



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, June 12, 2019**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2019, at City Hall.

Board Members in Attendance: Acting Chair Alvarez and Members Hosking Pulido, Worthington, Wren, Huston, Harrison, Bliss Lima, Burson Polston, Cortes-Castillo, Conlin

Staff in attendance: Rachel Farley, Donna Sundstrom, Cindy Gamez

Chair Alvarez called the Meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

1. **INTRODUCTIONS-** ECC members and guests introduced themselves.
2. **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST-** None
3. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL-** Notes on citizen communication from Janee Briesemeister appear in the minutes under item 6.b.i., as she spoke about that agenda item.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Member Harrison moved to approve the May 8, 2019, Regular Meeting Minutes with no changes and Member Hosking Pulido seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0.
5. **PRESENTATION**
  - a. **Alison Bentley, United Way for Greater Austin, Success By 6 Coalition and Action Plan**
    - 90% of children in poverty are children of color; For family of 4 in Travis County, a basic survival budget is higher than 200% of the federal poverty level
    - Cost of child care- average cost of child care is almost \$9000, infant care is \$8900, high-quality infant care is \$10,000 to \$15,000; This compares to annual tuition at UT of \$10,000
    - In the past, early childhood efforts in Austin not aligned in asks to Council and had no common vision;
    - First plan 2012- School Readiness Action Plan; 2<sup>nd</sup> iteration- 2015-2018- School Readiness Action Plan;
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration launched in April 2019- Rebranded as the Success By 6 (SX6 Strategic Plan) to highlight the SX6 Austin/Travis Coalition; workgroups and partner organizations help implement the strategies and work to achieve the plan's goals; Focus- 2000-day journey referring to the first 5 years of life as a critical period of brain development and to the 5-year plan's 5-year timeframe, 2019-23
    - Plan seeks to align with but not duplicate the Master Community Workforce Plan and the Family Opportunity Roadmap: Austin/Travis County 2-Generation Strategic Plan 2019-2023
    - The plan's framework has 4 pillars:
      - Healthy Beginnings- strategies include Family Connects focused on the health and wellbeing of families in the postpartum period, and infant mental health consultation in child care
      - Supported Families- strategies include home visiting programs like Nurse Family Partnership, and parent education. A workgroup called the Ready Families Collaborative is made up of 9 agencies providing those services. Any Baby Can is the fiscal lead for the collaborative with funding from the City.
      - High quality care and education- Strategies are working to increase the availability of affordable, high-quality child care, Pre-K partnerships between Austin ISD and community child care centers. Other key partners include Head Start and Workforce Solutions.
      - Safe and stimulating communities- The focus is on how our community- including elected officials, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Housing Authority, polices, and others, help create supports needed for healthy child development. This pillar includes an Early Childhood Resource and Referral System through 211 to help better connect families to programs and services. The system has a closed-

loop referral in which they identify what program is the best fit, send a referral, the organization receiving the referral contacts the client to check eligibility, and if they are not eligible, they let 211 know so they can reach back out to the family.

- The plan is a community effort and the Early Childhood Council can be involved.
  - The City of Austin and Travis County have a combined \$7 million investment in early childhood, which only comes out to \$220 per child from a low-income family which is lower than in other cities
  - 34% eligible children under 4 in services (child care subsidies, parent education, home visiting, Pre-K)
  - ECC can help- ask Council to invest more in early childhood, align public and private investments, and make investments that will pull down additional funding streams for the community
  - Let Council know about importance of, need for increased services and investments
- Outlying areas- less transportation, fewer services; serving these families adds challenges for home visitors (additional mileage, time, and traffic); Del Valle and Manor are child care deserts.

**b. Council Member Alison Alter, Priorities related to early childhood**

- Represents District 10 in west and central Austin; She thanks her appointee, Mary Jane Burson, her appointee, and all ECC members for their service and focus on how we serve our youngest
- ECC recommended that Council endorse Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit; Council did so unanimously.
- 3 most important issues facing Austin- Climate change; housing for families with children; Ensuring we have safe vibrant places to learn, play, and grow, including parks, libraries, after school EC programs, etc.; Addressing these benefits community, economy, saves money long-term
- How do we measure if Austin is succeeding? Ensure every child can thrive. We are working on equitable funding at the state level (justfundusTX), investing in AISD's Prime Time after school program and Pre-K classrooms, focusing on libraries, working to have parks accessible within ¼ to ½ mile of all residents
- She sits on a joint AISD/County/City board; Purpose is collaboration on issues of interest to all three entities; ex: City's Land Development Code rewrite in relation to AISD enrollment challenges, zoning, and consolidation plans. Board very busy, but ECC can reach out to chief of staff through Mary Jane Burson to get items on the agenda; bring things up in stages- flag issue, then discuss more as schedule permits.
- Lucky to have folks focused on children- United Way for Greater Austin, Success By 6, City and County funding continuity of child care, Austin Public Health staff coordinating services, investments
- Investments in EC and health align with strategic direction, but in Austin we are not leading the way on this.
- Your advocacy to center voices for children are important; Streamline your recommendations to council and work to get them acted on
- City budget is being developed in the context of revenue caps. We can't make the budget choices on the backs of our children; must continue to invest in children and families. Recognize we need to plan for potentially substantial cuts; don't yet know what are options are going to be; help us identify what we should stop doing to reorient funds toward early childhood
- City staff have been working for months on budget; Council fully engages in June; Boards and Commissions input now happens earlier; Budget aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 and this year, we may not be able to spend money on anything new; there is the potential for cuts
- Interaction with Council members helps; don't just send recommendations through system and expect easy adoption; make clear asks, clear justification; show how leverages other dollars, has a multiplier effect
- Land Development Code- CM Alter wants family-friendly affordable housing units, reduced costs to open new child care centers, maintain parkland as we increase density, looking at occupancy limits- allow families and children to be present without incentivizing stealth dorms
- Q- Are there efforts to build child care centers near affordable housing? A- Council can't control what the private sector builds. In transition zones, include the uses we want, use restrictions less for child care. There are also conversations about when the City is constructing new buildings or accepting proposals for developments how we can make it easier for child care or harder to for other uses, but we can't require it.
- Q- Thoughts about a proposed property tax for exempted houses on Lake Austin and child care as one of the target uses of those funds? A- Likely strong support for the uses proposed if the funding comes in. Not sure

how the funds would be divided among the proposed uses. Be clear about how the funds could be used and the return on investment. Address how the uses can reflect on the values of those who would be taxed.

- Q- Does the City's 5-year Consolidated Plan include funding for family stability? A- Not sure. Council asked that family friendly unit be included and families as a target populations. The plan reduced the amount of money for child care. Child care contracts under Neighborhood Housing and Community Development will be transferred to Austin Public Health eventually. ECC can advocate about those contracts. There were some challenges with the providers; we may need providers to step up so the funds can continue to flow.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

### a. Chair updates, Acting Chair Raul Alvarez

#### i. ECC officer elections

- The nominating committee put forth Raul Alvarez as nominee for Chair and Cathy McHorse as nominee for Vice Chair. Member Huston motioned to put the nominations to a vote, Member Harrison seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 11-0.

#### ii. Updates on ECC recommendations- no updates

### b. Policy work group updates, Anna Lisa Conlin and Cathy McHorse

#### i. Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC)

- Policy work group members attended JIC meeting to learn more. Success By 6 Leadership Team and ECC members want to be more intentional about addressing disparities; ECC interested in working across commissions on early childhood issues that disproportionately affect their populations of focus.
- Citizen Communication- Janee Briesemeister, Chair of Commission on Seniors and of JIC; JIC formed when the 10-1 Council was created; members are reps and alternates from each of 9 other boards and commissions; meet on 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 3:00. Mission- advise council on equity and inclusion; work closely with the City's Equity Office; make recommendations on budget, policy; foci related to boards and commissions- cooperation among them, racial equity training for members, increased diversity in appointments. Areas of potential cross-over with ECC- children, children in poverty; multigenerational work- proposal for multigenerational site at RBJ that could include child care. Working with Budget Office, each member commission had community budget forums to get feedback from constituencies before making recommendations. Human Rights Commission recently joined JIC- both bodies voted to recommend to Council that they be added, changed by-laws. Janee will let JIC know that ECC is interested in joining and discuss with them.

#### c. Community Partnership and Engagement work group updates, Rebecca Harrison

- Defined 3 areas of focus- united voice with other boards and commissions; raise public awareness and engage community voices on Council decisions, budget process; help spread message about high quality child care. Ideas- identify points of contact in various parts of City government- (library, Parks and Recreation, public safety, WIC, housing, etc.); Quarterly summary on ECC to share with Council Members, Boards and Commissions, community on successes, issues to engage in

#### d. Success By 6 Action Plan leadership team, Cathy McHorse

- SX6 having meetings with Council and Mayor's offices to discuss recommendations from ECC, SX6 leadership team; so far, overall supportive but concerned about revenue caps

## 7. STAFF BRIEFING AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

### a. Rachel Farley, Austin Public Health

- i. Council Resolution 20190411-020 on outstanding recommendations from the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K Resolution Work Group
- ii. Thursday, June 13- No Small Matter screening, 9:30-11:45 a.m. in Council Chambers
- iii. Thursday, June 13- Community meeting about the Dove Springs Health Center, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Mendez Middle School Cafeteria

iv. Thursday, June 20- Council proclamation honoring Larry Elsner, 5:30 p.m.

8. **RELATED GROUPS-** No updates provided.

9. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- a. Next meeting August 14, 2019, 9 a.m. - City Hall, Room 1101
- b. November 13- Police Chief Manley
- c. To schedule:
  - Workforce Solutions Capital Area presentation
  - ATX 2-Generation Strategic Plan- Family Opportunity Roadmap
  - Family Connects presentation

**ADJOURNMENT-** Member Harrison moved to adjourn the meeting and Member Huston seconded the motion. Newly elected Chair Alvarez adjourned the meeting at 10:34 without objection.