



## COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

<http://www.austintexas.gov/cttc>

### MINUTES

#### Special Called Meeting

Wednesday – October 9, 2020 – 3:00 PM

#### VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING

Please go to [http://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards\\_commissions/meetings/10\\_1.htm](http://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/10_1.htm) for backup material associated with this agenda.

All ATXN (City Channel 6) programming is cablecast on Spectrum, Grande Communications, and Google Fiber on their cable channel 6, on AT&T U-Verse Channel 99 and webcast online. Over 20 meetings per month, including this commission meeting, are available on demand online, typically within a few hours of the cablecast. Schedules and video can be found at:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/page/atxn-video-archive>.

#### **CURRENT COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Sophie Gairo - Mayor Steve Adler

Nehemiah Pitts III - Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Claudia Yanez - Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza, District 2

Malcolm Yeatts - Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria, District 3

David Alexander - Council Member Gregorio Casar, District 4

Dave Floyd - Council Member Ann Kitchen, District 5

Irfan Syed - Council Member Jimmy Flannigan, District 6

Vacant - Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Michelle Reinhardt - Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Nicole Thompson – Council Member Kathie Tovo, District 9

Sumit DasGupta - Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

#### **Commission Members Present**

Sophie Gairo

Nehemiah Pitts III

Malcolm Yeatts

David Alexander

Nicole Thompson

Sumit DasGupta

#### **Unexcused Absence**

Claudia Yanez

Michelle Reinhardt

Irfan Syed  
Dave Floyd

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 3:10 PM

## **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

Michael Ward of the Austin Urban Technology Movement (AUTM) spoke on digital equity in Austin and the Texas Technology for All petition.

### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 25, 2020**

**Motion to approve minutes as presented made by Commissioner Yeatts, seconded by Commissioner Thompson passed on a vote of 6-0.**

### **2. STAFF AND COMMUNITY BRIEFINGS (A member of the public may not address a board at a meeting on an item posted as a briefing)**

- a. Briefing on Digital Inclusion Week 2020 & Special Conversation on Digital Equity Introduction (Commission Chair, Nehemiah Pitts III)**

### **3. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion and Possible Action)**

- a. Digital Equity Discussion & Presentations - Digital Empowerment Community of Austin (DECA) Entities, Community Members, Civic Organizations, and Leaders**
- Texas School for the Deaf
    - David Coco - Outreach Specialist
      - David spoke on the technology and equity challenges that have been posed by COVID-19 to the deaf population. This includes increased bandwidth requirements and the inequitable distribution of bandwidth in particular.
    - Moderated Policymaker Response
      - Policymakers include all attending City of Austin staff, elected officials, and appointees.
  - Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired
    - Daniel Wheeler - Instructional Technology Coordinator
      - Daniel spoke to the technology and equity challenges that have been posed by COVID-19 to individuals with visual impairments. This includes how all websites in general and school learning platforms / web meeting platforms in particular are sometimes difficult to use with screen reader technology.
    - Moderated Policymaker Response or Presentation
      - Policymakers include all of the attending City of Austin staff, elected officials, and appointees.
  - United Way of Greater Austin

- Paola Silvestre Porras - Director Family Pathways
  - Paula presented on United Way's 2gen coalition. The objective this program is to work towards financial stability for low income families by removing systemic barriers to career and education pathways for parents and their children.
- Delfy Morales
  - Delfy related her lived experience of having insufficient bandwidth for her and her children to engage in digital schooling. She noted that she has to share devices and bandwidth with her children. She noted that there is a lack of culturally competent instructions for primary care givers that speak English as a second language. This has challenged her to provide support to her children in their learning. She has recently transitioned to a full time care giver for her kids, relying on the income of her spouse.
- Marie Lord Youmbi
  - Marie is a parent of 3 who is going to cosmetology school. She had to give up cosmetology school to provide support to her kids going into remote learning. She only had 2 computers for the 3 kids and herself to utilize. She felt she had to sacrifice one kid every day. She mentioned that her internet is very weak, and insufficient for her needs. She is not very digitally skilled, and she is struggling to provide her kids with the needed support.
- Maria Reveles
  - Maria is a mother of 4 children. She is a student as well. She has many teachers who are not bi-lingual, which is a challenge. The mobile-wi-fi-hotspot that the school district has assigned to her has insufficient bandwidth. Her youngest child is attending school via her cell phone. She implored that culturally competent resources be created and provided to the community.
- Moderated Policymaker Response or Presentation
  - Policymakers include all of the attending City of Austin staff, elected officials, and appointees.
- Housing Authority of the City of Austin & Austin Pathways
  - Catherine Crago - Head of Strategic Initiatives
    - Catherine gave remarks on how HACA had to respond to COVID and how that impacted their residents. She also spoke to the needs of her residents for parents to be digitally connected as well, since parents need to be digitally capable enough to support their kids.
  - Brianna Sterling - HACA / Smart City Ambassador and Team Lead
    - Brianna spoke of research that she performed. Low income folks often lack trust in internet and tech companies and often lack the funds to purchase broadband internet or devices. The older and bi-lingual folks often don't have the digital literacy they need. She asked if there is

anything we can do to connect low income families with sufficient internet.

- Josh Banks - HACA/IDADS Program Manager
  - Josh spoke on IDADS, a fatherhood program run by HACA. They transitioned meeting to virtual platform after COVID struck. He spoke to the challenges of moving folks from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one.
- Chester Martell - HACA/IDADS Ambassador
  - Chester spoke to challenges of doing interviews on unreliable digital systems.
- Moderated Policymaker Response or Presentation
  - Policymakers include all of the attending City of Austin staff, elected officials, and appointees.

#### **4. COMMISSION UPDATES (Discussion and Possible Action)**

##### **a. Digital Inclusion, Civic Engagement, and Strategic Technology and Telecom Policy Working Group**

This item was not reached.

##### **b. Knowledge, Information, and Data Stewardship Working Group**

This item was not reached.

##### **c. Technology, Infrastructure, and Innovation Working Group**

This item was not reached.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner DasGupta and seconded by Commissioner Alexander passed on a vote of 6-0.**

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For more information on the Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission, please visit their website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/cttc> or contact Jesse Rodriguez at [jesse.rodriquez@austintexas.gov](mailto:jesse.rodriquez@austintexas.gov).

Posting Submitted by: Jesse Rodriguez, Business Process Specialist, Wednesday, October 14, 2020