

CAN Community Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 17, 2020

Zoom Video Conference

Present: Caroline Reynolds, Nora Comstock, Hunter Ellinger, Sam Hensley, Blanca Alvarado, Nicholas Haigh, Lou Serna, Marcia Beckford, Ricardo Garay, Nancy Gilliam, James May, Myneeka Holloway

Staff Present: Raul Alvarez, Carlos Soto, Jelina Tunstill

Guests: Ivanna Neri, Ara Merjanian, Ruben Cantu

Call to Order and Announcements	Nora called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm a quorum was present. Members introduced themselves. James announced that the Rent 2.0 program released for anyone impacted by COVID-19 to get immediate rental assistance (https://www.austintexas.gov/rent?fbclid=IwAR2YK1LcMBCIrr1Xz2g8tfVepal4lcoOt7sYj4KCT92XoFn8l0c7Jpl27WI).
Approval of June 15, 2020 Minutes	The June 15, 2020 minutes were approved as amended unanimously on a motion by Hunter with a second by Caroline.
CAN Community Council Chair's Report	Summary: Nora stated that there is a google drive for the Community Council that contains the minutes, presentations, and supplemental documents for each meeting. Hunter and Nora will be working on the reports for 2020 and 2019. They will bring it to the whole group before it goes to the Board. The goal is to have a draft report complete by November. There is an "Issues and Trends" series on CAN's equity blog and the latest blog post in the series about COVID-19's impacts on immigrants. She reminded everyone to be thinking of people that may be appropriate for the Community Council. In July, Hunter, Nancy, Carlos, and Jelina talked about what the Community Council needs to focus on for the rest of the year. We decided the Community Council could bring people together to think more creatively around solving emerging issues. She stated that we wanted to have a meeting about the city budget and what they are thinking about collaboration. We were not able to pull it off, because everything is in flux with the shifting landscape. For this reason, today's discussion will be about how the future landscape may look. She also noted the importance of also focusing on getting an accurate Census count.
CAN Executive Director Report	Summary: Raul stated that the Central Texas Collective for Racial Equity has been formalized. They created a mission statement and have 20 charter members and it will be chaired by Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette (Huston Tillotson University) and the Interim ED

	<p>will be Kazique Prince (with the mayor's office). This group wants to create a structure for advocacy around racial justice. We are in the process of developing the "WeCan! ATX" website. Raul gave an update on the census response in Travis County. He mentioned that the map is looking a lot better than it was early this summer. CAN trained a few people to do outreach in their neighborhoods using NextDoor, and that he, Carlos and Jelina were doing outreach in their own neighborhoods.</p> <p>Raul showed the updated CAN Website and where people can find and sign-up for the equity blog and the podcast. He then showed the mockup of the WeCan!ATX website that will be translated into 10 other languages. There will be information on how to get informed, get engaged, or get help. Right now, the website is still in draft form and only translated into Spanish. We tried to put things that were relevant to the current health and economic crises. We are not only translating written content, but also the data and graphs which you don't see done with on other websites. We plan to reach out to refugee and immigrant communities in a targeted way, using the website as a resource to facilitate the engagement.</p> <p>Q&A: When will the website launch? Raul answered that there is some translation issues and we would want to test it with groups before we launch. Most likely, the launch will be in late September.</p>
<p>Panel Presentation of COVID-19 Impacts and Response</p>	<p>Summary: Ivanna Neri with Family Independence Initiative (FII) presented about their work. FII was created in 2001 in California by a social innovator Mauricio Lim Miller. He was frustrated with the way the system sees people in a deficit-based view. He wrote a book called "The Alternative" that basically said everything you know about poverty is wrong. The FII philosophy is based on learning what communities need from the communities, instead of telling them what they need. There are assumptions about low income families that blames the individuals for their situations. We need to help people develop the skills they need to get better jobs, how to make decisions, how to save money, and how to parent. More than 400 billion dollars are spent fighting poverty each year in the country, but the poverty levels haven't changed very much.</p> <p>The reality is that people are trying to get to a better place. They are resilient and have many assets already. Success looks different for different people, and the solutions can be found in community. FII learns from community solutions and invest directly in them. 50 million people live at or below poverty line. 50% of people that make it out of poverty fall back into poverty within 5 years, because there is not a system of support. FII gives direct</p>

investments, promotes social capital, and believes in the power of agency. FII uses the online platform Up Together. The impact of their program is usually an increase in income, a decrease in federal assistance and an increase in liquid assets. People use their direct investments the same way we use our salaries, in ways that work for them. The COVID-19 response in Central Texas distributed 3.3 million dollars to over 1,800 families with the following racial/ethnic breakdown: 60% Latinos, 28% Black, 6% White, and 3% Asian. Actions needed to truly address poverty are challenging assumptions/misconceptions arising from deficit-based views, putting trust in people's ability to make decisions for themselves, pushing for policies that incentivize communities, and believing in community-based solutions.

Q&A: Sam asked how people are accessing the direct funds from FII. Ivanna stated that organizations are electing people to participate and will give them funds via direct deposit or give them access to prepaid cards. James asked how the CARES Act funding has impacted FII's work. Ivanna answered that she feels they are aligned with understanding this is a wealth distribution issue. She feels the piece that is different is that FII also believes its social capital as well as cash assistance.

Summary: Ruben Cantu with Community Resilience Trust (CRT) presented on what the CRT is doing. He stated that he is a biproduct of this city, institutions and systems which fuels him to do his part for future generations. CRT grew from the notion that in disastrous times institutions will likely, and often do, fail. Institutions aren't built with a resilience mind set. They were built with a status quo mindset.

Resilience is the ability to respond quickly to events that are catastrophic to individuals or community. This rapid response cannot happen without trust which is why networking and community building are so important. We must identify what is broken in our community infrastructure so that we can begin to rebuild and enhance. This approach requires that we mobilize the community to do for itself what systems cannot when they fall apart.

CRT started with the question "How do we make Austin the most equitable city, starting with COVID-19?" Its hard to talk about social innovation when people are concerned about their basic needs. CRT provides a community driven, holistic, strategic, and systemic response to the pandemic in the short term and developing community resilience. CRT is a cross sector of community leaders

	<p>committed to making change as a collective. He mentioned the African proverb “If you want to go fast go alone, If you want to go far go together”. CRT has daily meetings, established strategic partnerships, runs a community website in Spanish for COVID, and amplifies community events and collaborative projects. Using the diversity of perspectives represented CRT, the group is able to take a multidimensional approach to solving problems. CRT is working to formalize its structure, to build capacity and to raise funds to support the work. The goal is for this model to scale to other communities.</p> <p>Q&A: Ricardo asked what Ruben sees the role of CRT in relation to the City’s work around resilience? The Resilience Office needs organizations like CRT, organizations who aren’t as constrained by rules or bureaucracy so when things need to move quickly, they can. CRT plays takes a systems approach that is community based, which government often does not have. CRT can serve as the connective tissue.</p>
Discussion and Preparation for 2021	<p>Summary: Nora stated that the council will begin planning for 2021 at the November and December meetings. The issue of public finance, particularly relating to health services, will be a big issue going forward. Financing the resources and services that schools need will also be very important. We want to create a long-term plan that ties into the presentation that Ruben just gave about resilience. We need to look at community needs right now and figure out where we can have an impact. Nancy will help to facilitate these discussions. Hunter added that we should be mindful that is much easier to secure speakers because of these virtual platforms that are now becoming the norm. This can help us engage people with the right expertise on issues we care about. Nancy noted that we also need to start thinking about recruitment for next year. Nora added that she would like to see better racial/ethnic representation.</p> <p>Q&A: Raul added that budgets would be an important topic for next year because it will be a difficult year, financially, for public institutions. There is also the whole issue of defunding the police and how that \$100 million dollars that has already been removed from the APD budget will be redistributed. It would be useful for the Community Council to create tools for people to engage in those processes.</p>
Adjournment	Nora adjourned the meeting 8:07 pm.