

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Wednesday June 29, 2011 10 a.m. to Noon
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayra Bontemps, Harris County (Alternate)
Sarah Cerrone, Chambers County
David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow
Ron Drachenberg, Fort Bend County
DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation
Emiliano Herrera III, Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
David Hitchcock, Houston Advanced Research Center
Mike Kramer, City of Houston
Christy Lambright, Harris County
Sherry McKibben, City of Huntsville
Curtis McMinn, United Way of Greater Houston
Diana Ponce de Leon, City of Houston (Alternate)
Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh, Brazoria County
Allen Richey, Houston Wilderness
Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future
Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council
Amanda Timm, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Monique Ward, METRO
Joe Webb, Blueprint Houston
Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District

Also in attendance (based upon sign-in sheet available at the meeting)

Ole M. Amundsen, The Conservation Fund; Jared Briggs, Harris County; Randy Butler, Outreach Strategists; Toni Candis, Harris County; Meredith Dang, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Dr. Garrett Dolan, Rice University; Autumn Hose, America Speaks; Zak Miller, America Speaks; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Michael Schertz, The Conservation Fund; Anna Seville, City of Houston; Linda Shead, Chambers Recovery Team; Mustafa Trainee, America Speaks; Jazzman Varela, The Conservation Fund; Ted Weber, The Conservation Fund; and Geri Wells, Center for Collaboration

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Certify Quorum

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

Public Comment

No public comments were provided.

3. Approval of May 26, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by David Hitchcock, seconded by Sherry McKibben, to approve the meeting minutes with the following changes:

- Add Chuck Wemple to the list of attendees
- Correct spelling of Montgomery County

Discussion:

- Future minutes should list Coordinating Committee members in attendance separate from other people in attendance.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

4. Technical Advisory Group and Regional Transect Groups

Meredith Dang reported that the workgroup interest application was published for approximately one month and tremendous response from all sectors and geographies of the region was received. There were approximately 300 applications to be on the workgroups. She acknowledged the sub-committee which worked to review all of the applications and assign workgroup members to the appropriate workgroups based on their skills, experience and expertise. Sub-committee members included Center for Houston's Future, Blueprint Houston, City of Houston, Harris County, Bay City CDC, HARC, Neighborhood Centers Inc., Montgomery County, Huntsville, Chambers County, Houston Tomorrow, Waller County EDC and Gulf Coast Economic Development District.

A recommendation of a slate of initial participants and their expertise was sent to the Coordinating Committee. As a point of clarification: Coordinating Committee members can participate in any workgroup and it would not count against the workgroup total. The sub-committee had targeted 25 members for the technical groups and up to 35 members on the transect groups. Some groups may have more members because the sub-committee didn't want to exclude people with expertise and experience that could bring something to the group because of a set limit.

There are still some gaps, with the rural and coastal transects having the least members. Sub-committee members indicated that the Coordinating Committee may still need to do some targeted outreach to help fill some of those specific areas of expertise.

Discussion:

The City of Houston requested two seats on each workgroup except for the rural and coastal transect groups. The names of core workgroup members, along with subject matter experts who could be brought in as needed, was also distributed electronically to the Coordinating Committee members prior to the meeting.

If Coordinating Committee members know of people who could serve as subject matter experts or who have additional expertise and could serve on a workgroup, there is no downside to providing those names to the sub-committee so discussions can begin.

The process will be open enough to allow Coordinating Committee and sub-committee members the flexibility to identify additional workgroup members and subject matter experts as the three-year process progresses.

All meetings of the workgroups will be open to the public, so anyone interested in participating is welcome to come. But the intent of having a core group is to have continuity throughout the process.

There were about 30 applicants who didn't fit into any group, such as multiple consultants from the same firms and some private citizens who would likely be a better fit during the public participation process.

The intent is to contact everyone who applied and let them know A) what group they are in and what that means and B) if you weren't selected how you can still get involved. The sub-committee will vet the packet of contact materials before they are sent to the applicants.

Before reaching out to potential new members, the Coordinating Committee should coordinate that effort by providing the names to the sub-committee through H-GAC staff. Coordinating Committee members will then be asked to reach out to the potential members, asking them to complete the workgroup interest application.

The purpose of the transect groups is to ensure viability of recommendations based on different regions. The members ideally will be able to discuss housing, transportation, economic development, healthy communities and the environment, not as experts, but from the perspective of the transect area. Definitions for the transects may be needed.

It's important to fill the gaps in diversity and make sure we have a good reflection of what the region looks like. If the idea is 13 counties collaborating, the Coordinating Committee needs to figure out how to reach out and get more representation for rural and coastal transects. It is challenging to recruit members from rural and coastal areas because they see this as a "Houston" thing. They are also hesitant to make a three-year commitment.

During the process, the groups should become more holistic and not siloed into smaller parts of the whole.

Policy makers and elected officials will be part of a governance committee. Though if any elected officials or policy makers want to be part of the workgroups, they are welcome to participate.

Action: Joe Webb made a motion to adopt the initial slate of workgroup members as presented, giving the workgroups the flexibility to reach out to additional individuals who may be a good fit. Curtis McMinn seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

Discussion:

Workgroup members also have the flexibility to move into different workgroups as needed.

Coordinating Committee members were asked save the date (August 5) for a kickoff meeting with workgroup members. A draft agenda for this meeting was provided electronically prior to the meeting. H-GAC staff would like to provide breakfast and a snack during this meeting, however, grant funds cannot be used to pay for food. Sponsorship ideas are welcome.

5. Sustainability Indicators

Dr. Garrett Dolan from Rice University provided an overview of the purpose and challenges of creating effective sustainability indicators. Donna Rybiski with Center for Houston's Future provided an overview of the Center of Houston's Future Quality of Life Indicators project.

An interactive indicators exercise was planned, but was postponed to a later meeting.

6. Updates

Inventory of Existing Plans

Inventory of Existing Plans templates were distributed at May meeting. H-GAC and the Gulf Coast Economic Development District have started the process of inputting all of its plans into the template. Coordinating Committee members are reminded to include their plans in the inventory. If they are unsure which plans are the best fit for the inventory, call Meredith Dang for more information. Inventory will also include plans from workgroup members as those are submitted.

Discussion

- Forward all comments about the usability of the inventory collection tool to Meredith Dang.
- The template is ready to be used by Coordinating Committee members, though additional tweaking to the tool may be needed before it can be utilized by the workgroups.

Preferred Sustainability Status

During the May meeting, the Coordinating Committee agreed that they did not want the executive committee to review the Preferred Sustainability Status requests. Harris County, the City of Houston and Montgomery County developed a proposed process for review. If an applicant is seeking a HUD grant and is interested in applying for the additional bonus points, they should fill out the form on the web site (www.gosustainablenow.org). This information will be reviewed by Coordinating Committee members. The plan is to have a pool of willing Coordinating Committee members to review the requests as they come in. However, only the City of Houston expressed willingness to be a part of the review pool and additional volunteers are needed if this process is going to work.

- HUD has a list of approximately 15 programs for which Preferred Sustainability Status is applicable.
- Grant applications will be received on different cycles.
- Could receive a high volume of requests from applicants for competitive grants.
- H-GAC has already processed two or three requests.

- HUD has only authorized this process through the end of this fiscal year. It is anticipated that the program will expand to next year and possibly to other federal agencies.
- Volume should pick up as word gets out about the program.
- Since this is part of a national program, a local logo should be included on the local form to avoid confusion.
- Any volunteers to participate in the review pool should contact Meredith Dang.
- All volunteers must be Coordinating Committee entities.

Public Engagement Consultant Selection Process

The H-GAC Board of Directors, at their regular meeting on June 21, did not follow the ranked order with the recommended public engagement consultant teams recommended by the Coordinating Committee. The H-GAC Board selected the second ranked firm, AECOM. The first ranked firm was America Speaks. Prior to the full Coordinating Committee meeting, interested members met to discuss next steps to recommend to the full Coordinating Committee.

- Our concern is that the message the H-GAC Board is sending to the Consortium, which is also the main portion of this grant, is not a good message and we need to make sure that the H-GAC Board knows how far extending this committee is. (DC Dunham)
- I would like to note that while the Board is made up of elected officials with the empowerment of the people who elected them, those people are us and they actually do work for us. I have no interest in presenting a nice presentation for them and them saying “thank you.” That would be an additional insult and waste of our time. I’d also like to hear some feedback that the staff will take action so that that doesn’t happen. (Monique Ward)
- Based on what Steve Howard, Chief Operating Officer of H-GAC, said (during the discussion meeting prior to the Coordinating Committee meeting) that it would be unlikely that the Board would reconsider, how do we move forward with that? I think we need to build that relationship. I think we need to build that credibility. I don’t want to get to a place where we’re drawing lines in the sand and saying this whole process isn’t going to work if we end up in a place where we are displeased with their actions again. I think we need to be cognizant of that in this discussion.(Allen Richey)
- This group that worked a long time to get to this recommendation and struggled mightily with one another to come to a consensus on only one, though we were forced into consensus on a ranking, essentially was ignored. I’ve listened to the tapes and you can listen to them too. They are on our website and the H-GAC website, I hope. This was not a substantive discussion. Jeff’s (Taebel) presentation to them, which was substantive, was the longest part. I think it’s very important we somehow find a way to come to some comfort here that the first thing we send to the H-GAC Board is just ignored without really any discussion. And it’s the most important thing we’ve done so far. What does that mean for the next thing we’re going to do? What is the next thing that we are going to send to them that they are going to not discuss and just ignore. I know that one member who voted against us on this thing is now saying she had not been briefed and made a mistake. So how many others are there like that? I think it’s critical that we be very careful -- H-GAC staff is in a very difficult position here. It’s their job to work for their Board. We know that and understand that. So we need to separate that. And, like Amanda (Timm) said, when we do things this big, we need to be there with the Board and not just put the onus on the staff. (David Crossley)

- For clarification: We asked the Board to allow us to negotiate the contract. Did we have to do that? The reason I ask that is, I have trained my Council to, where when I ask them to apply for the grant it is to apply for, accept and implement. With that, the next time they see anything with that is to award a contract. So I don't go to them to ask them to negotiate. Then go to them to ask to award. Then go to them for the next thing and on and on and take it back to them 15 times. Is this the procedure that we have to keep going back to the Board with H-GAC or can we just bring them back a contract and ask them to award it? (Sherry McKibben)
- In response: We don't ask the Board to award the contracts. We have a selection process that's the first step in a negotiation. While we have proposals, we don't have precise contract language and scopes of work and deliverables, so typically we submit a ranking to the Board of Directors basically to avoid what you are talking about. If we had gotten to a point with the number one ranked firm where there was a perceived deal-breaker we wouldn't want to have to put that back on the agenda. There are times when we've had longer rankings that is really to avoid having to go back every time. But we would never couch an action to award a contract. We need to be authorized, as staff, to negotiate when it's over a \$50,000 threshold because the Board is the responsible party for those decisions, ultimately. (Jeff Taebel)
- For clarification: As I said in an earlier e-mail, I'm dealing with multiple federal agencies. Some will allow a local preference. Others will not. Does this grant allow us to rank or even score based on a local preference? (Sherry McKibben)
- In response: We didn't have that as a scoring factor or a factor in the interviews, so as far as getting to the short list... I think, what I would focus on is the Board is allowed to make a decision they deem in the best interest of H-GAC and that was what was expressed orally in the discussion. I'm not a procurement lawyer, but my sense is we followed our procurement properly. (Location) wasn't a factor in being one of the top two of eleven. It wasn't a factor in interview questions. As policy officials, they deemed that that was a factor that they considered in that vote. So I don't view it is a violation of any federal procurement, but I'm not an attorney. (Jeff Taebel)
- There are some federal agencies that awarding or even entering into negotiations as that being the ranking criteria is not allowed. And you are then in violation of that grant's procurement process. (Sherry McKibben)
- The procurement that we follow is consistent with what you said. Again, with any public agencies, they can elect to award or not award a contract based on their views of it. I don't really think it was part of the procurement. It influenced a decision at the end of the process. (Jeff Taebel)
- Basically, our contract with HUD states that we will follow H-GAC's procurement policy for the procurement and our HUD grants representative is aware of the process we undertook in the procurement. (Meredith Dang)
- How many of the Board, the elected officials actually talked to us? Did they reach out to us? Did any of those reach out to us to see what they were actually voting on? I see that as a problem that none of them reached out to us, but then we didn't reach out to them either. (Sherry McKibben)
- To be honest with you, we all get a lot of information. I did not know it was going to H-GAC's Board at this time. I don't even have that on my calendar when they even meet. I think like so many of us who sit on Boards, like the judges and elected officials who sit on H-GAC's Board, they get their information, then they get here and they open it up. So for them to have studied everything ahead of time and said "Oh this is an important issue that's coming up," it's just sort

- of a blip on the screen. But after the fact, if we go back and say “what were ya’ll thinking.” “Oh gee I don’t know, someone made a presentation and we all voted.” And it happened. I do think, in this particular case, that we might be able to effect change in the Board decision. (DC Dunham)
- To Jeff Taebel: The Board routinely approves contracts like this or makes recommendations? They usually review these types of things and make a decision on them? (Mike Kramer)
 - In response: The Board approves a lot of contracts. (Jeff Taebel)
 - To Jeff Taebel: And when they do that, they often have to decide between one or the other? A lot of the times they don’t just have one recommendation to vote yes or no. They have several options? (Mike Kramer)
 - In response: Generally, when we have consultant contracts we provide them with a ranked list. (Jeff Taebel)
 - To Jeff Taebel: If they chose to, they could have deferred action for additional information? (Yes). So in my opinion, the Board did nothing wrong. We gave them a choice and they made the choice. Unfortunately we’re not happy about that choice, but I don’t think taking it back we’re going to get any other answer. (Mike Kramer)
 - I think in other circumstances that may apply, but the world has changed since the selection committee did its rank order, and if I knew in May what we know now because of what was in the paper in early June, AECOM would not have made it to the top two ranking. Because of the process we have to go through and the level of public trust that we need to be successful, by having the credibility in question of the Port (of Houston Authority) who was on the selection committee. I don’t think Dennis (Basinger) knew about any of that so we can’t hold him personally accountable, but his organization is responsible. We did not know that. They did not disclose any potential conflict of interest, and the type of situation that it is breeds distrust and we will not be successful in engaging thousands of people in our region because of that. That, in my mind, takes them off the table as an option. I’m not making this argument to advocate for America Speaks. I’m saying what the Board has recommended, I don’t think we should accept because we will not be successful in the process. So, for that reason, we have to go back. I don’t know if David (Crossley) was referencing the other comments that I made, which brings us back to the reason why the first choice was rejected on the basis of location. The Board has the power to make that decision, because that was a dealbreaker and to not have it in the RFP and to have us tell all of the candidates that it was not an issue, I think we did not have a process with a lot of integrity because people would have structured their teams differently had they known how important it was from the beginning. In addition, I think our Coordinating Committee is being held to a different standard per HUD than most other situations. We are not an advisory board to H-GAC. If I’m understanding it correctly, HUD assumes we have the power and that we are in charge of this process and that we have to work in collaboration with, not in subservience to, the H-GAC Board. So, if that requires a better relationship and more information to the Board we are obligated to provide that and have that conversation with them. (Amanda Timm)
 - Has the H-GAC Board empanelled the Governmental Advisory Committee yet? Have we brought an action request to them for that? I know that at one point we were going to have the H-GAC Board empanel that committee. What’s the thought in moving forward on that as a formal way to engage on the issue? To have a committee to run these decisions by in the future and get their read out so that when we go back to the Board we have more credibility. We can say “the guys

you appointed have also signed off on this contract.” What’s the feeling and timing of that?
(Allen Richey)

- Committee members acknowledged that now is the time to start working with the H-GAC Board to empanel the Governmental Advisory Committee.
- I think in some ways our group feels slighted because the process that we entered into seemed clear in the beginning, but we were tasked with something different and the result was different. So I think part of engaging the public, engaging elected officials, engaging everyone is having a clear, transparent feedback loop. Whether we put it up on the board or have a visual of it, but to understand where we fit in the game and how things are going to look as we move forward. We need clear relationships and clear communication. I think our presenter put it very accurately “process is important.” The process needs to be transparent if we’re going to engage at a certain level, and ask for things at another and make a decision at certain points, then I think that needs to be clear. As part of the selection committee, we went into a process thinking that we had a clear and transparent way to get things done, and I think now we feel a little bit slighted. (Emiliano Herrera III)
- Regardless of which way – keep in mind that everyone who responded to this RFP has been out thousands and thousands of dollars to do that. It is not cheap on a company or consultant group to do this. They take it very seriously and they have been out a lot of money. So, whatever we decide, keep that in mind that we’re asking a lot of these groups. We’ve asked a lot of them. They’ve come, they’ve interviewed, some of them are here now. We need to keep that in consideration. (Sherry McKibben)
- I’m not going to say that Dennis knew anything about this, like you said. But the story was out there on May 6. May 6 was when Wayne Dolcefino did the long, and by the way hilarious, story on Jim Edmonds, Chair of the Port, going to the Sahara with AECOM and then hiring them as a consultant while he was the chair. The finance committee of the H-GAC Board pretty overwhelmingly voted for America Speaks and sent that to the Board. With very little discussion, but still they voted for our recommendation. The Board not only ignored us but ignored its own finance committee. And in the discussions at the Board level that we say is full and fair. I think I’m right saying the only discussion was the Commissioner for Galveston saying he was concerned that America Speaks is a non-profit, Washington insider and that he thought AECOM was better. He made a motion before Jeff stopped breathing his last sentence. He said let’s use AECOM because they did the environmental work for the Grand Parkway in Galveston so they are familiar with them. That was the whole discussion, except for one member asking if H-GAC was going to do planning, so to say that it was a full and fair discussion when the only comments were that America Speaks is from Washington and therefore unacceptable and AECOM had done State Highway 99 environmental work in Galveston, that was it. That they have a local office just isn’t substantive. I think the Board itself didn’t have sufficient opportunity to look at something. Maybe they didn’t get it, but this is really important. I think that’s the key here. I don’t think the Board understood this is really important. (David Crossley)
- I was just wondering if there was anything else mentioned that was a deciding factor against our choice. (Curtis McMinn)
- In reference to what Mike (Kramer) and Amanda (Timm) said earlier, I really want us to focus and go in that direction if possible because from our perspective the Board did not do anything wrong. They have the ability to make those choices and whether we agree or disagree with them,

they do have that ability to make those choices and I think we are all in agreement on that. We also agree with Amanda with the points that you made. If we go to the Board with those points in those orders... obviously if we go and say “we don’t feel respected” they have the right to do that. So if we go to them and say “here are our legitimate concerns and here’s what they’re based on” I think we will probably have a better reception than if we go with a not so positive approach. (Mayra Bontemps)

- It wasn’t made clear that all of the top five teams had significant local representation on their teams with major roles in the process, so if that is the concern it was covered. There are local folks on the ground, so I believe the location argument is not valid. Again, if they had another argument, it might be more valid. Back to David’s point, if the main reason, besides the first choice being a Washington group, to support AECOM was the extension of State Highway 99 in Galveston County, I think we have to question then is AECOM the right choice. Because if you analyze that project per the livability principles I think we’d find conflicts. I apologize. I became aware of what was in the paper in June, not in May, and we did not discuss it at the selection committee. So I think that missing piece of information would have influenced the discussion. (Amanda Timm)
- I just wanted to say that they do have the authority, but they are required to act responsibly and not arbitrarily make decisions. (David Hitchcock)
- I agree with Amanda. Having served on the selection committee, had I been fully aware of the investigation, and I wasn’t, it would have influenced my actions. (Allen Richey)
- Sherry’s comments have really made me think of something too. Even though HUD may have said that your procurement process is ok, are we still in compliance with the Brooks Act because HUD is required to follow that and that’s where our money’s coming from. So I’d like to make sure we’re still in compliance with that. (Joe Webb)
- I first want to say that I did not support AECOM at that meeting. We had to do that to get the consensus on America Speaks is my memory of how that worked. I think there were people opposed to AECOM in that room and I was certainly one of them. I think that we ought to be pointing out that there are eight local people from America Speaks in this room right now. If they say they don’t have a local presence, then who are all those people over there that live here? Is there anyone from AECOM here? (David Crossley)
- All the teams have local presence. (Amanda Timm)
- So for the Board to say that we have to have someone local, we have to challenge that. You’re right. This has to be responsible. We have to challenge that kind of thing. (David Crossley)
- I think the lack of knowledge from the H-GAC Board of who we are is the message. Not going in and saying “how dare you.” Just their lack of knowledge of who and how diverse and how far reaching this group is. (DC Dunahm)
- I’m going to offer up a glass-half-full position and forgive me for being a pragmatist on this because I understand and appreciate the concerns that have been voiced. I’d like to remind this body that we currently have authorization to negotiate a contract – a large contract with our second ranked firm from what I recall as being a close discussion. There were advocates for AECOM. I didn’t view it as we had to settle for this to get to yes. I recall it being a pretty long, spirited discussion and I recall there being some concerns addressed about America Speaks and the viability of that project in the eyes of our Board for a variety of reasons at that time. I know I voiced some of those concerns. Just from my recollection of events, it may have been a closer call

than was expressed today. The second thing, we need to ask ourselves as a body is whether petitioning the Board at this time to reconsider its decision is likely to produce a better outcome. Again, I don't want to make assumptions or pre-ordained conclusions, but having worked here a while and having worked with that Board I think the likelihood, to me, seems low. I think putting something on the agenda again introduces additional uncertainty. We've had some public engagement items get tabled in the past. Frankly, going into the discussion I was a little bit more concerned about that happening. So, should it be placed on the agenda for some sort of action, I think we'd have to consider three options - A) "yes, we understand now and we will reverse our decision" B) "no, don't understand and have the same decision" or C) "I think we need to start over." And "C" to me would be a disaster. I think the amount of time and resources required to do another procurement at this point when we're trying to get things off the ground is problematic in my view. Again, is a better outcome likely? Would we be assured of having the same or better firms and the same or better outcome at the Board meeting? I don't know. Those are all sort of risk-benefit things I think we'll have to consider as we decide what we want to do. But I just wanted to remind us that we have authorization to proceed on a big project with a firm that we sent forward knowing what we knew at the time as second ranked. If we want to introduce more uncertainty into that, so be it, I think it comes with some risk. (Jeff Taebel)

- I would like to see a consistent communication from the Board and from our group to our stakeholders, to the community and to the public at large and say this is the reason we decided to move forward on this. I think there's some conflict in terms of understanding, because there's not a local office and things like that. Going to my stakeholders and saying that doesn't seem like there was integrity in the process and a robust arbitration of whether or not that was the choice that we all agreed to. (Emiliano Herrera III)
- I don't mean to sound like a pessimist because people who know me know my glass is usually half full. I agree with Jeff that re-doing the process would be disastrous, but I think if we do not go back to the Board and just accept this recommendation then the process would also be disastrous because the grounds on which the first choice was not accepted questions the integrity of that process and I think we have a huge legal vulnerability because we very clearly said here that we are concerned about how the process was handled. So I think that we should think of that as a disastrous outcome as well because it would slow things down way more than an additional three months to re-do the process. So I definitely recommend going back to the Board and laying everything out and having a very open conversation with them. I totally agree with Emiliano that for the non-profits especially that are accountable to the communities where we work if we do not demonstrate transparency in this whole process, especially our credibility with HUD is at risk because we are in no way demonstrating livability principles, especially on the front of social equity because it's business as usual on an anti-social equity – real or perceived – that's the perception of how things are done in this region. (Amanda Timm)
- The fourth option that Amanda expressed is simply this body expressing its deep concern about the decision that the Board made. It's not petitioning them to change their decision, but asking for a place on the agenda to make a presentation about the consortium. (David Hitchcock)
- At the risk of sounding defensive, I just want to clarify. There's been a number of statements about opaque process and changing the rules in midstream and I'd like for those to be articulated if they exist. I think we had a sound process. I think it was duly considered by a broadly representative group of this committee to be presented to the committee. After it got to the Board

of Directors, they make decisions. I'm assuming even non-profits have Boards of Directors that may occasionally disagree with a staff or sub-committee decision. So, if there was a problem in the process up to that point, I'd like to know about it, and we need to fix it and address it. We don't control how they vote or what they say when they get up to this table any more than you do of your boards, or councils or commissioners courts. (Jeff Taebel)

- I agree that this has not been opaque. I was very quickly able to get the recordings of what everyone said. You can't tell who is saying things because you are listening to a recording. An issue that arises here is that I believe H-GAC should start recording who votes how. And that's something I demand. If the Port Authority is being asked to do that, why shouldn't H-GAC do that? You hear the voices and hear people say no, but who said no? But I don't agree that this was a sound, full process. (David Crossley)
- Just to affirm what Jeff said. We've had, for the most part, a transparent process with a few blips and one of the biggest blips was the lack of revelation of potential conflict of interest. We are all pretty influential in the selection committee. The Port was on that committee and they did not express the potential conflict of interest with one of the top candidates, and that's a big concern. (Amanda Timm)
- If an H-GAC Board member had second thoughts about the way they voted, would they be able to re-introduce this issue to the Board? (Sherry McKibben)
- In response: Generally speaking, if a Board requests that an item be placed on the agenda I think it will be placed on the agenda. (Jeff Taebel)

Action: DC Dunham moved to request that Coordinating Committee have a spot on the H-GAC Board agenda in July to orient the Board to the diversity and reach of the Coordinating Committee and to express concern over the recent Board action, with an action item that the Board reconsider its decision. A Coordinating Committee delegation would also request a meeting with Board officers prior to the Board meeting for additional information. David Crossley seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion by a 13-4 vote following additional discussion (below). Voting for the motion were Allen Richey, David Hitchcock, Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh, Amanda Timm, Curtis McMinn, Sherry McKibben, Mayra Bontemps, Emiliano Herrera III, Ron Drachenberg, Joe Webb, Monique Ward, David Crossley and DC Dunham. Voting against the motion were Jeff Taebel, Mike Kramer, Chuck Wemple and Sarah Cerrone.

Discussion:

- We had some discussion about things not being brought up and not being mentioned, and I just want to go back and read three sentences from our meeting minutes from May 26. "Working with the project manager from outside the region will be beneficial, however, including a local planning consultant will also be beneficial. A concern is how heavily America Speaks will have to rely on the resources of the Coordinating Committee. If an agency has a history of political advocacy, it could be a red flag." Those are three lines from our meeting minutes from the discussion that we had about forwarding the recommendation about America Speaks. I don't want us to forget that. It is in our meeting minutes. We did have that discussion. It was a lengthy discussion, and so I just want to put that out there. (Mayra Bontemps)

- Those of us who were on the selection committee remember all the issues. Those weren't part of the Board's decline of the first pick. I think if that were the case, that needed to be brought up for discussion, not just there's a location-based issue. (Curtis McMinn)
- I want to say that it's not that I disagree with what the motion is and that we shouldn't introduce ourselves and express our concern. I'm just trying to say that we did bring up those issues that were brought up at the Board meeting. (Mayra Bontemps)
- Those issues were not brought up at the Board meeting (David Crossley and Amanda Timm)
- Does the Board meet monthly? (yes, the third Tuesday of every month) If this motion passes will we be on the next agenda or do you have procedures where we wouldn't make that? (Mike Kramer)
- In response: The Executive Director sets the agenda, so we'll forward whatever outcome of today's discussion to him and he will determine whether it gets on the agenda. (Jeff Taebel)
- I believe there are at least three or four Board members who would want to have this on the agenda. (David Crossley)

Additional discussion following the vote:

- Will H-GAC staff continue to engage AECOM or hold off pending the July Board meeting?
- Following today's action, Jeff Taebel will consult with his superiors as to the next steps. If guidance is to begin negotiations with AECOM, the Coordinating Committee will be given immediate notice.

Action: Amanda Timm moved that anytime during the grant process when the Coordinating Committee has an item on the H-GAC Board agenda that a delegation of at least three members including organizations who have representation on the H-GAC Board and organizations who are not represented on the H-GAC Board. David Crossley seconded the motion.

Discussion:

- A delegation is defined as three people including some organizations that are not represented on H-GAC Board and some organizations that are represented on the H-GAC Board.
- If the Board meetings are open to the public and there is a public information period, is this formal structure necessary?
- Delegation will be there to provide support for the H-GAC staff so they're not put in the difficult position they could be put in.
- Delegation will also demonstrate that the Coordinating Committee is an important entity for this grant and not just the public coming in and making comments.
- Coordinating Committee members who are in contact with Board members should continue that dialogue and education process.
- The delegation should also include at least one sub-committee member of the relevant issue.
- The officers can select this delegation or solicit volunteers.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion with Mike Kramer voting against the motion.

Action: Amanda Timm moved to ask the H-GAC Board of Directors to begin the process of empanelling the Governmental Advisory Council, which is part of the structure of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant. Mike Kramer seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion unanimously.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Announcements

None.

9. Next Meeting Dates

Tuesday, July 26, 2011, 10:00 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Tuesday, August 23, 2011, 10:00 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Tuesday, September 27, 2011, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

10. Adjourn

Action: The meeting adjourned at 12:11 PM

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC
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meredith.dang@h-gac.com