

Resource Council Meeting

Minutes

June 9, 2006

1:00-2:30PM

Austin City Hall Boards and Commissions Room

Attendees

David Balch, Ashton Cumberbatch Mike Manor, Raul Alvarez, Steve Swanson , Joene Grissom, Barbara Cilley, Mary Faria, Karen Sonleitner, Mary Ann Neely, Sam Biscoe, Beth Schlecter, David Evans, Miriam Nisenbaum , Patricia Guajardo (for Dianne Mendoza) , Elisabeth Earle Christie Garbe (for Trish Young)

Unable to Attend: Fred Gilliam, Lee Manford , Greg Vincent, Mary Hensley, Jim Rigby, Steve Kinslow, Lee Leffingwell, Martha Martinez , Anne Harutunian, Cathy Bonner, Dale Simons, Johna Edwards, David Escamilla, Mark Williams

Meeting Called By: Community Action Network

Facilitator: David Balch

Note Taker: Sam Woollard

Timekeeper: Fred Butler

Agenda Topics

1. Call to Order and Announcements

David Balch

Meeting called to order at 1:05pm by Vice-Chair, David Balch.

Announcements/Activities Related to CAN:

- 1) Raul Alvarez was honored and thanked for his service to CAN over the last six years.
- 2) The Austin City Council has appropriate and additional \$423,000 for substance abuse services for the downtown Community Court .
- 3) Travis County has received grant funding for a new Public Defender position to work with people with a mental illness
- 4) The City of Austin is including \$55 million for affordable housing in the proposed bond package that will go to the voters in the fall

Minutes: The May Resource Council minutes were accepted as presented

2. Citizens Communication

Community at Large

None

3. Strategic Issues

CAN Council Reports: Members were encouraged to review the written reports from the CAN Council meetings that are available on the CAN website.

Hurricane Impact: Paul Hilgers, Director of City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, outlined the current situation of evacuees. Of the 1,840 families who were receiving housing through the 403 program (where the City paid the rent and was reimbursed by FEMA), 1,246 families have been deemed eligible for continued assistance through the 408 program, 524 were deemed ineligible for continued assistance and 70 have an undetermined status. It is unclear what has happened to the families who were deemed ineligible beginning May 31, but there has not yet been an influx of evacuees seen at the homeless shelters. Paul stated that there have been many lessons learned from this event that can be transferred to other issues, including the importance of case management and the collaboration amongst agencies. **Amy Elder**, Executive Director of Texas Inter-agency Interfaith Disaster Response reported that by attending a national conference, she learned that Austin is "ahead of the curve" in responding to the Hurricanes. There are approximately 620 families who have received case management among all the organizations providing case management support. All these organizations are meeting on a weekly basis. The focus of the work is in moving from crisis to recovery and to create a sense of community between Austinites and evacuees. Amy also expressed a need to highlight success stories. The biggest challenge is going to be finding practical solutions to the affordable housing challenge that will be faced when the FEMA money is no longer available.

Discussion: Members expressed appreciation for the work that has been done on a local level, but expressed concern about how the community will be able to tackle the predicted need for more affordable housing. Currently the City is expending, using FEMA resources, \$1.2 million per month to keep people housed. It was suggested that the request to the federal government should be for additional rental vouchers.

Downtown Development and Growth: ECHO - Jeff Trigger, Vince Cobalis, and John Nyfeler outlined the work of the Ending Chronic Homelessness (ECHO) committee. They defined chronic homelessness and the costs associated with it. It is estimated that there are approximately 587 chronically homeless individuals in Austin. The ECHO group created a plan to end Chronic Homelessness in 10 years in 2005. Over the last year, the group has focused on creating the internal processes to move forward but has also: 1) Increased the day and night sleeping capacity at the ARCH, opened the ARCH on weekends, and created a representative payee program that has served 50 chronically homeless people. **Recommendations** for the future include: 1) Create a long term investment in rapid, supportive and permanent housing, 2) Approve the \$55 million housing bond package, 3) Create a network of services and housing approach, 4) Focus on preventing future homelessness, and 5) Promote self sufficiency and individual responsibility. Next steps for the group include presenting to the City Council Public Health and Human Services sub-committee, seeking a resolution from the Travis County Commissioners Court in support of the 10 year plan, and presenting to the Texas Homeless Network conference September 5-8. **Downtown Austin Alliance – Charlie Betts** stated that the downtown community has created an RFP for a plan for downtown development. The plan will be proactive with a focus on developing a tax infrastructure and will include and discuss the impact of development on the social service structure. DAA supported the building of the ARCH downtown and the Community Court in conjunction with the commitment for Public order. DAA also advocates for additional substance abuse and mental health treatment for people with Class C and enhanced Class B offenses and has been an active supporter of the Re-entry Roundtable. The Re-entry Roundtable will be featured on the weekly downtown show on KLRU. **Re-entry Roundtable – Tricia Forbes and Laura Smith** reviewed the work of the Re-entry Roundtable which represents 70 organizations. Travis County has experienced a 25% increase in the number of offenders returning to the community since 2001. 57% are not on probation or parole. To address their issues, the Re-entry Roundtable is integrating its work with other Issue Area groups such as the Substance Abuse Partnership. The 2006 Action Plan includes a focus on 1) Inventorying and assessing the current resources for offenders, 2) Developing the 2007 legislative agenda, 3) Evaluating current programming and 4) Convening forums about re-entry issues and best practices. **Requests:** 1) Assist in identifying resources to meet the Jett Foundation match, 2) Identify opportunities for the Re-entry Roundtable to present on its work and the challenges and opportunities for offenders, and 3) Identify ways to partner and leverage resources. **Discussion:** Members noted the impact that the reduction in state funding for substance abuse has had in the reduction of local treatment beds. Substance abuse is also correlated with homelessness and increased criminal activity. It was pointed out that recidivism has been reduced through the downtown re-entry pilot project. Locally the state jail has also been assessing its services and adding substance abuse services. It was stated that the Re-entry Roundtable's efforts in the last legislative session opened doors and built relationships. One of the challenges in creating legislation is that the abolition of the state's Criminal Justice Policy Council has made it difficult to understand the implications of state decisions on the criminal justice system and the budget. One suggestion was to support the re-establishment of the Criminal Justice Policy Council. David Evans pointed out the following items that seem to have made the collaborations successful:

- A shared vision
- Case management with accountability
- Common point of entry/intake
- Network of solutions/options
- Individual plans
- Strategic next steps

These may provide a guide for the elements that need to be in place to ensure success.

4. Executive Director's Comments

Fred Butler

Fred stated that the staffing/funding process has been moving forward and all CAN partners are being visited. So far, the response has been very positive. There will be no meeting in July.

2:30PM

Adjourn

David Balch

Next meeting: Friday August 11, 2006, 2006, Austin City Hall, Boards and Commissions room