



Community Update August 8, 2005

One Team-One Dream

AFRICAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE COMMUNITY TEAMS WORK WITH CITY STAFF TO DEVELOP IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOR COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS.

Joint effort started July 7, 2005 moving to meet October 6 2005 City Council deadline

Austin, TX. On July 7, 2005, Acting Assistant City Manager Michael McDonald convened a group of over 100 individuals and charged them with developing action plans to implement the community's recommendations for improving the quality of life for African Americans in Austin. The group divided into six subcommittees to address the areas under review. Each subcommittee is composed of community representatives who either worked on the recommendations or had experience in the area under review and city staff responsible for that policy area. Co-chairs, one from the community and one from the city, were appointed to direct the process. The action plans for implementing the recommendations will be completed in late September and presented to City Council October 6, 2005.

Below is a brief summary of the status of each subcommittee.

Business Economic Development: The subcommittee meets weekly. Five of the nine recommendations have been discussed in detail-1) M/WBE procurement, 2) contract issues, 3) creating an Ombudsman to address issues faced by contractors, 4) indexing insurance and bonding requirements to the level of risk; and 5) improving access to capital and cash flow for contractors.

Neighborhood Sustainability: The subcommittee has met four times Initial focus has been on assessing proposed new City programs and policies that may address deficiencies identified in AAQL report, e.g., establishing Land banks and Community Land Trusts as ways of increasing affordable housing; and implementing legislation proposal by Council members Thomas and Alvarez aimed at increasing jobs and reducing the impact of rising property taxes and gentrification on neighborhoods.

Arts and Culture: The subcommittee has met as a body twice and working groups are meeting several times a week. The current focus is on the four recommendations related to the Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau's role in promoting African American culture, heritage and events as an integral part of its mission to promote Austin as a convention and tourism destination.

Health: The focus has been on two areas: identifying a method for establishing a clinic in far northeast; and developing a prevention team model to carry services to areas of high African American concentration. Meetings are held weekly through September

Police and Safety: The subcommittee is meeting regularly and working on issues related to disablement rather than deadly force, training and recruitment.

Employment and Education: The group has met three times and the first few meetings have sought additional information on some topics. The team believes that one recommendation, dealing with potential incentives for corporations that hire qualified African Americans, should be referred to the Business and Economic Development Implementation Team.

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For more information contact Nelson Linder at 695-6674 (Police and Safety); Jeffrey Richard at 478-7176 (Employment and Education); Greg Marshall at 459-1181 (Business Economic Development); Lisa Byrd at 914-5198 (Arts and Culture); Joe Barnes at 922-0503- (Health); or Byron Marshall at 469-1705 (Neighborhood Sustainability).

Links to the position paper can be found at the following website addresses: www.capcitychamber.org; and www.aaul.org. Hard copies may be secured at the Carver Branch Library located at 1161 Angelina Street. The phone number there is 974 – 1010.