



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

The Commission on Seniors convened a Regular Meeting at Austin City Hall, Boards and Commissions, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas, 78702.

**Board Members in Attendance:** Chair, Janee Briesemeister, Vice Chair, Peter Varteressian, Adam Hauser, Diana Spain, Emily De Maria Nicola, Erica Garcia-Pittman, Fred Lugo, Jacqueline Angel, Luz Lopez-Guerrero, and Patricia Bordie.

**Board Members not in Attendance:** Amy Temperley, Martha Bauman, Martin Kareithi, Natalie Cagle, and Sally Van Sickle.

**Staff in Attendance:** Tabitha Taylor and Halana Kaleel, Austin Public Health

**Presenters:** Carol Johnson, Civil Rights Officer, City of Austin and Emi Johnson, Austin Public Library

Chair, Janee Briesemeister called the Board Meeting to order at 12:05pm. The Commission introduced themselves.

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

A. None

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE COMMISSION ON SENIORS JULY 14TH, 2021 MEETNG, 2021 MEETNG**

A. The minutes for the July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting were approved on Vice Chair Varteressian motion, Commissioner Hauser second on a 9-0 vote. Commissioners Temperley, Bauman, Kareithi, Cagle, Van Sickle, and Lugo were absent.

**2. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. First in person meeting since March of 2020.
- B. Commissioner Lugo entered the dais at 12:11pm

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Discussion and possible action Commission Work Plan – Standing Item
  - i. No discussion currently.
- B. Discussion and possible action from Working Groups – Standing Item
  - i. Age Friendly Action Plan Implementation Working Group
    - No discussion currently.
  - ii. Transportation, Housing and Outdoor Spaces Working Group
    - No discussion currently.
  - iii. Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment Working Group
    - No discussion currently.
  - iv. Community Support and Health Services Working Group

- No discussion currently.
- v. Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group
  - No discussion currently.
- C. Discussion and possible action from Joint Inclusion Committee – Standing Item (Chair Briesemeister)
  - i. Idea to have working groups of Joint Inclusion to focus on issues that are common among all boards and commissions.
- D. Discussion and possible action of City of Austin Budget – Standing Item (Chair Briesemeister)
  - i. No discussion currently.

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Presentation: Overview of Civil Rights Enforcement in Austin, Carol Johnson, Civil Rights Officer, City of Austin.
  - i. Discussed virtual presentations her office is preparing as well as Fair Chance Hiring.
  - ii. Many conversations occurring with community organizations
  - iii. Civil Rights Office will have 16 staff at capacity.
  - iv. Discussed how failing to get hired, receive promotions, acquire training/development due to age is covered by laws.
- B. Presentation: Library Department Initiatives Update, Emi Johnson, Austin Public Library
  - i. Provided update on the library and other activities they are interested in pursuing regarding older adults.
  - ii. \$11,000 in funds were reallocated during COVID for technology needs for older adults experiencing isolation due to the pandemic. Laptops were loaned to many older adults in partnership with Parks and Recreation Department.
  - iii. Update provided on computer loaning and emergency internet services.
  - iv. Two other Commissions also made the request for hotspots and laptops for low-income seniors.
  - v. The library has applied for three grants that would cover costs for these different programs.
  - vi. There is a digital literacy gap, so the grants will be focused on digital literacy and not devices if the grants are received. This includes hiring digital navigators, and outreach endeavors.
  - vii. The library updated their metrics for the AFA plan.
- C. Discussion and Approval of the 2022 Commission on Seniors Meeting Schedule
  - i. Meeting schedule is 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month 12:00pm, no holiday conflicts for FY22, and the meeting will occur at City Hall unless otherwise noted.
  - ii. Encouraged in the City Ordinance is a meeting with the Mayors Committee on Disabilities.
  - iii. The 2022 Commission on Seniors Meeting Schedule was discussed and approved on Commissioner De Maria Nicola motion, Vice Chair Varteressian second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioners Temperley, Bauman, Kareithi, Cagle, and Van Sickle were absent.
- D. Discussion and Possible Action on the City of Austin Budget Process (Chair Briesemeister and Commissioner De Maria Nicola)
  - i. During December Meeting the Commission would like to address overarching issues regarding budget, and decided what themes are relevant and not being addressed through the current budget.
  - ii. Commissioners would like a more in-depth response from the different departments regarding budget.

- iii. LGBTQI+ Study came out and affordable housing is noted a lot as a need.
- iv. The biggest recommendations the commission made was about homelessness for the FY22 budget, and the responses were vague.
- v. Senior Tax Exemption was not awarded funds for efforts.
- vi. Housing and Planning are working on internet access issues.
- vii. Working groups will be gathering information on the budget process to be sent to Joint Inclusion Committee.
- viii. Commission would like to start working towards getting a Quality-of-Life Study rolling.

**5. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

- A. Age- Age-friendly Austin Update, Tabitha Taylor, Age-Friendly Program Coordinator
  - i. Taylor presented on Age Friendly updates and COVID-19 response.
  - ii. Currently in Stage 3.
  - iii. Many questions about boosters, upcoming townhalls will clarify a lot of questions.
  - iv. Commissioner Lopez-Guerrero left the dais at 1:45pm.

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. Homeless Strategy
- B. Budget Office
- C. Branding Strategy
- D. Parks and Recreation

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Chair Briesemeister adjourned the meeting at 1:55pm.