

Austin Neighborhoods Council
Executive Committee Meeting
May 9, 2007
7:00pm to 8:30pm

Minutes prepared by Kevin Lewis, ANC Secretary.

President Laura Morrison called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 25 ANC General Meeting were distributed. Minutes were approved.

Officer/Committee/Representative Reports

- Treasurer's Report (Linda Guerrero) ANC's balance is \$3,347.28.
- Sector Issues

Kevin Lewis of South Lamar NA gave an update on the Cypress VMU project proposed for Manchaca & S. Lamar. Planning Commission voted in favor of the project last night.

Lorraine Atherton gave an update on Zilker NA's VMU recommendation process. They have decided recommendations for most of their area and affordability levels, and are proceeding to decisions on density bonuses and possible opt-in parcels.

Bo McCarver and Daniel Llanes gave a report on the East Sector's concerns about negative impacts of the VMU designation in their areas.

Lorraine Atherton moved that ANC support the ANC East Sector's request to City Council for a moratorium on VMU designations until October as described in their draft letter of May 9, 2007. Motion seconded. Motion was approved.

Meeting Planning

- May Program Topic – Cid Galindo, Planning Commission/Jeff Jack, Zilker NA– Neighborhood Density Modeling
- May Other Potential Agenda Items
 - AMANDA Demo
 - Town Lake Animal Shelter (Ricardo Soliz & Concerned Citizen)
 - Updates from ANC Representatives as Needed
- June Program Topic—Capital Improvements budgeting and neighborhood plans
- June other potential agenda items
 - Legislative Roundup
 - Noise Solutions Committee Report (Scott Trainer)
 - Barton Springs Master Plan (Laurie Limbacher) (tentative)

Potential future programs or agenda items: Climate Protection Plan, Transportation, Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (Kennard Wright), suggested for start of school year, bimonthly invitation to a member of the Travis County delegation

Ongoing Business and Neighborhood Issues

- Police Chief Selection Process

Laura Morrison moved that ANC support the letter of concern about the selection process for a new chief of the Austin Police Department. [See Appendix A] Motion seconded. Motion was approved.

- Neighborhood Planning

Daniel Llanes explained the work of the Johnson/Govalle Neighborhood Planning Team and urged action to bring full acknowledgement in the city of NP Teams in the planning and development process. He will draft a request to the Planning Commission Neighborhood Planning Subcommittee to incorporate NP Team recommendations in the template for backup information on cases that go to the Council and Planning Commission.

New Business

- DHHS/TIDR Grant Work on Pandemic Flu

Laura Morrison reported that she will likely soon begin working under a grant with Texas Interagency/Interfaith Disaster Response on Neighborhood Coordination for pandemic flu response.

- Capitol View Corridors Report

The Downtown Commission has proposed changes to and the elimination of some Capitol View Corridors. The Heritage Society of Austin has stated a position opposed to these changes.

Danette Chimenti moved that ANC oppose removal of Capitol View Corridors and support the Heritage Society's position against major changes to Capitol View Corridors. Motion seconded. Motion was approved.

- Austin Housing Finance Corporation's Policies for Building Affordable Housing on City-owned Land

Bo McCarver reported that the Austin Housing Finance Corporation was recently released RFPs for affordable housing projects on city-owned land without coordinating with the neighborhoods in which the land and projects are located. In one case, it entails an amendment to the neighborhood plan to shift the zoning from SF to MF. ANC may consider a resolution on this in future.

Meeting adjourned.

APPENDIX A—Resolution on Austin Police Chief Selection Process

Dear Mayor and Council:

We the undersigned citizens, many representing civil rights and neighborhood organizations, collectively voice concern over the selection process used to select our next chief of police. Many of us have historically voiced community concerns over police/community relations and are disappointed that City management chose not to include us in a meaningful way in the process. We represent a broad spectrum of the community, which has the most at stake in a new police administration.

As you know, the police chief is a substantially different kind of position from all other division heads, because the police have the power to stop, detain, search, interrogate, arrest and incarcerate people. If they do that job poorly, or they do it in a discriminatory fashion, or they hurt or kill people while doing it, Austin citizens are affected in ways that are far more serious than the effects from other government action. The Chief needs to be held to a higher standard, and the hiring process needs to be more transparent than any other kind of hire. Transparency creates trust.

To have true checks and balances in a democracy, you must have critics at the table with explicit say in the outcome. The people who are most affected by the decisions being made need to be involved in making those decisions! The process for selection of the new police chief is indicative of so many problems with governance in Austin. The lack of meaningful input from organizations such as LULAC, NAACP, ACLU, Austin Neighborhood Council, and major coalitions such as Unidos de Austin and the August 10th Coalition indicates a lack of respect for the desires and needs of the community which creates a lack of trust between concerned citizens and the City. Representative democracy is based on trust. Once lost, it is very hard to regain.

The disappointment in the process is even more profound in light of the poor relationship between the community and APD. Community organizations sent letters to the City in August, 2006 and specifically requested that members of the very broad-based coalitions (Unidos de Austin and the "August 10 Coalition") be placed on the selection panel. Our requests were ignored. Instead, as usual, management composed the panel almost exclusively of "insiders" – staff, government officials and business representatives, "...notably without a single member from the coalition of those groups that have, from the start, been so concerned with the necessity of community involvement in the hiring process." – *Jordan Smith, Austin Chronicle*. This panel, such that it was, had limited authority; merely making "recommendations" which management could then choose to ignore when it pared down its choices.

We had hoped to be useful to the City in this process, ensuring community buy-in from the outset. Many of the citizens committed to finding a community-minded police chief are part of national networks. We could have participated in a recruitment effort to bring new kinds of candidates and we could have effectively vetted those who applied based on community needs before cuts were made.

Knowing it may well be too late to alter the slate of candidates at this late date, we hope Council will help us effectively weigh in on the final phase in the following ways:

- Allow us to meet and conduct our own interviews with the candidates (prior to the community-wide meetings scheduled); sanctioning a "community panel" to officially make a recommendation – one not made up of government officials or leaders of groups receiving funding or benefits from the City (the panel may choose to review already-cut candidates in this process);

- Provide us the actual set of criteria used to get to this point;
- Accept additional criteria for qualifications we would like to see added to the final deliberations and advise City management to give special consideration to the candidate with the greatest community support who meets the community criteria; and,
- Agree that you will reject management's recommendation if that candidate does NOT explicitly receive broad community support.

The City Manager herself said she'd take until the year's end to find a new police chief if she had felt she had to, so time shouldn't constrain us.

We, the undersigned, feel we should determine which candidate is the right match for our community; the one the community believes will best serve our community. The community-backed candidate will then, in turn, better ensure that our police force better serves our community. Finally, that, in turn, will serve to build trust with our City!

We hope to hear back from you as soon as possible on what actions Council will take, and what actions Council will direct the manager to take, to address our concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

In community,