



***EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
OCTOBER 1, 2025***

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center convened in a Regular Meeting on October 1, 2025, at 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas. (Some members of the ESB-MACC Advisory Board participated via videoconference.)

Vice Chair Lily Zamarripa-Saenz called the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Lillian “Lily” Zamarripa-Saenz, Hilario “Larry” Amaro, John Estrada, Lynda Quintana, Selma Sanchez.

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Noemi Castro (left at 7:08 p.m.), Cynthia “Cy” Herrera (arrived at 6:19 p.m.), Raul “Roy” Reyna.

Board Members Absent: Angelica Navarro, Alexander “Al” Duarte, Anthony Martinez.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Manuel Zamarripa, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Institute of Chicano/o/x Psychology shared that his organization had been in operation for approximately 13 to 15 years, explaining that their focus was on providing community workshops (platicas) and other initiatives designed to promote culturally relevant wellness and a sense of well-being within the community. He emphasized the importance of grounding his type of work in the history and cultural identity of the Mexican American community. He expressed interest in learning whether there were efforts being made to provide more Mexican American historical cultural literary events at the MACC, as he believed such efforts were crucial and highlighted that a key component of his organization’s mission was to foster identity development, provide a sense of belonging, confidence, competence, and a strong self-concept. Mr. Zamarripa hopes the MACC will offer workshops and culturally grounded activities as part of future programming and events.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1. Approve the minutes of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Regular Meeting of September 10, 2025.**

The minutes from the Regular meeting of September 10, 2025, were approved on Member Castro’s motion. Member Quintana seconded. Unanimous vote (8.0). Motion passed. Members Duarte, Martinez, and Navarro absent.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

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

Marie Ortiz, Culture and Arts Education Supervisor, provided updates on Casa de la Cultura programming and the Latino Artist Access Program (LAAP). She noted that all programs are conducted in English & Spanish and announced the LAAP application period was on a temporary pause to allow for more community feedback during the Creative Reset Phase II. She recommended visiting the [Creative Reset Phase II](#) website for more information.

Olivia Tamzarian, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Marketing & Outreach Representative, reported updates on their Holistic Wellness Programs (HWP), Caminos Teen Leadership programming, and current and upcoming marketing and outreach events.

Carlose Meda, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Event Coordinator, informed the board that the Día de los Muertos (DDL M) celebration would no longer serve as the grand reopening event, as the center would not be open in time. Instead, the DDL M event would take place from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Pan America Recreation Center. He stated the event would continue its collaboration with MexAmeriCon and will partner with Frida Friday ATX for vendor marketing. The program will feature four performers, a dance group, and headliner Gary Hobbs. Planned activities include sugar skull decorating, face painting, community altar, a vendor market, and food trucks. (Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 3. **Update on Phase 2 Construction Project.**

Heidi Tse, Capital Delivery Project Manager, Austin Capital Delivery Services, stated that due to the delayed reopening of the center and technical difficulties experienced during the September advisory board meeting, she wanted to share images taken from Thursday, September 25, 2025, to show true construction progress of the facility. She also went over key project milestones and informed the board of the estimated reopening timeline, explaining the meaning of the substantial completion date and the anticipated reopening date. (Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

- 4. **Update on the permanent pocket park.**

Marjorie Flanagan, Cultural Education & Programs Division Manager, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment (AACME), provided insight into the history of the Pocket Park. She explained that the space was originally an alleyway right-of-way owned by the city and was used temporarily as a construction staging area. Over time, it underwent an alley vacation process to become dedicated parkland, ultimately integrating into the MACC facility as the MACC Pocket Park. Flanagan also explained that during the Phase II expansion project, there were initial discussions about using the space as a grand entrance. However, due to budget constraints, that plan evolved, and the park continued as a pocket park. Meanwhile, funds from the Art in Public Places (AIPP) program, which allocates 2% of expansion budgets, were designed for artwork at the MACC. The project also benefited from multiple budget sources, including the Rainey Street Historic Fund and the Parkland Acquisition Dedication Fund. Additionally, temporary furniture and murals were contributed by local

artists, enhancing the park’s appeal. However, due to limited planning staff at the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC), the project stalled. Eventually, the responsibility transitioned to AACME, and now, under Capital Delivery Services, Daniel Yen is leading the effort.

Daniel Yen, Capital Delivery Project Manager, delivered an update on the Pocket Park project, detailing the current progress and outlining the forthcoming phases of development.

Project Timeline:

- Planning Phase (Fall 2025 – Spring 2026): Selection of the architectural team and alignment of project scope with community input.
- Design Phase (Spring 2026 – Spring 2027): Finalizing scope, schedule, budget, and design permitting, alongside collaboration with the Art in Public Places program.
- Bidding and Award Phase (Summer 2027 – Fall 2027): Public announcement of bidding, evaluation of proposals, and contract awarding.
- Construction Phase (Spring 2028 – Fall 2028): Coordination with city staff to complete construction, with continuous community updates.

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

5. Presentation on the updated guidelines and process resulting from the Creative Reset phase I.

Morgan Messick, Asst. Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment Department (AACME) delivered a presentation on the program’s structure, eligibility requirements, and overall application process. She explained that the newly developed guidelines merge several existing programs into a unified framework, with the goal of increasing transparency, simplifying navigation, and ensuring equitable access for artists and organizations. She also gave an outline of the implementation timeline and next steps.

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

Recessed at 7:52pm. Reconvened at 7:57pm

6. Presentation on Academia Cuauhtli’s fall rubric and plans.

Patricia Núñez, UT student, La Colaborativa Cuauhtli, presented an overview of Academia Cuauhtli’s accomplishments during the summer of 2025 and highlighted the organization’s upcoming programming and initiatives for fall 2025.

Dr. María Del Carmen Unda, Ph.D., Researcher, Academia Cuauhtli, commenced the session, introducing herself as one of Academia Cuauhtli’s researchers. She highlighted a recently submitted manuscript she worked on with Dr. Lauren Mena Shook, and Lizeth Lizarraga Duenas titled ***“The Power of Authentic Cariño, Political Care, and Community: Eagle Academy Teacher Agency During the COVID-19 Pandemic,*** noting the work explores pandemic-era pedagogies and the concept of authentic education.

Alma Ixchel Flores-Pérez, a PhD student at UT Austin, presented her fieldwork conducted during the 2024 -2025 academic year. Her research was focused on alternative and community education spaces like Cuauhtli, examining how they support students amid gentrification in East Austin and foster linguistic development. Her findings underscored the program’s community-based approach, promoting cultural identity and linguistic diversity, as well as the concept of “Latinx Indigeneity.”

In closing, Dr, Unda shared that there were 5 grants in progress that would support their research and programming, with expected completion by the end of January. She noted the competitive nature of

certain grants, such as the William T. Grant Foundation, and expressed her excitement about continued collaboration.

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

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

7. Plan and approve 2026 Advisory Board meeting dates.

The motion to postpone this item to 11/5/2025 was approved on Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz’s motion, Member Quintana second on a (7.0) vote. Motion passed. Members Castro, Duarte, Martinez, and Navarro absent.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

8. Update from Music Hub Programming Working Group

Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz informed the board that she, along with Members Estrada and Castro, held a brief meeting during which they agreed to tour several locations suggested by Member Duarte. She will coordinate the arrangements for those site visits and indicated that the group will proceed with meeting biweekly on Sundays.

9. Update from Grand Re-opening Working Group

Michelle Rojas, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Manager, reported that the working group held its second meeting, during which they discussed the recent update regarding the postponed reopening previously planned for November 1. She noted that the group agreed to continue meeting on a monthly basis moving forward. Rojas expressed her appreciation to the board for their ongoing support, feedback, and insights regarding potential community connections and services the MACC could use or offer and thanked them for their help.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Staff Report: ESB-MACC Financial Overview (Sponsors: Herrera, Zamarripa-Saenz)

Presentation by Manuel Zamarripa on history and cultural workshops (Sponsors: Amaro, Quintana)

ADJOURNMENT

Member Amaro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:54pm. Member Herrera seconded. Unanimous vote (7.0). Motion passed. Members Castro, Duarte, Martinez, and Navarro absent.