



Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board

MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 15, 2020

The Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board (ATCFPB) convened on Wednesday, April 15, 2020
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/watch-atxn-live>

Board Members in Attendance:

Andrea Abel, Joi Chevalier, Kacey Hanson, Karen Magid (Chair), Sharon Mays, Kara Prior (Vice-Chair), Ryan Rosshirt, Ellen Sweets

Absent board members: Roman Gonzalez, Felipe Camacho, Emily DeMaria

Staff in Attendance:

Emily Ackland, Edwin Marty, Brittany Nevins, Sam Night, Amanda Rohlich

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Karen Magid called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- a. Vanessa Fuentes, Community Advocate, Dove Springs. Importance of food access as part of resilience plan. Life expectancy 10 years longer than those east of I-35. High risk areas for COVID-19 those in Eastern Crescent bear the brunt of coronavirus. Higher risk for hospitalizations. Ensure equitable food access. Many families are essential and frontline workers. Need to fill immediate need and include in the resilience plan.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 9th MEETING

Board Member Kacey Hanson motioned to approve the meeting minutes from March 9, 2020 with Board Member Sharon Mays seconding the motion. Passed on a 7-0 vote.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Board Infrastructure & Protocol
 - i. Review Board Members' meetings with City and County Officials
 - i. Sharon Mays met with Mayor and Environmental Health regarding the new order requiring face masks and the lack of notification that restaurants and businesses have received regarding these orders.
 - ii. Andrea Abel had communication with Constable Stacy Suits
 - iii. Joi Chevalier had communication with Brigid Shea, Judge Eckhardt, Mayor's Office, and
 - iv. Kacey Hanson met with Jeff Travillion provided updates on emergency activities and about the City's budget request.

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- v. Ryan Rosshirt communicated with ACC Julie Ann Nitsch, had materials to distribute but could not get access to vehicles
- vi. Karen Magid working with Joi on a food access proposal and has written to Travillion, Gomez and Daughterty. Proposal being sent to County for possible funding.

3. STAFF BRIEFINGS

Edwin Marty provided staff briefing on the Food Access Coordination Group and response to COVID-19. The Food Access Coordination group serves as a Strategy Group within the Social Services Branch of the Incident Command Structure of the City of Austin's Emergency Operations Center. The group of approximately one hundred departments, school districts, and organizations is convening meetings twice per week to provide updates on organizational operations and identify areas of need, including opportunities for collaboration and directing resources.

The Office of Sustainability is working in close partnership with Austin Public Health, COA Economic Development Department, Equity Office, Travis County HHS, the city's Emergency Operations Center, and the City Manager's Office to coordinate an emergency feeding response. The group is also working to develop a longer-term strategy for addressing the anticipated increase in food access needs throughout our community. In addition to regularly scheduled calls, the Office of Sustainability is in constant communication with individual partner organizations and sends a daily food system update to the Food Access Coordination group.

Key issues of concern: 1) Twin curses of scarcity and excess due to supply chain not being able to pivot from supplying institutions/ restaurants to only supplying grocery stores/ food banks, 2) Massive shift from traditional model of congregate feeding for food insecure to drive-by and home delivery, 3) Tracking massive swing in food insecure population. Report from U of Arkansas estimates 40% of Texas is food insecure.

Approach for addressing concerns: 1) Identifying clusters of populations experiencing food insecurity. Developing a strategy for each cluster and collecting data (Homeless, Youth/ Students, Seniors, Populations lacking mobility, Newly laid-off, Refugee/Immigrant), 2) Working with UT Pop Health and Public Health to create aggregated food insecurity data tracking system, with a specific focus on racial equity, 3) Communication Strategies include promoting United Way's 211 and ConnectATX.org and updated information on the COA web site, 4) Food Recovery - created a single point of contact for all business wanting to donate edible food, 5) Farmers Markets - helped ensure markets were considered critical and remain open, convene weekly calls to support alignment with safety protocol, used Office of Sustainability funding to support local markets to address drop in income

Key Accomplishments: 1) Created ATX Emergency Food Exchange web site platform for listing unmet needs, resource matching between organizations, 2) drafted a letter clarifying role of food pantries/ farmers markets as Critical Infrastructure, 3) working with County in developing a contract with Keep Austin Together to use commercial kitchens to produce prepared meals for distribution, 4) City is working on a contract with Sustainable Food Center to work with local restaurants in underserved communities, 5) Exploring a range of additional strategies for supporting private sector food business in collaboration with the Economic Development Department, 6) Close coordination with all agencies working on PEH to bring 1,000 meals a day from Revolution Foods contract and 1,000 grocery bags for homeless from CTFB each week

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Hot topics: 1) Coordination with local Funds to ensure agency needs are best addressed, 2) Biggest policy need is to allow SNAP to be used online in State of Texas.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Working Group Briefings and Recommendation
 - i. Build Opportunities for Food Entrepreneurs
 - a. Sharon Mays provided updates. Using this opportunity to get more voices to the table and ensure much better coordination and communication with APH. Need for liaison position between board and APH.
 - ii. Support Farms & Farmers – no updates; need for producer perspective on board. Board Member Ryan Rosshirt spoke with Johnsons Backyard Garden who are dropping all volunteers and restructuring workforce. Had tripling/quadrupling in orders.
 - iii. Healthy Food Access to All Communities
 - a. Kacey Hanson provided updates. Working group met and budget recommendations came out of the meeting. Several people in the workgroup that are contributing to the COVID-19 food access response.
 - iv. Food and Gardens – no updates
 - v. COVID-19 Food System Response – Karen Magid and Joi Chevalier convened new working group. Craft a letter (similar to process used to make recommendation regarding the LDC), using this meeting to determine the outline. Key issues: 1) Encouraging more complete resiliency, emergency, and disaster recovery planning and additional FTE's to address staffing for food system work, 2) Enhanced aggregation for supply chain supports (including infrastructure, health and safety, communication, and labor)
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on recommendations
 - i. Suggestion for working group to put together a draft letter
 - ii. Other interested board members: Ellen Sweet, Kacey Hanson, Andrea Abel, Karen Magid, Joi Chevalier, Kara Prior, Ryan Rosshirt
 - iii. Karen Magid to take on creation of first draft and will send out working group invite
 - iv. Kacey Hanson to suggest COVID-19 issue items as they relate to each of the working groups
 - v. Ellen Sweets suggestion to consider brochure
 - vi. Discuss and take possible action on budget recommendations
 - a. Kacey Hanson provided update on the budget request coming out of the Healthy Food Access Working Group (see back-up)
 - b. Board to review and provide comments
 - vii. Review of Board Member Assignments
 - a. Karen Magid to draft COVID-19 Food System Response letter and send letter and calendar invite to those who expressed interest in participating in a working group (Ellen Sweet, Kacey Hanson, Andrea Abel, Karen Magid, Joi Chevalier, Kara Prior, Ryan Rosshirt)
 - b. All board members to review and provide comment on revised Healthy Food Access WG recommendation
 - c. Kacey Hanson to participate and review both working groups' recommendations in order to reduce overlap between COVID-19 response recommendation and healthy food access budget recommendation
 - d. Joi Chevalier to make recommendation on Diversion Planning and the URO

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FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a.** Prioritize ability to continue to meet remotely and possible frequency – the board decided to request May meeting options from Clerk’s Office

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Karen Magid adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am

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