina Fowler

City Staff in Attendance: Economic Development Department (EDD) Acting Deputy Director Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, and EDD Development Services Administrator and Liaison Linda Hayes.

1. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the September 4th regular meeting were approved unanimously following a motion by Commissioner Conner, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

2. Chair's Report:

Chair Thompson recognized former Assistant City Manager Mark Washington who left to become the City Manager of Grand Rapids and recommended creating a report on how the Commission is to be treated by the City of Austin. He recommended a class in 2019 that would include 5 – 6 people to be added to the Mural. Chair recognize Stephanie Haden for being honor at the Urban League Banquet.

3. Citizen Communication:

- a. **Stephanie Haden** from Austin Public health requested continuation of the conversation between the Commission and Austin Public Health regarding the \$5,000.00 that is included in the budget. She is willing to return at any time she is placed on the agenda.
- b. **Ge Thomas** from Central Texas Allied Health Institute said she applied at UT and ACC but was not accepted so she went to San Antonio and found a job. She is now back in Austin to start her own Institute and invites members of Austin's black community to work with her project.

4. Presentations:

- a. **Carver Complex Update – Bamidele Demerson, Cultural and Arts Education Manager and Laura Esparza, PARD Division Manager** provided an update on the building improvement and continuing challenges, including water leakage. The Carver has vacancies for a cultural instructor and educational specialist. The Carver will help with the Oakwood Cemetery.
- b. **Water Forward. Austin's Integrated Water Resource Plan – Marisa Flores Gonzalez, Program Manager and Teresa Lutes, Managing Engineer, Austin Water** talked about outreach in the development of the plan that will be taken to City Council in November to incorporate climate changes with the community values. Among the Plan recommendations are smart readers to monitor water usage; education on storing and reusing water for landscaping. A new pilot program with the City of Austin and ACC showcase the Plan.



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- c. **African-American Cultural & Heritage Facility Annual Report – TJ Owens Program Manager, Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division** discussed how the linkage between cultural arts and the economy provides a platform for the community. The facility is available for meetings, including the 80-inch monitor.

5.

- a. **Proposed Budget Overview– Kenneth Thompson, AARAC Chair, and Sylvania Holt-Rabb, Assistant Director of City of Austin Economic Development Department:** Chair Thompson described the difference between the Concept Menu method used last year and the process this year, in which Quality of Life commissions had input early in the process. He noted that it is difficult to see that the budget actions taken by the City will necessarily impact African Americans in Austin. Based on the budget, it looks like a lot of money was allocated to African American Quality of Life in three categories, but those funds will benefit everyone. There are a few categories where AAQOL did not receive any allocation. He asked commissioners to consider budget amendments that would allocate funding under some of these categories. Commissioners noted that other commissions were more specific in their requests, and they seem to be getting what they requested. The amendment process can be used to request funding for groups such as Jump On It. Commissioners Linder and Gillard will write a resolution advocating \$69,000 in 2019 to Jump On It to erase their debt and funding in future years for programming. The Budget committee will consider additional resolutions advocating funding for other ME3LJ, Urban Fest and the Carver. All resolutions should be turned in to the City Manager before September 10.
- b. Commissioner Fowler was elected to serve on the Mini Grants Review Panel after being nominated by Commissioner Demerson. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. Commissioner Gillard recused himself from the vote.

6. Special Presentation: African American Community Alliance Community Update

- a. The Austin Revitalization Authority – Greg Smith, President – nothing to report
- b. The Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce – Tam Hawkins, President and CEO Excused Absence
- c. The Baptist Minister Union – Rev. Daryl Horton, President – Excused Absence
- d. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – President Nelson Linder thanked Greg Smith for his work with the ARA and reminded Commissioners about voting and the bonds on the ballot.
- e. The Austin Area Urban League – Quincy Dunlap, President and CEO commended the community on how it showed up for the Urban League Gala.
- f. Cultural Arts – Clifford Gillard announced how East Austin benefits from the Yellow House, Six Square, and the Carver Complex.

7. Working Groups:

- a. Photograph Selection for Mural: Chair Thompson discussed a new class starting in February
- b. Health and Mental Health: will report next month



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- c. Public Safety is looking at mental health in APD and the training they provide not only the police officers, but also the Emergency Communication Department [911] and the DA's office. Urban League has a social action group pertaining to Alzheimer's disease.
- d. Expansion of the Carver Complex: No update
- e. Solar and Economic: No update
- f. Youth and Education: next month
- g. Urban Music/Other Cultural Activities: No update
- h. Affordable Housing and Equitable Planning Group: recommendation on Jump On It with the City Manager
- i. Commissioner Demerson is starting a new work group about the Report Card on the QoL budget recommendations

8. Discussion and Possible Action:

- a. **Historic Preservation and Representative Election - Deputy Director Cara Bertron-Lowe** talked about historic preservation as tool to help stabilize community by preserving landmarks within an area. Responsibilities of community members and leaders include building support in the district and neighborhoods. Materials are available for community outreach. The project will continue until next fall. The community stakeholder group requests a volunteer from the Commission to advise on outreach and engagement. Meetings are held six times each year. Commissioner Conner volunteered to serve in this capacity and Commissioner Thompson volunteered to serve as backup.
- b. **Staff Briefing – of Austin City Clerk's Process and Procedure Update –** Commissioners were asked to read the information packet and follow correct procedures when sending something to a working group.
- c. **Staff Briefing - Chair and Vice-Chair Election** was postponed to the next meeting following a motion by Commissioner Linder that was seconded by Commissioner Smith.

9. Future Agenda Items:

- a. Police Oversight Advisory Working Group Update – Farah Muscadin, Police Monitor

10. Announcements: The State of Black Business annual luncheon will be held October 4.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned following a motion by Commissioner Hawkins seconded by Commissioner Demerson.