



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
Friday, September 18, 2020**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened on Friday, September 18, 2020.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Alvarez, Vice Chair McHorse, Members Bliss-Lima, Conlin, Cortes-Castillo, Gordon, Huston, and Paver

Staff in attendance: Rachel Farley, Cindy Gamez, Michelle Rodriguez, Ashlee Kraus, Shay Breen

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Alvarez called the meeting to order at 3:13 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from 6/10/2020 meeting

The August 10, 2020 meeting minutes were approved by a vote of 7-0-0 with Member Cortes-Castillo off the dais

2. PRESENTATIONS:

a. Economic Development Corporations - Matthew Kwatinetz, Q Partners

Economic Development entities that function as inclusive growth organizations. People and businesses are not left behind as it grows. Intervenes to make what is needed (such as early childhood education, transportation, workforce training, fresh food, affordable housing, etc.) more accessible so that it is economically feasibility to living here. Makes sense to integrate early childhood education into the economic development entity because if functions as an equalizer for children, workers, and economy of the city. Mr. Kwatinetz has been working with the City on the creation of an Austin Public Development Corporation (APDC) which will function like a real estate developer that works for the people. The APDC was going to launch in March but timeline was slowed by the pandemic.

Benefits- broader focus than most developers, more return on the public investment, the organization coordinates the needs, multi-use developments that can be used at all different times of day are more economically viable. The corporation functions as the developer, not as the operator of the businesses or organizations housed there (like child care program, retail space, art space, etc.). It speeds up the processes for real estate procurement and evaluations in collaboration with subject matter and service provider experts.

Currently he is working with the City of New York to expand free Pre-K to all areas. Worked on geo-mapping needs, potential public spaces, resources. Conducted analysis of existing child care and schools and proposals to central storage and open up for program space. Partnered with the Department of Education on RFPs to child care programs to provide free Pre-K.

The Corporation will be a 501c3 and a local government corporation that can blend governmental funding from all levels. Funds generate by one activity can be used to support

another activity within one building or across projects in different areas. These are policy decisions that Council could choose to make. Could also leverage bonds, philanthropic donations to create cultural spaces in perpetuity. Have explored public spaces available that could be leveraged for public use. The APDC can maximize possibilities of public-private partnerships. There can be separate public ownership of a facility with private operators which allows the entity access to funding available for both public and private projects.

b. Deputy City Manager Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Reimagining Public Safety

DCM Rivera-Vandermyde came from Minneapolis where she worked on some early childhood projects. City Manager Cronk proposed a budget and Council took steps to go further in reimagining public safety. It includes immediate reductions/reallocations of \$31.5 million, reinvestments of \$31.5 million, decoupling \$76.6 million in services from the Austin Police Department, and \$45.1 million focused on reimagining various programs/services of APD.

Additional direction and budget riders from staff: Asked to come back in 6 months with evaluation and recommendations. Exploring: creation of mini police departments, civilian board of police commissions, relocating APD headquarters and using the building in a community-led effort. Under consideration for decoupling or reimagining: internal Affairs; policing at parks, lakes, airport; mounted police.

City Manager created Reimagining Leadership Team that includes DCM Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Assistant CM Ray Arrellano, Assistant CM Chris Shorter, Director of Office of Police Oversight, Director of Equity office.

Communications plan: Website- <http://www.austintexas.gov/publicsafety>, focus groups, surveys, listening sessions across City and in each district. Creating a Community Reimagining Task Force- centering it in the voices of those who have been most impacted by problems with police; developing priorities and creating work groups.

Questions and Answers/Discussion:

Q- How do we look at the particular needs of specific parts of the city where there is overlap between economic needs and crime and focus on prevention?

A- Think about how you want your government to show up in a time of crisis- could be mental health, other crises, not just crime. There will be work groups on parks, business sector, anticipates one on youth, etc. Can think about the intersectionality of economics and health. There will be listening sessions, organized by topics and by geography.

Q- Early childhood is a key priority for prevention. How could some of the money be put toward prevention?

A- DCM Rivera Vandermyde is trying to get staff not to just think about moving buckets or services which won't solve the problems. In another city, an Office of Violence Prevention started as youth-focused and expanded to a broader focus. We should make sure we have a lens that includes some of the youngest residents, schools, and support for families in crisis. What would that look like? Think about what resilience looks like. She welcomes our creative input in the process.

ECC member comment- For example, early childhood home visiting programs have been proven to reduce child abuse, and in some cases, domestic violence.

DCM response- In another City, she had the code compliance officers trained to look for signs of sex trafficking

3. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

a. Success by 6 Coalition’s recommendations for uses of public safety funds to protect and promote the welfare of families with children

Success by 6 is working on recommendations to the City about reimagining public safety that focus on prevention, quality programs for families, and equity.

b. ECC recommendations on uses of public safety funding

We could look at the make-up of the Reimagining Task Force to see if any members with a focus on families with young children could be a part of it. The ECC Policy Work Group will discuss potential recommendations for the ECC to consider in October.

c. Nominating committee slate- officer nominees

The committee’s nominees were Cathy McHorse for Chair and Matt Worthington for Vice Chair.

d. Elect ECC Chair and Vice Chair

The nominees presented by the nominating committee were approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

e. Elect ECC representative and alternate to sit on the Joint Inclusion Council

Postponed to next meeting.

**f. City Council resolutions related to child care- [Item 62 on 9/17/20 council agenda](#)
Staff Response to Council on Resolution 20200729-089**

On 10/17/2020, Council passed a resolution directing staff to find funds to support fragile sectors affected by COVID- child care, bars and restaurants, and music. There is potentially \$12 million in property tax revenue available. Advocates are pointing Council to the report submitted by the Austin-Travis County COVID-19 Task Force and APH about the funding needed in the immediate and long term for stabilization and sustainability of the child care sector.

g. Updates on the state of child care and Pre-K in Austin-Travis County during COVID-19

According to data from Workforce Solutions Capital Area on the child care programs they work with, 40% are not operating, 56% are operating and have available seats, and 4% are operating at capacity.

h. Dove Springs Health Center and Child Care Center Community Task Force- Matt Worthington- No updates given

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT- Chair Alvarez adjourned the meeting at 4:29 p.m.