



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2023**

**The Early Childhood Council convened in a regular meeting on Saturday, August 12, 2023, at Permitting and Development Center, Room #1405, 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive, Austin, Texas**

**Vice Chair Green-Otero called the Early Childhood Council Meeting to order at 11:06 a.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance: Vice Chair Green-Otero and Members Cormie, Gordon, Hamilton, Hedrick, Jaime, McCollum, Selig, and Vargas**

**Staff in Attendance: Caitlin Oliver, Rachel Farley, and Donna Sundstrom**

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

The first five speakers to register prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

**Loretta Johnson, a home-based child care provider, gave public comment on the needs of in-home child care and urged the City of Austin to do more for child care providers like her. Ms. Johnson expressed feeling like home providers were put on the backburner until the COVID-19 pandemic, when more funding for child care became available. However, funding is now gone, and she feels that the funding for child care was distributed unequally, with child care centers getting more support than in-home providers.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approve the minutes of the Early Childhood Council Regular Meeting on May 10, 2023  
**The minutes from the meeting of 5/10/2023 were approved unanimously on Member Hedrick's motion, Member Gordon's second, on a 9-0 vote.**

**STAFF BRIEFINGS**

2. Briefing from Planning Department staff on amendments to Title 25 to create separate zoning use classifications and modify definitions pertaining to childcare and daycare services to increase opportunities for childcare services around the city in response to Resolution No. 20230126-055

Jordan Feldman, Senior Planner, and Paul Books, Principal Planner, presented staff recommendations in response to Resolution No. 20230126-055.

- On October 4, 2018, the Austin City Council passed Resolution No. 20181004-036, directing the City Manager to review fee and zoning regulations for childcare centers. The goal was to promote affordable and high-quality childcare in the city. As a result, the Housing and Planning Department, Development Services Department, and Austin Public Health provided a report with recommendations for changes to the Land Development Code (LDC).
- In January 2023, City Council passed Resolution No. 20230126-055. The resolution aims to increase childcare services throughout the city by amending the Land Development Code (LDC). It also calls for the creation of a grant program to help qualifying childcare operations cover City fees associated with opening or expanding a childcare facility.
- [Resolution No. 20230126-055](#) directs the City to develop proposed amendments that do the following:
  - Introduce zoning use classification and definition for Childcare Services
  - Remove non-accessible parking requirements for Childcare Services
  - Allow Childcare Services as an accessory use in residential
  - Increase maximum enrollees allowed in childcare services
  - Increase Childcare Services accessibility by:
    - Adjusting zoning districts to permit Childcare Services
    - Permit Childcare Services in areas within childcare deserts
    - Implementing other appropriate changes to the conditional use permitting process
  - Restrict Childcare Services in incompatible zoning districts
- Proposed changes- definitions and occupancy
  - Change the term from Day Care Services to Childcare Services
  - Childcare Services is the use of a site for the provision of daytime care for:
    - Limited: 12 persons or less
    - General: more than 12 but no more than 24 persons
    - Commercial: more than 24 persons
  - Planning staff confirmed the proposed definition and occupancy changes apply to child care homes, as well as centers.
- Proposed changes- permitted use chart
  - Permit Childcare Services in most zoning districts across Austin
  - Require a Conditional Use Permit for Childcare Services in zoning districts:
    - Commercial: Development Reserve (DR), Agricultural (AG)
    - General: Commercial Recreation (CR), DR, AG
    - Limited: CR, DR, AG

- **Do not permit in industrial zoning districts: Industrial Park (IP), Major Industry (MI), Limited Industrial Services (LI)**
- **Proposed changes- maps of existing permitted acreage and proposed acreage for childcare services use**
  - **For child care services limited, the proposed changes would not result in a significant change to the areas where these services would be permitted.**
  - **For child care services general and commercial there would be a significant increase in areas where these services would be permitted, an increase in over 150% and 250% of the acreage currently permitted for this use, respectively.**
- **Proposed changes- parking**
  - **Add subsection to 25-6-471 “Off-Street Parking Facility Required” requiring:**
    - **The minimum off-street accessible spaces are the greater of one accessible parking space or the number required by ADA or FHAA regulations**
    - **Accessible spaces to be located adjacent to the site and on an accessible route**
    - **Accessible parking to be provided off-street**
    - **The director to determine minimum off-street loading and bicycle parking requirements**
- **Staff recommendation to City Council**
  - **The above modifications to land use definitions, zoning districts permitted uses, and off-street parking requirements.**
  - **Recommendation on a grant program for Part 2 of the resolution:**
    - **Staff recommends that Council consider waiving fees for other parts of the development process because the proposed changes minimize the likelihood that a Conditional Use Permit will be needed.**
- **Anticipated timeline for these proposed changes**
  - **Planning Department presents staff recommendations to relevant boards & commissions, including:**
    - **Early Childhood Council – August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**
    - **Codes and Ordinances Joint Committee – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023**
    - **Planning Commission – September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**
  - **Then, the proposed amendments go before City Council – October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

3. Presentation by staff liaison Caitlin Oliver on the purpose of the Early Childhood Council (ECC) and recent actions taken by the ECC

**Staff liaison Caitlin Oliver presented a brief overview of the role and purpose of the ECC and how the ECC partners with the Austin-Travis County Success By 6 Coalition.**

4. Community forum, facilitated by Dr. Choquette Hamilton, to inform the ECC members of the perspective and needs of family-based child care providers

**Member Hamilton asked the family-based child care providers, “What do you need as a home-based child care provider?” The following list of needs came from responses from the audience to that question:**

- **More funding to attend trainings, for directors/teachers to take time off when sick, and to compensate themselves and employees.**
- **Some home providers need benefits like a retirement plan and health insurance.**
- **Compensation that matches what teachers and educators in the schools and center-based child care centers receive**
- **For the community to see home providers as educators, just like teachers in the schools and center-based care.**
- **Increase to the child care subsidy reimbursement rates. Child care providers want to support families with low income, but the current rates do not cover the true cost of care.**
- **That the ECC members advocate for more support for home providers at City Council and equitable funding distribution. Child care providers have been asked many times what they need, now they want to see the City offer solutions, especially for child care home providers, whose directors serve multiple roles, like janitor, pest control, food services, and educator.**
- **Resources from the City after weather events that lead to fallen trees on their properties and play areas for the children in their programs.**
- **Pest control and lawn services support, so that providers do not have to spend their down time on the weekends doing work to upkeep their program facilities.**
- **Resources to be able to provide care that is high-quality but also affordable for families. Affordable tuitions do not cover the cost of operating a high-quality program.**

**Dr. Hamilton also asked, “What do you need to provide high-quality care for families?” The following list came from provider responses:**

- **Books, furniture, outdoor shades, playground equipment, classroom manipulatives, curricula, educational materials, and office supplies like printers (to print contracts, program policies, family welcome packets, etc.) and laminators.**
- **Funding to help cover the costs and fees for permits. Providers want to do everything legally and provide high-quality care, but the expenses to do so can be prohibitive.**

- A center-based child care provider shared the desire to start their own child care home, however, buying a house is difficult and so is starting a business from scratch without funding and programs to support her doing so.

Member Vargas thanked the providers in attendance for sharing their thoughts and experiences with the ECC members and reiterated that the ECC is here to serve the community and allows for public comment at their monthly meetings.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

ECC members did not list future agenda items.

On Member Gordon's motion and Member Hedrick's second, Vice Chair Green-Otero adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m., without objection.

The minutes were approved at the September 13, 2023, meeting on Member Tom Hedrick's motion and Member Choquette Hamilton's second, on a 7-0 vote.