



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened on Wednesday, June 9, 2021.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair McHorse; Vice Chair Worthington; Members Hosking Pulido, Gordon, Alvarez, Huston, Bliss Lima, Hedrick, and Conlin

Staff in attendance: Cindy Gamez, Leila Lawson, Filip Gecic, Mary Jamsek, Donna Sundstrom

**CALL TO ORDER** – Chair McHorse called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL** – Khotan Harmon, 2021 Digital Inclusion Fellow, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs, City of Austin

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from May 12, 2021 meeting** - Member Huston moved to approve the May 12, 2021 meeting minutes and member Hedrick seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0

### **2. PRESENTATIONS**

- a. **Updates on Dove Springs Public Health Facility** – Kalpana Sutaria, Project Manager from Public Works; Kymberley Maddox and Donna Sundstrom, Assistant Directors, Austin Public Health

Presenters shared schematic design of the health care facility showing different views, including the child care facility. Outdoor learning area is not designed yet. All renderings were shared with the Dove Springs community. Dove Springs Public Health Facility Taskforce members helped distribute a survey (English/Spanish) to ensure City was on the right path with the design. 92 respondents. Strong support for design concept. Community wanted it to be a modern design and excited about the child care center. Still working on interior floor plan design and will seek feedback from the taskforce. Staff are working on answering questions from the survey including connections to transportation. Current budget estimate is at \$15M for construction during schematic design phase. This is \$2.8M over-budget. Cost drivers are high construction and material costs. Additionally, the cost of a high-quality child care center was not in the original 2018 bond election. Cost saving options do not impact any of the proposed services. Coordinating with Parks and Recreation Dept. to include Inclusive Play Equipment for the Dove Springs Metro Park near the recreation center. Revised site plan of the building includes removal of a large parking lot. Parking spaces were added to a second area that included existing parking spaces so none were lost. Revised site plan also includes leaving existing soccer fields and updating them. Full facility design and permitting will be happening early Fall 2021. Ground-

breaking late Fall 2021. Construction complete by Spring 2023. Next steps include Art in Public Places beginning community engagement and an in-person/virtual public meeting late July 2021.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

#### **a. American Rescue Plan Act funding – Policy Work Group**

Chair McHorse updated recommendations from City of Austin where early childhood was one of the top four priorities. Item 77 on Jun 10<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting has \$7.5M as part of the spending framework for early childhood. Staff will work with community on how the dollars are allocated. Total request to fully fund all recommendations split between City and County would have been \$9M. Should there be a shortfall, staff would need to look at priority areas and analyze which areas can be supported by State/TWC funding. Member Conlin updated members that County is investing similar amount but timeline is different. Hoping to have item on next week's County Commissioner's meeting agenda. County support appears to be positive.

#### **b. Recommendations on follow-up to community presenters on child care subsidies – Policy and Community Engagement Work Groups**

Chair McHorse thanked community members/parents for sharing their stories last month. CM Gordon shared follow up items to request including considering what the ECC can impact in their role as a Boards and Commission. The workgroup would like to invite Workforce Solutions to come to the next ECC meeting and share about the subsidy system process from beginning to end. Specifically, the process to move parents/children through the process to enrollment and processes for hearing community voice. This would help the ECC make recommendations to City Council to help families and children. Formal invite for August. Member Conlin shared that the Policy work group is in agreement with this next step. Goal is to address systems and not individuals. Given that the it is a complicated system, ECC members would like to hear about the family perspective side first.

#### **c. Winter Storm Review Task Force update- Aletha Huston**

##### **i. Listening session dates- June 11, June 23, 6-8 p.m**

CM Huston reported that there have been three virtual sessions. June 23<sup>rd</sup> is the last one. Different populations have been speaking but no families with young children/ child care community so far. Need to hear these voices. Community can send communication in various formats: phone, email, video. Task force is looking for suggestions on how COA can be better prepared and communicate better and more effectively in an emergency, especially when people don't have power. Chair McHorse added that she would send input she has received from the child care community. CM Huston also shared that more voices from East Austin community is also needed. Provide comments by 6/22/21.

- ii. Web sites: [www.austintexas.gov/content/winter-storm-review-task-force](http://www.austintexas.gov/content/winter-storm-review-task-force), <https://www.facebook.com/AustinHSEM/>, <https://twitter.com/AustinHSEM/>

#### **d. Topics to take to Joint Inclusion Committee**

CM Alvarez reported that JIC did not meet last month. The winter storm was on the agenda so unfortunately, they were not able to give CM Huston any feedback from that committee. Will be voting on American Rescue Plan budget recommendations during the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

#### **4. STAFF UPDATES**

##### **a. Child care center at Bergstrom Technology Center**

APH Program Manager, Cynthia Gamez provided updates on the facility progress for staffing, opening, playground. KinderCare Education (KCE) at Work was the child care operator selected to run the center. The center will be called KinderCare at Bergstrom Tech. KCE will finalize Center Director hire in the next two weeks and then initiate hiring of other staff and prepare the center for licensing. KCE hopes to open the center in time for back to school. Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) construction has not started but a construction company has been identified and everyone will be working to get the center ready for children in time for back to school.

##### **b. Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan**

CM Hoskings wants to know how this will be phased out. The team will use a multi-generational approach to the solutions. Friends and neighbors in the community helping friends and neighborhood. They will look at how child care is the entry point into households for support and connectivity for generations around resources, access, affordability, devices, skill training, and IT support. The team will work with Cathy McHorse to get on the Early Childhood Council agenda as well as other community early childhood meetings including the Workforce Solutions Provider Advisory Council and Success by Six Leadership Team meetings.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**ADJOURNMENT** – Chair McHorse adjourned