

Austin Neighborhoods Council - General Membership Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2010 Austin Energy Building
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Minutes prepared by Lisa Harris

7:00 Call to Order and Introductions

7:05 Resolutions

7:06 Preservation of Life standard. Bo McCarver presented. Justin Irving moved passage, Steven Aleman seconded. Passed: 20 yeas, 6 abstentions.

7:14 Prostitution Diversion. Bo McCarver presented. Lorraine Atherton moved passage, Doris Williams seconded. Passed: 26 yeas, 3 abstentions.

7:19 East Travis County TXI gravel pits. Bo McCarver presented. Lou O'Hanlon moved passage, Delwin Goss seconded. Passed: 26 yeas, 1 abstention

7:23 Authority of Neighborhood Planning Contact Teams (discussion only)

7:26 AISD Superintendent Meria Carstarphen. Accompanied by Paul Turner, executive director for operations for AISD. AISD is the only large urban school district in Texas that is growing. Has one of the smaller special ed populations (12%) and has a growing population of nonnative English speakers. The only system in Texas to have had two schools closed by the Commissioner of the TEA. School closures have been in east Austin, but two of the current academically unacceptable schools are not in east Austin.

AISD 5-year Strategic Plan has 4 key goals: all students performing at or above grade level; achievement gaps eliminated; all students graduate ready for college, career and life in globally competitive economy; all schools meet or exceed state accountability standards, district meets federal standards and exceeds state standards.

\$1.3 billion has been recaptured from AISD in the past ten years. The rate and amount of recapture is mismatched to AISD's needs- demands and needs are increasing but funding isn't. School board will vote on the budget in August.

AISD is working on increasing attendance and completion rates. Instituting two-way dual language programs at four schools. Also transitioning traditional ESL programs at AISD into one-way dual language programs. Will take resources from transitional ESL programs to pay for dual language. Currently using some stimulus money to launch the program as AISD transitions out the old design that hasn't worked.

AISD has launched a request for proposals for turnaround programs for struggling schools. AISD working with COA Planning and Development Review dept. on planning. AISD is seriously considering self-insurance. On dropouts- introducing alternative programs for older students. Need to develop quantitative data measurement of outcomes.

8:20 Matthew Christianson, Assistant Division Manager, City of Austin Code Compliance Department, on new developments in code compliance.

Code compliance applied community policing idea to their area when they were consolidated into Solid Waste Services. Started increasing enforcement through citations; this started a bottleneck in the courts. They also had to broaden solid waste service employees' knowledge of code (were very specialized before). Have worked on streamlining processes. Developed a code enforcement compliance officer academy. Are working with APD on trainings APD has that are applicable to code compliance. (Example: de-escalation techniques.) As of Oct. 1st Code Compliance is a standalone dept.

It's difficult to get more staff so they are working on ways to be more effective with the resources they have. Established a code compliance volunteer problem. Field volunteers: If a complaint is for high weeds in front yard or something else that can be observed from the right-of-way the volunteer will use a city vehicle to document it and make notice of violation and will go back to see whether it has been taken care of. 90% of those cases don't go back to a code compliance officer. Zone volunteers volunteer in their neighborhoods. They proactively look for egregious violations. Take a picture from the right-of-way and email it to code compliance. Pool volunteers are activity and event based. (Participate in neighborhood cleanups, etc.)

Proposed residential rental registration program- directed by Council resolution. Gathering stakeholder input

Austin Neighborhoods Council - General Membership Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2010 Austin Energy Building
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

through end of May. Next meeting tentatively set for April 19th at lunchtime and 6 PM. (Business and neighborhood concerns.) Code compliance is complaint-driven. When complaints arise it is hard to reach the property owners. (No contact point, particularly with out of state owners.) Problem properties tie up resources of Code Compliance and APD. Program would be for triplex and above, but code compliance was also directed to look for criteria that would bring duplex or single family rentals into the program.

8:50 ANC Announcements

8:50 Invitation to see Barton Barriers art project. (Art on the Way) at Barton Skyway and S. Lamar.

8:52 Peter Davis: community climate action plan. Meeting April 1st.

8:56 Jeff Jack: Downtown plan stakeholder group has been meeting ad hoc, without staff. They are meeting again Saturday March 27th from 10-12 about density bonuses- considering putting affordable housing within 2 miles of downtown rather than downtown. March 27th meeting is focused on the Warehouse District, historic zoning and affordable housing)

9:00 Jolene Kiobassa: update on proposed new zoning category for rehab hospitals. The proposal was voted down at PC March 23rd.

9:01 Cory Walton: 801 Barton Springs Pico PUD. Applicant wants case to be heard by Council.

9:02 Jeff Jack: telecommunications towers.

9:03 Cure zoning criteria update

8:58 Adjourn

Natasha Rosofsky, Executive Director, AVANCE- Early childhood/family programs for low income families was on the agenda, but rescheduled because of illness.

Text of the resolutions considered at this meeting:

Preservation of Life Standard for Use of Force

The most restrictive deadly-force standard is the "Preservation of Life Standard" as adopted by the Dallas and Houston (Texas) Police Department (among others).

The "preservation of life standard" states that, "regardless of the nature of the crime or the justification for firing at a suspect, officers must remember that their basic responsibility is to protect life. Officers shall not fire under conditions that would unnecessarily subject bystanders or hostages to death or possible injury, except to preserve life or to prevent serious bodily injury. Deadly force is an act of last resort and will be used only when other reasonable alternatives are impracticable or fail." Further, the "preservation of life standard" requires that, "officers will plan ahead and consider alternatives which will reduce the possibility of needing to use deadly force)."

It is the position of the Austin Neighborhood Council Eastern Sector that, Implementation of a "preservation of life standard"; aggressive recruitment of a diverse applicant pool from our area schools; rigorous training on interacting with the mentally ill; and confronting racial and cultural bias in policing will reduce incidents of excessive force in our community.

Resolution for a City-Wide Prostitute Diversion Initiative in Austin

Whereas, prostitution in Austin is a recurring tragedy that destroys lives, families and communities; and

Whereas, police "spot enforcement" at selected locations is ineffective in stemming prostitution; and

Whereas, an effective program needs to be established to address the underlying employment and medical issues that foster prostitution; and

Whereas, the City of Dallas has established a successful, multi-agency initiative to deal with prostitution; and

Whereas, Austin's Downtown Community Court has begun to address the underlying issues and assist prostitutes to redirect their lives;

Be It Resolved that the Austin Neighborhoods Council urge the city to expand and develop a city-wide prostitute diversion program that utilizes all agencies and resources to end this epidemic.

Austin Neighborhoods Council - General Membership Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2010 Austin Energy Building
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Resolution Concerning TXI Applications for Gravel Pits in Eastern Travis County

Whereas, the citizens of Texas have a right to a healthy environment, free of industrial wastes and which preserve the bountiful natural beauty of our state; and

Whereas, the present laws for unincorporated areas of Texas are inadequate to assure those rights are preserved; and

Whereas, the TXI Corporation is presently planning expansion of its operations to entail placement of gravel pits near residential areas in Eastern Travis County that include the Imperial Valley Neighborhood and other communities;

Therefore, the Austin Neighborhoods Council urges the city, county, state and federal entities to negotiate a project that protects the health of residents and preserves the natural environment of Eastern Travis County; and also urges that the Legislature provide adequate laws to allow counties to protect the health and the environment in all unincorporated areas of Texas.

Authority of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams

WHEREAS City of Austin Land Development Code defines a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team as “an interested party for purposes of notice, appeal, and other processes” and “a separate body apart from any other existing or future neighborhood organization;”

WHEREAS the City of Austin encourages participants in the development of a neighborhood plan to form a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team during the planning process or once the plan is adopted;

WHEREAS many stakeholders devote numerous volunteer hours to work on their neighborhood plan through participation in a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team;

WHEREAS the roles and responsibilities of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams are clearly defined on the Planning and Development Review pages of the City of Austin website, but the authority of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams is not clearly laid out;

WHEREAS questions have arisen regarding potential liability of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams and the individual participants in those Teams;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Neighborhoods Council calls upon the City of Austin to clearly define the authority of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams, including provisions for team members’ representation in any litigation arising from their actions, decisions and initiatives resulting from participation in city-sanctioned neighborhood planning processes.