

Austin Neighborhoods Council
General Membership Meeting
Austin Energy Building, 721 Barton Springs Rd.
July 25, 2007
7:00pm to 9:00pm

Minutes prepared by Kevin Lewis, ANC Secretary

Discussion with Sen. Kirk Watson

Senator Watson discussed issues and results from the last legislative session.

Pedestrian Master Plan (City of Austin: Eric Dusza, Annick Beaudet)

The Pedestrian Master Plan exists to prioritize the building of pedestrian infrastructure, i.e. sidewalks. City staff and consultants are working to update this plan and would like input from citizens on how this can work best.

Some Phase One aspects:

- Develop a Pedestrian Infrastructure Management System (PIMS)
- Field assessment in priority corridors, core neighborhoods downtown and near downtown.

Some Phase Two aspects:

- Update the ADA Transition Plan
- Update the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan
- Update the PIMS
- Do field assessment in more neighborhoods in the central city

The City is in the process of creating an inventory of existing (and missing) sidewalks throughout the city. They are creating a new tool (the PIMS tool) for the COA website that will allow citizens to gather information about sidewalks in any particular area.

For more information or to provide input:

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Project Manager, Bicycle Program Manager
974-6505
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Announcements and Updates

- Coordinating Neighborhoods for Pandemic Flu (Laura Morrison)

Laura Morrison discussed the city's new effort to create plans for the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak. Neighborhoods have the opportunity to help distribute information and coordinate between the city and citizens in the event of an outbreak.

- Restructuring City Government (Lorraine Atherton)

The city has appointed a task force to study several possible amendments to the city charter, one of which is changing how City Council members are elected. An ad hoc group of citizens including several neighborhood representatives have been meeting to discuss the issue of Council representation and districts over the past year and have invited the task force members to attend their next meeting.

- Report on July 19 Town Hall meeting with the City Manager

A large turn out of neighborhood representatives to the meeting recommended funding in the 2008 budget for Neighborhood Ombudsman positions.

Consideration of Growth Management Resolution

Jeff Jack moved for approval of the proposed resolution. Motion seconded.

Dana Lockler proposed to amend the last (5th) bullet point on page 2, under section "Foundations for a Successful Policy" to say

"...so that it is a living document: Likewise provide each neighborhood resources so that it may update its plan regularly, to assure that the plan functions to preserve the goals of the original document and allows for such flexibility as the neighborhood desires."

Amendment accepted by the maker of the motion.

Jeff Jack proposed to amend by changing the language of the 4th bullet point under section "Foundations for a Successful Policy" to say:

"Collaborate with other municipalities and political jurisdictions, including AISD, Travis County and others, to ensure widespread collaboration should identify legislative issues, such as zoning in non-incorporated areas, that can be advanced with the support of surrounding and overlapping political jurisdictions." Jeff accepted his amendment.

Jeff Jack proposed to amend by changing the language of (2) on page 1 to read "(2) That within 90 days the City Council should prepare and adopt a work plan for the process of creating the growth management policy." Jeff accepted his amendment.

Laura Morrison proposed dropping the sentence on first paragraph of page 2 "This deficiency results...with neighborhood goals." Amendment accepted by maker of motion.

Jeff Jack proposed to amend by removing from the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 2 "...increases in density and..." Jeff accepted his amendment.

Bryan King called the question.

Laura Morrison called for a voice vote. Motion passed.

For original proposed text of resolution, see appendix A.

For final text of resolution as passed, see appendix B.

Austin Neighborhoods Council Call for Action to Manage Austin's Growth

For Consideration by the General Membership, July 25, 2007

The Austin Neighborhoods Council is committed to working toward a high quality of life for all residents of Austin, current and future. We share our City Council's vision that "Austin is a place where all residents participate in its opportunities, its vibrancy and its richness of culture and diversity."¹ The ANC also shares a determination to make this vision a reality. However, as the City Auditor noted, policies that incorporate a vision for growth are not in place.²

In the absence of a coherent and living plan to manage growth, the City has reacted to various pressures and influences in a manner that has consistently:

1. Disregarded neighborhood plans and ignored public input;
2. Promoted disproportionate impact on established neighborhoods;
3. Made decisions without adequate data or social and environmental impact projections and failed to provide neighborhoods with valid information with which to plan;
4. Favored granting of development subsidies, entitlements and abatements over community preservation and enhancements; and
5. Promoted gentrification and economic inequality.

In order to create a shared vision and correct the present unwritten policies, the Austin Neighborhoods Council makes the following recommendations:

- (1) That the City Council, in partnership with the ANC and a broad range of other community stakeholders, embark upon the development of a viable growth policy.
- (2) That the City Council prepares and presents a plan for creating the growth management policy within 90 days.
- (3) In the interim,
 - That the City Council approve neighborhood recommendations for Vertical Mixed Use as submitted and
 - For all other land use decisions, that the City (a) make available to neighborhoods and to decision-making bodies relevant information regarding transportation, infrastructure, housing, and other critical matters, and (b) that Council decisions reflect the positions of the affected Neighborhood Plan Teams or Neighborhood Associations.

¹ Council Priorities. <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/vision/priorities.htm>.

² City Auditor Summary "City of Austin Long-term Planning". <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/auditor/au05101.htm>.

The ANC believes that the lack of well-defined policies and long-term goals which reflect community values undermines the quality of life for the people of Austin and jeopardizes our future. This deficiency results in disproportionate impacts on established neighborhoods with approvals of developments that are incompatible with neighborhood goals. Likewise, the delay in garnering a city-wide growth vision, developing coherent strategies, and implementing consistent policies has allowed inappropriate increases in density and development in many of Austin's communities and over the aquifer.

A healthy future for the City of Austin that achieves our shared vision requires a viable and living growth management policy. The ANC identifies the following as essential to success.

A Community-based Process for Creation of the Policy

- Engage diverse stakeholders and the general public
- Identify and articulate long-term goals that reflect community values
- Develop a strategy on which to implement policies
- Ensure that the policy provides an equitable balance of gains and losses for all stakeholders
- Secure the citizenry's endorsement of the policy

Foundations for a Successful Policy

- Ground the policy in sound research and analysis: conduct social, economic, and environmental impact studies; transportation modeling and analysis; and long-term housing (nexus) studies to evaluate existing conditions and assess future impacts
- Identify a method to assure that the policy is applied consistently with all new developments within the city boundaries
- Develop a mechanism for the thorough evaluation of proposed annexations within the framework of an adopted policy
- Collaborate with other municipalities and political entities to pursue legislation that limits sprawl in non-incorporated areas
- Update the policy on a regular basis so that it is a living document; likewise, update neighborhood plans regularly to assure they are living documents and are congruent with city-wide policies

Tools to Implement the Policy

- Provide versatile tools, planning information and resources that enable neighborhoods to manage development in terms of housing, critical infrastructure, economic development, transportation and traffic
- Introduce new planning and zoning tools in a judicious manner that ensures their quality and feasibility, using beta-testing for complex policies that have city-wide impact

Adherence to the Policy

- Once adopted, consistently apply the policy for decision-making at all levels of city government including Council, Boards and Commissions, citizen task forces and committees
- Ensure that city department policies and recommendations are made congruent with the updated growth policy and that all departments apply the policies with appropriate coordination

Austin Neighborhoods Council Call for Action to Manage Austin's Growth

Approved by the General Membership, July 25, 2007

I. Introduction

The Austin Neighborhoods Council is committed to working toward a high quality of life for all residents of Austin, current and future. We share our City Council's vision that "Austin is a place where all residents participate in its opportunities, its vibrancy and its richness of culture and diversity."³ The ANC also shares a determination to make this vision a reality. However, as the City Auditor noted, policies that incorporate a vision for growth are not in place.⁴

In the absence of a coherent and living plan to manage growth, the City has reacted to various pressures and influences in a manner that has consistently:

- Disregarded neighborhood plans and ignored public input;
- Promoted disproportionate impact on established neighborhoods;
- Made decisions without adequate data or social and environmental impact projections and failed to provide neighborhoods with valid information with which to plan;
- Favored granting of development subsidies, entitlements and abatements over community preservation and enhancements; and
- Promoted gentrification and economic inequality.

II. Recommendation

In order to create a shared vision and correct the present unwritten policies, the Austin Neighborhoods Council makes the following recommendations:

- (1) That the City Council, in partnership with the ANC and a broad range of other community stakeholders, embark upon the development of a viable growth policy.
- (2) That within 90 days the City Council should prepare and adopt a work plan for the process of creating the growth management policy.
- (3) In the interim,
 - That the City Council approve neighborhood recommendations for Vertical Mixed Use as submitted and
 - For all other land use decisions
 - a. that the City make available to neighborhoods and to decision-making bodies relevant information regarding transportation, infrastructure, housing, and other critical matters, and
 - b. that Council decisions reflect the positions of the affected Neighborhood Plan Teams or Neighborhood Associations.

³ Council Priorities. <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/vision/priorities.htm>.

⁴ City Auditor Summary "City of Austin Long-term Planning". <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/auditor/au05101.htm>.

III. A Successful Growth Management Policy

The ANC believes that the lack of well-defined policies and long-term goals which reflect community values undermines the quality of life for the people of Austin and jeopardizes our future. The delay in garnering a city-wide growth vision, developing coherent strategies, and implementing consistent policies has allowed inappropriate development in many of Austin's communities and over the aquifer.

A healthy future for the City of Austin that achieves our shared vision requires a viable and living growth management policy. The ANC identifies the following as essential to success.

(1) A Community-based Process for Creation of the Policy

- Engage diverse stakeholders and the general public.
- Identify and articulate long-term goals that reflect community values.
- Develop a strategy on which to implement policies.
- Ensure that the policy provides an equitable balance of gains and losses for all stakeholders.
- Secure the citizenry's endorsement of the policy.

(2) Foundations for a Successful Policy

- Ground the policy in sound research and analysis: conduct social, economic, and environmental impact studies; transportation modeling and analysis; and long-term housing (nexus) studies to evaluate existing conditions and assess future impacts.
- Identify a method to assure that the policy is applied consistently with all new developments within the city boundaries.
- Develop a mechanism for the thorough evaluation of proposed annexations within the framework of an adopted policy.
- Collaborate with other municipalities and political jurisdictions, including AISD, Travis County and others, to ensure widespread governmental cooperation in the formulation of the growth management policy. This collaboration should identify legislative issues, such as zoning in non-incorporated areas that can be advanced with the support of surrounding and overlapping political jurisdictions.
- Update the policy on a regular basis so that it is a living document; likewise provide each neighborhood resources so that it may update its plan regularly, to assure that the plan functions to preserve the goals of the original document and allows for such flexibility as the neighborhood desires.

(3) Tools to Implement the Policy

- Provide versatile tools, planning information and resources that enable neighborhoods to manage development in terms of housing, critical infrastructure, economic development, transportation and traffic.
- Introduce new planning and zoning tools in a judicious manner that ensures their quality and feasibility, using beta-testing for complex policies that have city-wide impact.

(4) Adherence to the Policy

- Once adopted, consistently apply the policy for decision-making at all levels of city government including Council, Boards and Commissions, citizen task forces and committees.

- Ensure that city department policies and recommendations are made congruent with the updated growth policy and that all departments apply the policies with appropriate coordination.

[END]