

CAN Community Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 19, 2021

Zoom Video Conference

Present: Nancy Gilliam, Nora Comstock, Patricia Longoria, Kelly Crook, Blanca Alvarado, Anaami Pandit-Haji, Donovan DePreist, James May, Laura Goettsche, Hunter Ellinger, Caroline Reynolds

Staff Present: Jelina Tunstill, Carlos Soto, Raul Alvarez, Melinda Barsales

Guests: Ara Merjanian, Simone Benz

Call to Order and Announcements	Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm followed by introductions. A quorum was present.
Approval of June 21, 2021, Minutes	The June 21, 2021, minutes were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Nora and a second by Kelly.
CAN Community Council Chair's Report	Summary: Nancy stated that there was no Executive Committee meeting or Board of Directors meeting. Raul and CAN staff are doing a lot of work around the Regional Summit. The housing workgroup completed their workgroup report and will present on it later in the meeting.
Executive Director's Report	Summary: The CAN Community Dashboard will release August 4 th and we are finishing up the Race Equity Framework as well. This year's Dashboard is the data before the COVID-19 outbreak. A lot of the indicators won't show the true impact of COVID. That data won't come out until the fall and will be a true picture of what's happening now. That's part of the reason we paired this year's Dashboard with the Race Equity Action Framework to show that there is still value in what we are doing. The REAF is part of a race equity series including equity bogs that we have been working on. He stated that he will present the series at the next Community Council meeting. Raul stated that the Language Access Action team is finalizing their Community Engagement Modules which will engage non-English speaking communities. He stated that they will be ready to roll out in the fall beginning with Spanish and Burmese. The plan is to eventually expand to other languages as well. We will work with our school district partners to engage non-English speaking communities. Raul announced that Melinda Barsales will officially be a part of CAN staff in less than 2 weeks.
Workgroup Updates	Housing Workgroup Summary: James gave an overview about the housing workgroup report. He stated that the format is a description of the housing issue, a summary of the presentations,

	<p>and their recommendations. They include extra resources for right to counsel. They sent the report to John Pollock to review the final report and check for accuracy. James stated he reached out to Shoshana who had some concerns with right to counsel. James believes the recommendations in the report are solid and will alleviate the pain for some households.</p> <p>Q&A: Nora asked for clarification on a sentence in the housing workgroup report regarding lay advocates and legal representation. James stated that sentence needed to be tweaked and would send revisions to CAN staff.</p> <p>Nora asked for clarification on next steps after the report is submitted to the Board. Raul answered that once the report is published it gets shared with the Board and once its final individual members of the Community Council can share it with whoever they want. Kelly stated that there is nothing in the bylaws that says that Community Council members can't use the report to advocate. Kelly explained that the CAN Board is a group of loose affiliation that have to wait for their individual organization's boards to approve before they can take action as the CAN Board. She suggested Community Council members present to CAN Board member organizations at their forums. Nancy asked what the time frame and process is for presenting to the CAN Board. Raul stated that in the past the chairs presented the report to the Board at the Board meeting. Ara stated that there is urgency with this issue and there is a public awareness component for renters and landlords to this issue. Raul stated that another way of sharing information while receiving feedback is sharing a draft report. Nancy suggested putting it out as a draft. Nora suggested bringing it to the Executive Committee first.</p> <p>Follow-up: CAN Staff will send out final report via email for a digital vote to sign off on it before we forward it to anyone.</p> <p>Mental Health Workgroup Summary: Blanca stated that the Mental Health Workgroup is excited to start presentations next month. Nora is working on a behavioral health change media campaign. Blanca stated that the Mental Health workgroup will look at the housing workgroup report to help shape our report and meetings.</p>
Presentations on Food Insecurity	The Food Insecurity workgroup showed a video about Ron Finley that created a garden in New Orleans that impacted changing laws from needing a permit to make an urban garden to not needing a permit to make an urban garden.

Simone Benz, Sustainable Food Center Presentation

Summary: The SFC cultivates a just and regenerative food system so people and the environment can thrive. They envision a future where Central Texas is among the most sustainable, equitable food systems in the nation. They focus on farmer support, cooking and gardening, food access, and policy. They have two key programs, the first is Spread the Harvest. They give free seeds, plants, and gardening resources to qualifying individuals, schools, and organizations. Through this program they have a resource giveaway day. They had 2 events in 2021 serving 600 individuals and providing around 12,000 meals. The second program is Double Up Food Bucks. Double Up Food Bucks doubles the value of SNAP, WIC, and WIC FMNP benefits at participating farmer's markets. They have 32 sites statewide and have served over 5,000 individuals in 2021. The SFC's policy recommendations include creating a Central Texas Food Hub which aligns with Item 39 in the Austin System Food Plan. They also recommend expanding the Double Up Food Bucks program. Regarding Travis County, they have a contract with Travis County for gardening education that will end in 2022. She stated that some of the farmers they work with are from surrounding counties and posed the question of how to advocate in the city and county how to use ARPA funds.

Q&A: What can we do? Simone stated that she isn't sure and would like to stay in touch to figure out opportunities.

What is your experience about what obstacles you encounter for people trying to make use of your services? She stated she doesn't work directly with the gardening programs. One of the major challenges they experience is the expense. Time is a constraint and gardening has a high initial expense.

What has SFC done with schools at different levels? Moving a little bit away from school gardening because other organizations are doing that work. They have focused more on community gardens. They do training for teachers on how they can use gardens in the classroom. Partners in Education, Agriculture, and Sustainability (PEAS) are a program that's more involved with school gardens.

Do you think people, the community council, organizations should discuss food in the context of the larger neighborhood, community, sustainability effort that addresses related issues simultaneously? She thinks that its important to work in collaboration with groups working on related/ affected issues. She works with GAVA and Urban Roots.

Adjournment	Nancy adjourned the meeting 8:05 pm.
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