



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, February 13, 2019**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 13, 2019, at City Hall.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Elsner, Members Alvarez, Burson, Conlin, Huston, Paver, Worthington, and Wren,

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

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

1. **INTRODUCTIONS-** ECC members, guests, and presenters introduced themselves.
2. **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST-** None
3. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL-** None
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Member Huston moved to approve the January 9, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes with no changes and Member Conlin seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0.
5. **PRESENTATION**
 - a. **Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza- Priorities for early childhood work**
 - The boards and commissions that relate to her top priority issue areas are the Early Childhood Council, public safety, women's commission, and electric utility commission.
 - She works as a team with Council, the Mayor, and City Managers to get things done and four co-sponsors are needed to put item on Council agenda. Endorsements from boards and commissions are useful.
 - Child care among top three biggest burdens for families; Capacity of high quality child care does not match the need; Families struggling to stay in Austin
 - Her district, district 2: Over 70% Hispanic, \$50,000 median income for family of four compared to \$80,000 in Austin overall)
 - Her 2017 resolution on high quality child care and Pre-K led to a work group that submitted recommendations to Council, some of which have already been implemented
 - On 1/31/18, Council waived fees for food establishment permits and environmental health inspections for high quality child care providers
 - In October, she introduced a resolution asking City Manager to look at other City fees and zoning for child care and what barriers could be removed for high quality providers: Ex- Conditional overlays create a restriction on what a piece of property can be used for and often prohibit child care as a use. Child care facilities operate on slim margins, removing barriers helps. Findings and options are due back to Council in March.
 - Council has passed funding for new Pre-K classrooms (3 in AISD in fiscal year 2018)

- and Council will consider two new inter-local agreements on 2/21/19 to fund 4 new classrooms in Manor ISD and up to 5 in AISD)
- A new Dove Springs health center that will include child care center was included in the City's bond package which is greatly needed in the area. This was the one stand-alone item that passed that was not for a city-wide purpose.
 - Council passed funding to hire a consultant to explore incentives and public-private partnerships the City could consider to increase the availability and accessibility of high-quality, affordable child care.
 - MPT Garza noted that the ECC has done so much to support these efforts and she is excited about the partnering with United Way for Greater Austin on early childhood issues. ECC members thanked MPT Garza for her leadership on early childhood and asked what else the ECC can do to support the work.
 - MPT Garza said a major concern is threat of revenue caps from state legislature which would have a significant impact: Had a 2.5% cap been in place for the prior five years, the City would experience \$93.2 million less revenue. With cap, City would not be able to fund new programs and would have to make significant cuts, making it more difficult to prioritize early childhood and other important issues. Local governments are not the primary driver behind property tax increases; bulk of property taxes go to the state. State underfunds education and relies on property taxes to cover costs. Members asked MPT Garza if it would be helpful for the ECC to pass a recommendation on the revenue caps issue and she thinks it would.
 - Council will get information in March about options for potential zoning changes regarding child care. If Council decides to take action on any zoning changes, the issue would then go to the Planning Commission. ECC members asked if it would be helpful for the ECC to voice support to the Planning Commission and MPT Garza said it would.
 - Opportunity Zones- created in federal tax code in 2017 as a tool to reinvest capital gains in designated census tracts to encourage investment in low-income communities. Part of her district has been designated as an opportunity zone. MPT sponsored a resolution to develop a local policy that any City incentives or resources used to encourage investment in Opportunity zones take into consideration needs expressed by community, particularly the need for grocery stores in food deserts. Economic Development Department is working on that policy now. The ECC could recommend that City include investment in child care facilities or start-up costs for new child care facilities as a priority in any City investment in opportunity zones or in any City policy that addresses opportunity zones.

6. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- a. **Potential action on Early Matters Greater Austin business alliance's Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit-** ECC members discussed potential language for a recommendation related to the Toolkit. The policy committee will draft a recommendation and ECC will take action at a future meeting.
- b. **Chair updates, Chair Larry Elsner**
 - i. **Uphaus Early Childhood Center- traffic and safety concerns**
MPT Garza provided updates. Uphaus is the only AISD facility that only serves Pre-K students. Its location dead-ends into a mobile home park and provides only one way in and one way out, causing traffic issues at drop-off and pick-up time for morning and afternoon classes. Many students come to the school from other neighborhoods, so arrive by car or bus. Her office is working with AISD and the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) to explore potential solutions

including possible use of parking lot at IRS facility.

ii. New ECC members and vacancies

1. Mayor Pro Tem appointee- Matthew Worthington
2. Mayor Adler appointee- Johanna Hosking Pulido
3. Current vacancies- CM Natasha Harper-Madison, CM Paige Ellis
4. Upcoming vacancy as Chair Elsner is stepping down- CM Tovo

c. Work group updates

- i. Policy work group, Anna Lisa Conlin-** At February meeting, work group reviewed calendar of upcoming ECC meetings. In March, the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development department will present on 5-year planning effort and PARD will present on long-range planning. ECC can weigh in on early childhood issues related to those plans. March and April meetings will be the time to make any recommendations to Council regarding the FY2020 budget. The policy workgroup and APH staff will bring updates to the ECC on the work of the consultant looking into incentives and public-private partnerships.
- ii. Community Partnership and Engagement work group, Rebecca Harrison-** no updates
- iii. New member orientation work group-** The group is creating a packet for new members with an overview of ECC, highlights from last year's annual report, and links to key documents and resources that will be ready soon. Members Burson, Huston, and Wren volunteered to be mentors for new council members.
- iv. Success By 6 School Readiness Action Plan leadership team, Mary Jane Burson-Polson-** Shifting away from the name School Readiness Action Plan toward ATX Success By 6 Coalition Action Plan. The new action plan for 2019-2023 will be launched at end of April with a breakfast event, an afternoon event, and a happy hour.

7. STAFF BRIEFING AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- a. ECC Officers-** Chair Elsner is stepping down. Vice Chair Alvarez will serve as acting chair until new chair is elected. ECC can vote on officers at April meeting. ECC members decided to postpone election until the new members are seated so they can participate. Vice Chair Alvarez and Member Burson volunteered to be the nominating committee.
- b. City budget process-** Boards and Commissions' budget recommendations due to Council May 3, so ECC will need to vote on any recommendations at the March and April ECC meetings
- c. 2019 ECC meeting agenda updates-** Next meeting staff will provide updates on work by the Development Services and Planning and Zoning Departments to respond to Council Resolution 20181004-036 directing the City Manager to evaluate fee and zoning regulations relating to child care centers. Council Member Alter has accepted ECC's invitation to speak about early childhood priorities at the 6/12/19 ECC meeting. City Hall Boards and Commissions room is currently reserved for all 2019 ECC meetings except the September 11 meeting which will be at an alternate location.

- d. Prenatal to 3 updates- Austin Public Health (APH) early childhood team participated in a Baby Day event sponsored by Zero to Three at the Thinkery to tell families about Bright By Text. The project to create a coordinated enrollment system for early childhood services is beginning to get technical assistance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and is coordinating with a similar effort in Dallas as a result of TEA including this work in that agency's Preschool Development Grant application. Through the Prenatal to Age 3 work our community is doing with the National Coalition for Infants and Toddlers, the newly formed Success By 6 communications committee is receiving technical assistance from two communications firms, GMMB and Finn Partners. This work is primarily focused on prenatal to 3 messages to parents and caregivers in the community.

8. RELATED GROUPS (Only as needed)

- a. Austin Association for the Education of Young Children- none
- b. Child Care Licensing- none
- c. Child Incorporated- none
- d. E3 Alliance- none
- e. Success by 6
 - TAEYC and United Ways of Texas are having Advocacy days at the state legislature
 - The Statesman's "Unwatched" series about child injury and death in child care facilities has led to some legislation. There is also proposed legislation focused on Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to increase transparency with data collected, prioritize quality care, and increase coordination on data between TWC and TEA.
 - Cathy McHorse will be on a panel about mental health consultation at SXSWedu.
 - AISD and United Way for Greater Austin have a grant from the Texas Education Agency to increase the number of Pre-K partnerships between the district and community child care centers. The partnership agreement will be considered by the AISD school board on March 25th.
 - The local Head Start grant is currently being re-competed. We expect to know who the grantees will be in March or April.
 - Workforce Solutions Capital Area currently has only a short wait list or no wait list for child care subsidies, so let eligible families know.
- f. Workforce Solutions- none

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Possible recommendation to inter-governmental relations staff about potential for state legislature to place a cap on local property tax revenue
- b. Presentation about the updated ATX Success By 6 Coalition Action Plan in June or July
- c. Next meeting April 10, 2019, 9 a.m. - City Hall, Room 1101

ADJOURNMENT- Chair Elsner adjourned the meeting at Adjourned at 10:25 without objection.