



Community Action Network Community Council 04/19/10 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Rebecca Cobos, James Cornish, Terry Cowan, Nancy Gilliam, Anne H. Harutunian, Kirsha Haverlah, Linda Kokemor, Shawn Lemieux, Penny Lichenstein, Stefan Molina, Mary Moran, Jim Reed, Marquis Williams, Amy Wong Mok

CAN Staff: Chantel Bottoms, Mary Dodd, and Cristell Laurel

Unable to Attend: Sylvia Blanco, Michelle Casanova, Kevin Coleman, Jason Earle, Jacinda Johnson, Gloria Mejia, Esther Reyes, Ruby Roa, Clint Smith, Lesley Ramsey, Kelsey Stutzman, Helen Watkins, Willie Williams

Call to Order, Introductions, and Announcements: Jim Reed, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. Kirsha Haverlah announced that she is part of the Austin/Travis County Complete Count Committee and encouraged people who have not completed their census forms to do so. Amy Wong Mok announced that she also sits on the Austin/Travis County Complete Count Committee and also asked that people complete their census forms. Wong Mok also announced that the 12th Annual Dragon Boat Festival will take place on Saturday, April 24th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Festival Beach. For more information, visit <http://www.asianamericancnc.com/>. Wong Mok also stated that she supports the mission of [Family Connections](#) and hopes they stay open despite recent financial troubles. Mary Moran announced that the National Defendant Offender Workforce Development Partnership presented her with the National Outstanding Leadership and Workforce Award for individuals who have demonstrated leadership in creating and promoting offender workforce development, partnerships, programs, policies, practices, and/or legislative initiatives. Moran was also recognized by the Travis County Commissioner's Court with a proclamation. The Community Council congratulated her with a round of applause.

Approval of Minutes from March 22, 2010: Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. Anne Harutunian noted her abstention from the vote as she was not present at the March meeting.

Review Schedule of Forums and Motions from March Meeting: The Community Council has proposed that they have two regularly scheduled meetings with discussions on community indicators followed by a discussion meeting where members review what they have learned and consider recommendations to be taken to the CAN Board of Directors. This structure would result in quarterly reports to the Board from both the Community Council and the Dashboard Steering Committee. The motion was passed to approve the new Community Council forum schedule.

Overview of the Austin Housing Continuum – Rebecca Giello of the [City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development](#) shared highlights of NHCD's first housing market study that examined current and future housing needs. Austin was one of the most affordable housing markets in the country from 1970-1990. Then we experienced rapid job and population growth. From 2006-2007 alone our city added 18,000 new residents or 50 people every day. Population growth continues to contribute to the demand for affordable housing. Austin is a majority renter city with students comprising approximately 25% of our low-income renter population. Austin's rents are relatively high compared to similar cities. Austin has a very large demand for affordable rentals. Just one in six renters earning less than \$20,000 can find affordable housing. The report noted that Austin has a shortage of 39,000 rental units that are affordable to households with incomes of \$20,000 a year or less. Survey data shows that most renters would like to become home owners. Austin has a need for homes priced between \$113,000 and \$240,000 to enable its renter population earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000 per year to become homeowners. The City of Austin uses a housing continuum model to assist in planning efforts. The City of Austin does a housing action plan every year that combines local and federal dollars and considers local input. The two programs that take the bulk of the funding are Homeowner Assistance and Housing Developer Assistance. The City of Austin has also mapped affordable housing in the community that is publicly subsidized. The map shows that affordable housing is currently concentrated on the east side. The City of Austin's housing programs typically serve

individuals who earn 80% or less of the median family income, but they also have programs that target those who earn 30% or less of the median family income. Austin's housing resources include: a \$55 million General Obligation "GO Bond" for affordable housing, Annual Sustainability Fund support, redevelopment proceeds of City-owned property into affordable housing, and Austin's reputation as a progressive community that uses local resources to promote affordable housing. The housing market study produced several recommendations for our community. The first is that we build on our strengths by continuing to prioritize funding for affordable housing, continuing to develop innovative affordable housing strategies, and maintaining strong intergovernmental agency partnerships. The second recommendation is to raise the bar by setting affordable housing targets, establishing new financing sources, and collaborating across city departments and partnership agencies to increase affordable housing development. The third recommendation is to focus on the future by replicating and adapting best practice models for Texas, collaborating across city departments to monitor the zoning and development process, improving development incentives, to produce affordable housing, and working to eliminate legislative barriers. Interested persons can keep up with the work of the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development by signing up to receive NHCD Notes here: www.cityofaustin.org/news/notes.

Affordable Housing: Ashton Cumberbatch, chair of the [Dashboard Steering Committee](#) and Board Member of [HousingWorks](#) presented the Community Dashboard indicator for housing.

- Indicator: % of households that are "cost-burdened": Approximately 37% of individuals in Travis County are housing cost-burdened meaning that they spend 30% or more of their monthly income on housing. Approximately 16-17% of individuals in Travis County are extreme housing cost-burdened meaning that they spend 50% or more of their monthly income on housing.

Homelessness is also being presented at this Community Council forum. There is not an official indicator for homelessness on the Community Dashboard because the data is still under review.

HousingWorks: Francie Ferguson, Chair of [HousingWorks](#), spoke. HousingWorks is a group that was first organized to support the passage of \$55 in General Obligation Bonds in 2006. When the group realized that this singular effort was not going to solve housing problems, they decided to become a non-profit organization to continue to work on research, advocacy and education. They have been strengthening housing discussions in the city by engaging employers, for-profit and non-profit developers, the faith community, the homeless, neighborhood associations, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds. HousingWorks is also the CAN Issue Area Group for housing. A new report on actions Austin can take to promote a mix of affordable housing in all parts of town has just been completed and released by HousingWorks, the Urban Land Institute, Austin Area Research Organization and the Real Estate Council of Austin. The four primary needs highlighted in the report are: first, our community must increase the supply of affordable housing; second, we must increase the diversity of housing; third, housing must be distributed throughout the community near jobs, schools, and services; and fourth, we must create stable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods. In considering these recommendations, there are several important things to know about our community. Austin is now one of the most expensive places to live in Texas. As Austin grows, affordability becomes more of a challenge for more people in the lower income ranges. Socioeconomic segregation in Austin is also on the increase and is exacerbated by the economic segregation of housing. The lack of affordable homes in all parts of town leads to concentrations of poverty. Ferguson noted that having all kinds of housing in all parts of town would have a variety of beneficial effects on the community such as decreasing student mobility rates, decreasing crime, and creating a more sustainable balance between jobs and housing throughout the community.

HousingWorks recommendations for promoting affordable housing in all parts of town:

There are a few key areas to address in creating a stable and sustainable housing community in Austin. First, the community should insure that balanced housing concepts and goals become part of our City's Comprehensive Plan. Second, additional General Obligation bonds for affordable housing should be passed. Third, there must be sustainable design with efforts to promote affordability by creating density/affordability incentives. The development process should also be examined to implement change

on a regular basis (annual or semi-annual) and to do cost/benefit analyses across regulations rather than item-by-item.

Homelessness:

- Homelessness indicator is under review

ECHO Ending Community Homelessness Coalition

Recommendations for addressing homelessness: Ed McHorse spoke, Chair of ECHO's Executive Committee, spoke. ECHO has been doing community planning around homelessness since 2006 and is currently working to broaden the governmentally required 10 year local plan to end community homelessness. As part of the plan ECHO is now doing planning around issues such as short-term homelessness and prevention rather than just focusing on the chronically homeless. ECHO is the official homeless planning agency for the Austin area and is the CAN issue area group for homelessness. The homeless services continuum includes prevention, short-term, and long-term housing and rent/utility assistance services supplemented by other support services that help an individual or family move into affordable permanent housing. Permanent supportive housing is the crucial component in serving the chronically homeless. According to a January 2009 point in time count, there were 1,345 sheltered homeless and 1,223 unsheltered homeless in Austin at that time. There is also a HMIS data system that tracks the homeless, but it is currently only used by service providers that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2008, 6,407 unduplicated homeless clients were entered into the HMIS system.

- **ECHO Plan for Ending Community Homelessness:** The critical needs of the homeless in Austin are: 1) additional affordable and permanent supportive housing, 2) enhanced services targeted for special needs populations (physical disabilities including HIV and aids, mental health/substance abuse issues, criminal background, youth aging out of foster care, and veterans), 3) prevention programs to identify and intervene quickly to keep people in their homes, 4) employment opportunities and workforce development targeted at the homeless population, 5) legal assistance and tenant/landlord mediation, 6) systemic level data management, 7) effective systemic approach to addressing issues led by coordinating entity, and 8) a visible, committed community leader to champion the cause. ECHO is in the process of becoming a 501c3. The group will continue to do lead the continuum of care planning process, but will have funding to take on more extensive planning and studies of best practices. ECHO will work to find a homeless indicator within the HMIS system that will work for the Community Dashboard. The ultimate measure is whether we have fewer homeless families in Austin. What can the community do?
 - Advocate for more permanent supportive housing units
 - Volunteer for the annual homeless count
 - Join one of the ECHO committees
 - Support a local homeless agency with your time or money
 - Advocate for a community-wide response
- **Corporation for Supportive Housing Financial Modeling for Permanent Supportive Housing:** A financial modeling report by this group found that in the next 10 years Austin will have a need for 1,889 additional units of permanent supportive housing. The short-term production goal of the group is to create 350 additional units by the end of 2014. Adding the 350 units would have a one-time construction cost of \$23.2 million and would have annual operating and service costs of \$7.4 million/year.

Discussion: What solutions require a cross-jurisdictional, collaborative approach? –

Community Council members asked if any of the housing funding goes toward people who don't need subsidized housing, such as downtown developments. Rebecca Giello stated that the city has programs that dictate how their investments occur. The majority of their funding is distributed through CHODOS for affordable housing. Community Council members asked Ashton Cumberbatch what the goals are related to the housing cost-burdened and extreme housing cost-burdened indicators. He replied that the committee is still working to develop benchmarks and target goals for the housing indicators. Ultimately the committee prefers using an indicator that combines housing and transportation costs as a percentage of monthly income. Community Council members stated that our city is not zoned for multi-family

housing in many neighborhoods and asked how this can be addressed. Francie Ferguson replied that each part of town is like a small city and the goal should be to have a mix of jobs and housing that is affordable to different household income levels. We could then examine these larger parts of town to examine arterials, density, etc. We should also start looking into design types that create greater affordability. We currently have multi-family stock in all parts of town so an issue is considering how to preserve it and keep it affordable. Community Council members noted that some of HousWorks' recommendations could increase gentrification. Francie Ferguson stated that HousingWorks is more focused on working to get affordability in places where it's not than on balancing the effects of gentrification. Community Council members expressed concern that taxes could go up for those with lower incomes in mixed use housing developments.

Community Council members asked what the cost is of not taking action to assist the homeless. Ed McHorse stated that there is a cost savings in building permanent supportive housing projects. Most of it comes in removing the burden from the criminal justice, healthcare, and social service agencies. ECHO will need to examine Austin-specific data to make a better case for this locally. Community Council members noted that the most recent homeless point-in-time count shows a drop in homelessness. McHorse stated that homeless groups do think that there had been some decrease in homelessness, but also attribute the smaller numbers to the difficulties of counting homeless populations. The date of the homeless count was moved due to inclement weather resulting in the count taking place after the first of the month when many homeless individuals had just received their monthly support checks and were able to afford some kind of shelter for the night. Community Council members asked if homeless agencies work with the families of the homeless. McHorse stated that in general homeless programs do attempt to seek out a person's family or support network to help them become stable. Often, the homeless have burned that bridge just one too many times.

Community Council members asked how we could create a larger housing planning group overcoming competitive interests and to encourage better cross-jurisdictional housing planning. Rebecca Giello agreed that housing entities in Austin need more overall coordination. She said there is a need for a single planning entity to channel all housing planning in the community and to provide a strategic voice where everyone is working together to offer planning solutions. Such a planning group would include funders, advocates, and special subpopulations. Giello stated that everyone must first be convened to see if there is an interest in having a broader housing planning group. Francie Ferguson stated that part of the solution is getting the community to understand that housing is the infrastructure of the community and that it affects everything from transit to schools to health to the environment. Then there would be a greater community response. Ashton Cumberbatch stated that Community Council forums are an opportunity to learn more and increase collaboration. He asked that anyone who has ideas for improving this process share them. Rebecca Giello said on March 27th, the City Council instructed her department to prioritize permanent supportive housing. The recommendations will be in writing for review at a future Community Council meeting. Community Council members expressed concern that Austin's continued population growth will result in urban sprawl which would increase vehicle miles traveled per capita and decrease air quality. Community Council members stated that Austin should ensure that we have housing growth and density that doesn't decrease our green space.

Adjournment: Marquis Williams, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.