

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Monday, February 21, 2011 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

ATTENDEES:

Dennis Basinger, Port of Houston Authority; Rebecca Blatnica, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Mayra Bontemps, Harris County; Amy Boyers, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Jared Briggs, Harris County; Toni Candis, Harris County; David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; D.C. Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation; Emiliano Herrera III, Neighborhood Centers, Inc.; David Hitchcock, HARC; Michael Huddle, Montgomery County; Michael Kramer, City of Houston; Christy Lambright, Harris County; Erin Livingston, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Stephanie Lopez, United Way of Greater Houston; Sherry McKibben, City of Huntsville; Cheryl Mergo, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Gina Mitteco, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Andria Nelson, Student; Kelly Opot, Harris County; Diana Ponce De Leon, City of Houston; Kelly Porter, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Mary Ruth Rodenbaugh, Brazoria County; Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future; Lori Schwarz, City of Galveston; Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Laura Solitare, TSU; Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amanda Thorin, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amanda Timm, LISC; Monique Ward, METRO; Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District; Nicholas Williams, Houston-Galveston Area Council; and Chelsea Young, Houston-Galveston Area Council.

A. Sustainable Communities Boot Camp Overview

D. C. Dunham, Michael Kramer, Cheryl Mergo and Amanda Timm represented the Coordinating Committee at the Living Cities Sustainability Boot Camp in Boston. They offered a presentation on the major themes and key lessons learned from the boot camp. The Powerpoint presentation is available at ftp://ftp.h-gac.com/Pub/CE/Sustainable_Communities/SustainableCommunitiesBootCamp.ppt

B. Example of Regional Sustainability Plan

Kelly Porter provided a brief overview of similar sustainability plans from other regions in the country. Handouts from this presentation are available by contacting Kelly Porter at: Kelly.porter@h-gac.com

C. Facilitated Exercise

Geri Wells (Wells Consulting) led the Coordinating Committee members thru a facilitated exercise examining:

- Why are we motivated to commit to this planning effort?
- What is it that we want to achieve most as a result of this planning effort?
- How do we need to work together to accomplish the results we want?

H-GAC staff transcribed all of the wall comments from the exercise. The comments are available as an attachment to the minutes.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m..

2. Certify Quorum

At least 51% of the member entities were represented, constituting a quorum.

3. Approval of January 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Sherry McKibben, seconded by Christy Lambright to approve the meeting minutes as presented. The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

4. Public Engagement Declaration and Public Engagement Consultant RFP

David Crossley presented the Public Engagement Declaration and Request for Proposals for a Public Engagement Consultant as recommended by the Public Engagement Sub-Committee.

Action: Motion made by David Crossley, seconded by Sherry McKibben to approve the Public Engagement Declaration with the following corrections:

- Add “housing” to the purpose statement
- Delete “Citizen Participation Plan” from the title

Points of Discussion:

- The Coordinating Committee needs to be more frank and more honest in their comments to each other about work being done to help the process move faster.
- The Coordinating Committee needs to delay approving documents until consensus can be reached as the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development’s purpose.
- More time is needed for review of documents before approval.
- The Coordinating Committee would benefit from an online, collaborative mechanism.
- The opportunities to participate in the sub-committee meetings were not ideal – more time is needed to schedule participation that includes dialogue and not just input through e-mail.
- Non-Profits are going to need to be more engaged in the processes.
- Coordinating Committee needs consistency in who is participating in its discussions.
- Can we use the goal or objective of the grant application as a starting point?
- When defining “sustainability” we should not define what the focus areas are going to be until we have had the public outreach.
- The grant application includes six priority areas with bullets under each. That should not be changed without amendments.
- The Public Participation Declaration is a guidance document for the public engagement consultants.

Laura Solitare offered the following opposition for passing the motion: There are critical decisions we, as a consortium, have to make, before we actually call in someone to run our public engagement process. We have not been able to have a discussion as to what is the purpose of public engagement throughout this process. We need to come to a consensus. There are two critical things missing from the declaration: How the participation will be included in the overall process and how we are going to evaluate and monitor our openness. Several people spoke up and said they did not have an opportunity to participate in this statement as a result of a rushed time frame and a problematic process.

The Coordinating Committee approved the Public Engagement Declaration with amendments as noted.

Action: Motion by DC Dunham, seconded by David Crossley to provisionally adopt the Request for Proposals for a Public Engagement Consultant(s), allowing for the Coordinating Committee to review the document for two additional weeks and provide comments for additions and changes

Points of Discussion:

- The RFP is open for consultants who are proposing to apply their knowledge and areas of expertise. The RFP is written to encourage outside expertise in developing the public participation plan based on broad goals as outline in the grant application.
- Because we don't have the details of the workplan, in the RFP we asked the consultants to propose how they would approach public engagement with the tasks we know we have to do per what was in the grant application.
- The RFP can be amended after it is published if notification is given to all potential proposers who asked to be notified of any changes.
- The Coordinating Committee's objective is not clearly known relative to many of the details in the RFP. So we have to make some decisions as to what they have to propose to. The April 12 deadline is not realistic.
- If the RFP is approved at the February 21, 2011, meeting of the Coordinating Committee, with an April 12 deadline for submissions, it would go to the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval on May 17. We would have someone under contract and doing that scope of work in June.
- According to the grant application, the Consortium committed to developing a Citizen Participation Plan within 60 days.
- Members of the Coordinating Committee will be part of the selection committee for the consultants.
- The actual text, based on H-GAC's RFP template of the RFP, was presented to the Public Engagement Sub-Committee only within the last two weeks; however, the sub-committee began brainstorming on the content of the RFP in December.
- A workplan is due to HUD within 60 days of signing the contract (February 1, 2011). HUD has provided templates. A workgroup to develop the workplan will be needed.

The Coordinating Committee provisionally approved the Request for Proposals with one dissenting vote.

5. Other Business

H-GAC has signed the contract with HUD, therefore we have 120 days to get the signed MOUs with each Coordinating Committee member entity. HUD may send some guidance as to how they would like the MOUs. (The effective date of the contract is February 1, 2011.)

Representatives from HUD will be in Houston on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, to meet with members of the Coordinating Committee to talk about the grant. The HUD representatives will also be available for a reception with civic leaders.

6. Next Meeting Dates

Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 10:00 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Wednesday, April 20, 2011, 10:10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

7. Adjourn

Action: The meeting adjourned at 2:25 P.M.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Gina Mitteco, H-GAC

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Gina.Mitteco@h-gac.com