



**EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025**

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center convened in a Regular meeting on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at Permitting and Development Center – Event Center, First Floor, Room 1405 located at 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive in Austin, Texas 78752. (Some members of the ESB-MACC Advisory Board participated via videoconference.)

Chair Navarro called the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Meeting to order at 6:19pm.

Board Members in Attendance:

Angelica Navarro, Chair
Lillian “Lily” Zamarripa-Saenz, Vice Chair
Noemi Castro, Member
Alexander “Al” Duarte, Member
John Estrada, Member

Board Members in Attendance Remotely:

Hilario “Larry” Amaro, Member (Arrived at 6:36pm)
Raul “Roy” Reyna, Member

Board Members Absent:

Cynthia “Cy” Herrera, Member
Anthony Martinez, Member
Lynda Quintana, Member
Selma Sanchez, Member

Staff in Attendance:

Marjorie Flanagan, ACME Division Manager of Cultural Education & Programs
Michelle Rojas, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Manager
Marie Ortiz, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Supervisor
Tina Davila, ESB-MACC Administrative Specialist

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Speaker 1: Michael Mendoza, founder of Augzoo LLC introduced himself and shared details about his current project titled *Bilingual Dinosaurs*. A play involving interviewing cultural leaders with imaginative and metaphorical questions. Mendoza expressed interest in presenting a staged reading of the play at the MACC when an opportunity becomes available. He proposed scheduling the event in either the black box theater or the auditorium as a 1- or 3-day collaboration.

Speaker 2: Mateo Hernandez, Board Member of Teatro Vivo, provided remarks on the organization’s longstanding relationship with the MACC. He shared a brief history of Teatro Vivo’s engagement with the

Center, highlighting the facilities role as a cultural home to them. As a long-time participant in the Latino Artist Access Program (LAAP), Hernandez expressed enthusiasm about the reopening of the Center but voiced concern about the lack of clear communication regarding the return of LAAP participants. He stated that Teatro Vivo has not received information about when-or if-they will be able to resume performances at the MACC. Additionally, he pointed out that although the MACC website indicated the LAAP application would open in August with decisions expected in October, the application had yet to be made available. He questioned how the MACC can effectively serve as a hub for a thriving Latino artist ecosystem if certain artists are unable to apply. He emphasized that artist require consistency and, following previous displacement, deserve the opportunity to return and engage with the MACC once again.

Speaker 3: Emilio Zamora, Ph.D., Co-founder, Academia Cuauhtli and University of Texas Professor shared positive news and expressed his appreciation for the support received by the board. He reminded them that Academia Cuauhtli had previously approached them to request an endorsement or letter of support to assist in their participation in the funding process. He noted that representatives of Academia Cuauhtli attended multiple board and commission meetings, including Austin City Council, to advocate both for Academia Cuauhtli's budget and for continued support of the MACC. He conveyed gratitude for the support provided and shared that a proposal had been submitted to MACC staff, specifically to Michelle Rojas, ESB-MACC Site Manager, regarding Academia Cuauhtli's participation in the upcoming grand reopening. While open to any space allocated, Zamora expressed that Academia Cuauhtli had ideas and was eager to contribute to the success of the event.

Speaker 4: María Del Carmen Unda, Ph.D., Researcher, Academia Cuauhtli echoed the comments made by Dr. Zamora, expressing gratitude on behalf of Academia Cuauhtli for the funding anticipated from the City of Austin. She noted they were waiting on final details to solidify the amount and were deeply appreciative to Council Member Vanessa Fuentes and her staff for their support. In closing, Ms. Unda provided a report of Academia Cuauhtli's recent accomplishments and extended thanks to the MACC Advisory Board for their ongoing support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. The minutes from the Regular meeting of August 6, 2025, were approved on Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz's motion. Member Duarte seconded. Unanimous vote (7.0). Motion passed. Members Herrera, Martinez, Quintana and Sanchez absent.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

2. **Staff briefing on staffing updates, August and September programs, marketing and outreach efforts, and updates on signature event planning.**

Olivia Tamzarian, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Marketing & Outreach Representative provided updates on Holistic Wellness Programs (HWP), Education, Caminos Teen Leadership programming, current and upcoming marketing and outreach, collaborations, signature events, Latino/a/e Artist Access Program (LAAP), exhibits and staffing updates.

(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

3. **Staff briefing on the Office of Arts, Culture, Music, & Entertainment (ACME) Creative Reset Phase 2 community engagement and timeline.**

Marion Sanchez, Interim Community Engagement Division Manager, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment (ACME) discussed the background and establishments of the ACME Creative Reset initiative, highlighted its primary deliverables of research and engagement goals along with actionable plans, and concluded with an overview of the initiative's marketing and outreach strategies.

The ACME engagement process is scheduled for completion by January 31, 2026, to align with the upcoming City budget cycle. Updates will be provided as the process advances.

(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Update on Phase 2 Construction Project.

Heidi Tse, Capital Delivery Project Manager provided a brief overview of the current project timeline, key announcements, and scheduled milestones, accompanied by recent photos illustrating construction progress. Tse revisited the project milestone schedule, noting that construction commenced in 2023. However, the anticipated completion date for all major construction activities was currently undetermined. She informed the Board that, based on critical information received on September 9, 2025, substantial completion would not occur by September 11, 2025, as previously projected. She went on to explain that unforeseen site conditions and the unavailability of key materials-currently without confirmed delivery timelines-have contributed to the delay. Given these developments, and in the interest of transparency, she reported that the project would not meet the originally scheduled reopening date of November 1, 2025. As a result, the grand reopening event had been postponed until further notice. While all details were not yet available, sufficient information had been received to confirm that the current timeline was no longer feasible.

Member Castro inquired about the specific materials currently unavailable that were contributing to the projects delay. She expressed concern that the Board was only now being informed that the project would not meet its scheduled completion date, despite it being the month of the projected deadline. She requested that a thorough assessment be conducted to evaluate the causes of the delays and to outline the proposed recovery plan. She also requested that Tse provide the Board with all relevant information and supporting documentation to ensure transparency and accountability.

Chair Navarro voiced disappointment regarding the recent developments, noting that the MACC had invested significant time, effort, and communication in promoting the November 1 grand reopening date. The Board shared this sentiment and was collectively surprised by the news of the delay. Chair Navarro emphasized the importance of ensuring their feedback is communicated to Rogers-O'Brien and suggested that their experience be taken into consideration during future contracting decisions with the firm.

Marjorie Flanagan, ACME Division Manager of Cultural Education & Programs acknowledged that the team shared their disappointment regarding the delay of the November 1st reopening. However, she emphasized that ACME, in partnership with Capital Delivery Services, remains committed to delivering a fully functional, state-of-the-art, and newly expanded facility. Despite the schedule shift, both teams are enthusiastic about achieving the overall goals and vision of the project. (Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

5. Presentation by Iván Dávila from the Coalition for Austin's Arts & Spanish-language Theater (CAAST).

Michelle Rojas, ESB-MACC Site Manager informed the board that Iván Dávila, Founder of Coalition for Austin's Arts & Spanish-language Theater (CAAST), was unable to attend the meeting in person. In his absence, Rojas presented a pre-recorded video message prepared by Mr. Davila. In the video, he introduced two CAAST colleagues, Karla Gutierrez and Soledad Bautista who were able to attend the meeting in person to speak on behalf of the organization. Ms. Bautista gave a comprehensive presentation outlining CAAST's mission, historical background, and founding purpose. The discussion included the key challenges the organization aimed to address, an overview of its strategic objectives, and a long-term vision. Additionally, a formal proposal for Fiscal Year 2027 was presented for consideration.

Karla Gutierrez proposed on behalf of CAAST to expand the Latino Artist Access Program (LAAP) as part of a pilot initiative aimed at increasing equity in the MACC's theater operations. The proposed expansion included the following key components:

- Hiring dedicated production staff for lighting and sound to support theater activities.
- Establishing artist residencies for two to four Spanish-language theater groups.
- Offering micro-grants or in-kind support to assist with marketing and production needs.

Gutierrez stated the intent was to address long-standing access and equity gaps within the Latino arts community. Furthermore, the initiative was intended to support scalable, equity-driven operations in Phase III of the MACC’s development plan.

(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

Recessed at 8:18pm. Resumed at 8:24pm.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

6. Update from Music Hub Programming Working Group

Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz reported that the working group convened briefly to confirm alignment among all members. It was verified that the alignment fell within the scope of the designated working group. Planning was initiated for strategic use of the designated space, aiming to appropriately serve community members and identify potential partners for collaboration. A follow-up meeting was anticipated to take place within the next two weeks.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Keep standing agenda items. Members who wish to propose additional agenda items will submit their requests via email to the Chair and Vice Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Castro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:38pm. Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz seconded. Unanimous vote (7.0). Motion passed. Members Herrera, Martinez, Quintana and Sanchez absent.

The minutes were approved at the October 1, 2025, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center meeting on Member Castro’s motion, Member Quintana seconded on a 7-0 vote with no vacancies. Chair Navarro and Board Members Duarte, Herrera and Martinez absent.