



CAN Community Council Meeting Minutes, 4/15/19

Community Council Members in Attendance: Aletha Huston, Ara Merjanian, Caroline Reynolds, Ginny Fredricks, Hunter Ellinger, Jenny Jensen, Kathleen Galvin, Laura Griebel, Myneeka Holloway, Nora Comstock, Thomas Martinez

Guests in attendance: None

CAN Staff: Raul Alvarez, Carlos Soto, Jelina Tunstill

Call to order & announcements: Hunter called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Each member present introduced themselves. Myneeka announced that Akwasi Evans founder of the progressive weekly newspaper, NOKOA, passed away this past week.

Citizens Communication: None

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for 2/27/19 were approved unanimously on a motion by Ara and a second by Ginny.

Community Council Chair's Report: Hunter presented the "organizational accountability" handout. The idea of the Community Council acting as an accountability body originated in the Executive Committee. Hunter stated that during the presentations at the Board meeting, a Board member asked for more information to which the presenter responded that it wasn't on the website. Hunter thinks the Community Council could look through organizational websites and see if the websites provide the information that is supposed to be publicly available to community members. This would stress what is and isn't publicly available and judge how well organizations are informing citizens on what they are doing. He stated this could also be a perfect opportunity for leadership development within the council.

Other ideas for consideration:

- The Community Council could request that organizations report what they report to funders and make that information publicly available.
- We could share out organizations' annual reports.
- Inform people about the 'hot issues' in the city and how they can get involved, similar to a navigation guide that is issue specific
- Create a central repository for job/ internship fairs, a connecting role

Executive Director's Report: Raul announced that CAN's State of the Safety Net forums will be starting next week. The one on health is April 24th and then the one on basic needs (housing, food access, homelessness) is on June 26th. The location for the basic needs forum will be at Meals on Wheels. Nora suggested that there would be more interest if there was more space. Raul explained that CAN split the slots with Austin Housing Coalition because the forum is happening in conjunction with the Austin Housing Coalition regular scheduled meeting. Aletha wanted to know who the intended audience was for the forums. Raul explained that we want a balance of community members and professionals. The main thing is to get feedback on the report and issues outside of the CAN circle. Nora suggested that CAN film and archive the forums via Facebook Live. Raul stated that CAN staff would investigate what is possible.

The regional summit is set for Oct 25th. CAN relaunched the Equity Blog. It will include some data entries and discussing more about the drill downs, tool kit highlights, and discussions about books that are being read during our book studies. In order to receive the blog, it is a different subscription than CANews. We have about 300 people signed up right now. Nora suggested we use social media for blog entries, similar

to a podcast, using Skype or Zoom. Kathleen added that professionals have difficulty making meetings or forums and suggested that we consider holding webinars during lunch to which people could subscribe.

Discussion and Possible Action on Appointment of New Members: No new members were present. Jelina will follow up with candidates who have not attended a meeting yet.

Explain Existing Community Council Projects:

Child Poverty Report- Laura presented the Child Poverty Report Summary and Recommendations. Laura explained that the Community Council started the Child Poverty work 2 years ago, and worked last year to create a “leave behind” document that could be used to spread the word about child poverty and the impact it has on our community. She noted that poverty disproportionately affects people of color. Aletha stated that her concern with this version of the leave-behind is that race equity doesn’t come through in the recommendations. Equity runs through all these issues and needs to be addressed and overtly stated. Raul noted that there is a graph on the leave-behind that illustrates the race equity implications of poverty. Hunter stated that the purpose of the report is to highlight the problem of child poverty which many people aren’t aware of versus highlighting income inequality which many people are aware of as an issue. Laura suggested that the leave-behind promote dual language programs by listing both the English and Spanish titles, i.e. families with voices (familias con voces).

Community Council Recruitment Process- Nora stated that it’s difficult to recruit when the requirements of the appointee aren’t specific enough. One of the main questions that needs a clear answer is: What’s the profile of the individual we are looking for? She said that what she observed is that most of the people on the council right now are service providers and that we need more activists. This is a part of the profile we are looking for and helps me know who to reach out to and who to follow up with. Once we come up with a set of people, then we can focus our efforts.

Part of the problem is traffic and people that live far away. Video conferencing could help with that problem. Nora mentioned that she checked on video conferencing at the libraries and it is available at every library; each with a room accommodates 4 people, except for the central library, which accommodates 10 people. When reaching out to potential members the pitch could include topics that we discuss, expectations of members, and a profile of the type of people we are looking for. Two members of those present stated they would attend their neighborhood library instead of the current meeting location if given the option. Raul stated that the challenge with libraries is that outside communities, such as Del Valle, don’t have Austin Public Libraries. Laura concurred that increased access by video is beneficial. Hunter thinks structure of the council needs to be solidified before remote locations are considered. The first logical priority is making the meeting available via zoom for people who can’t make it to the meetings. Another idea that was suggested is to switch locations each month. Raul stated that there is nothing that prohibits video conferencing for meetings in the bylaws, but it is not explicitly stated. Hunter stated that we need to add it to the bylaws. Raul stated that another option would be to pass a rule to allow video conferencing so that the bylaws won’t have to be changed.

Ginny added that from a new member perspective, something that would be helpful for a new member is to have a buddy that has been in the Community Council before or to come an hour earlier to meet with someone for an orientation. This would help to ensure that new members up to speed more quickly.

Nora encouraged members to attend board meeting or watch it online; it will help understand the purpose of the Community Council. We function like a smaller version of the board.

The recruitment goals each year is that there can be up to 30 members, and we generally add 10 people a year. We could have more appointments if we have vacancies and enough applications. Traditionally, we have only recruited once a year, but this past year there were discussions to recruit at multiple points in the year. The downside of ongoing recruitment is that it would make orientation difficult.

Alumni Group Follow-up- Will be discussed next meeting

Discussion and Possible Action on Identification of Topics for Future Presentations/ Discussions/

Reports: Raul explained the focus area on the work plan document. He discussed still needing a communication strategy to go along with the Child Poverty Report leave-behind tool. We will continue to work on the alumni network and membership recruitment. We talked about aging or workforce as possible focus areas.

Hunter described the two choices elderly needs and community self-development. Hunter would like to start presentations next month and would like to be able to send them questions in advance. Hunter explained that there is more structure around the elderly issue and would probably be easier to navigate. Community self-development would be a little mushier because it's a newer concept. Raul stated that part of the process is assessing the landscape of the issue and finding the sweet spot for the community council by identifying something that isn't being addressed.

Member Interests and Suggestions:

- Intersectionality between seniors and workforce
- Identify the space that is not being addressed within workforce (barriers to access)
- 16-24 age group in workforce
- Transportation as a barrier to workforce
- Address how income inequality impacting the aging community, assessing whether something is missing from the work that's happening around the aging community
- Get presentations from people who work with aging or workforce and ask them where the gaps are and where they believe we can add value
- Focus on access or barriers for both age groups (seniors and opportunity youth)
- Barriers to entry
- Analysis of dropouts

Raul suggested we start presentations with Leslie presenting on the workforce plan. Hunter suggested that we could focus on things that are happening that aren't in the main stream; for example: Teach for America employees living in college houses. Hunter sees the Community Council bringing the most value by bringing an "interested and helpful citizen" perspective into different areas rather than deep diving into one particular topic.

Ara requested that during the next meeting we need to be thinking about follow-up communication with the Alumni group.

Raul added that the final directory is available in everyone's packets.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.