

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Tuesday, February 4, 2014, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Bay City Community Economic Development Corporation, D.C. Dunham
Blueprint Houston, Joe Webb and Martha Murphree
Center for Houston's Future, John Wilburn
Chambers County, Sarah Cerrone
Fort Bend County, Ron Drachenberg
Gulf Coast Economic Development Corporation, Chuck Wemple
Harris County, Jared Briggs
City of Houston, Anna Sedillo
Houston Advanced Research Center, David Hitchcock
Houston-Galveston Area Council, Jeff Taebel and Cheryl Mergo
Houston Tomorrow, David Crossley
Houston Wilderness, Marc Reid
City of Huntsville, Sherry McKibben
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Amanda Timm
METRO, Shaida Libhart
Montgomery County, Joanne Ducharme
Neighborhood Centers, Inc., Tanya Makany-Rivera and Mike Lykes
Texas Southern University, Dr. Carol Lewis
Waller County, Harvey Laas

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

Meredith Dang, Andrea Tantillo and Amanda Thorin, H-GAC.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Certify Quorum

More than 51% of the member entities were present. There was a quorum of members present at the meeting.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

4. Approval of August 28, 2013, Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes. The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

5. Approval of October 22, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by Mike Lykes, to approve the meeting minutes. The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

6. Approval of October 22, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes. The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

7. Our Great Region 2040 Final Draft Plan

Meredith Dang presented the latest version of Our Great Region 2040 and asked the Coordinating Committee to consider it for approval. She noted the following updates and changes:

- Additional resources have been added to provide more information on metrics; the *Strategy Playbook*; the videos, community resources guide and guidebook for local governments; the *Existing Conditions Report*; and the Think 2040 Survey.
- Updated the strategy charts to reflect input from the Coordinating Committee and other stakeholders, including additional implementers and additional model policies/helpful programs in our region.
- Add a new priority strategy to the Resiliency section: Enhance coordination of evacuation planning and preparation efforts, particularly to address the needs of vulnerable populations.
- Specific text changes based on public comment, Coordinating Committee and Governmental Advisory Committee input, including word changes for clarification, changes to correct grammar and addition of language addressing maintaining local autonomy and protecting personal property rights.

Motion: Motion by D.C. Dunham, seconded by Sarah Cerrone to approve *Our Great Region 2040*.

Discussion

Can we change “buy local, made local, grow local” on page 6 and 23 to “buy local, make local, grow local” to keep the tense the same? (We can accommodate that change.)

Preserving natural areas and wetlands received the highest score in the survey but it does not appear in the Big Ideas, but somewhere else. It is something people wanted, and we are going to have extensive conversations about it in the future. We should be able to refer to it being in the plan.

Preserving natural areas is definitely in the plan. Although the Big Idea for the Environment section is to secure a clean and ample water supply, several of the priority strategies speak directly and specifically to conserving high-quality natural areas. The survey asked “should steps should be taken to preserve natural areas as we grow,” and 95% of respondents agreed. It didn’t ask them if they thought it was more important than other environmental topics. The survey wasn’t a referendum for potential Big Ideas. We took the results of the survey and developed draft strategies with the assistance of the Coordinating Committee and workgroups. We took those strategies out over a 6-month period to focus groups and local leaders and water supply bubbled up consistently across the 13-county region as the most important environmental issue for community leaders.

The plan is meant to be a living document of voluntary strategies. If a local jurisdiction wants to add something to their use of the plan, they can.

This is a chance to put the whole conversation in front of leaders in this region. If someone thinks there’s an omission, that’s a good chance to talk about it.

Action: The Coordinating Committee voted to approve Our Great Region 2040 with the following change:

- Change “buy local, made local, grow local” to “buy local, make local, grow local” on pages 6 and 23.

8. Our Great Region Endorsement Process (Discussion)

Meredith Dang reported that Our Great Region 2040 was presented at the January meeting of the H-GAC Board of Directors as an informational item, and that they tentatively plan to present the plan again at the February meeting and ask for acceptance by the Board. She noted that at the January meeting, members of the public made comments regarding concerns about personal property rights and connections to the United Nations. A Board member offered a generic video about Agenda 21 that did not speak to the plan. The video was not displayed at the Board meeting, but access was provided to Board members following the meeting.

She said some Coordinating Committee members have already contacted H-GAC staff regarding their endorsement activities and asked if any other members had any updates on their endorsement process they'd like to share.

METRO: Staff used the sample endorsement and drafted a letter of support that is on the President/CEO's desk for signature later this week. If there is interest, METRO staff can take the plan to their Board and ask for a resolution, but it will be after the reporting deadline for the grant. (Any support for the plan is welcome, at any time)

Discussion

We should consider attending the next Board meeting in February to show our support. We may need to make public comment to say that we strongly support this plan.

Can H-GAC staff provide a copy of the PowerPoint presentation about the plan that Coordinating Committee members can use when talking about their plan to their respective Boards. (Materials can be made available. As per a Coordinating Committee member's request during the December meeting, H-GAC also developed a one-page handout describing the plan and the Big Ideas. The hand out can be printed in color or black and white and was distributed electronically to Committee members prior to the meeting.)

Can H-GAC notify the Coordinating Committee members after the H-GAC Board of Directors meeting regarding the outcome of that meeting. (H-GAC staff will update Coordinating Committee members following the Board meeting.)

Following the Board meeting, H-GAC will meet with the graphic designer to make final design tweaks to the plan and will have 5,000 copies professionally printed. The final version will also be translated into Spanish, and both the Spanish and English versions will be available online.

9. Timeline and Next Steps (Discussion)

Meredith Dang told the Coordinating Committee that the final meeting for the group is scheduled for February 25. After three years of work, this meeting will focus on celebrating the accomplishments of the Committee. The meeting will also be a chance to consider how the group will move forward.

10. Updates

Financial Report

Meredith Dang presented the financial report. We will be able to spend down the remaining allocated funds; however, more than \$500,000 is still needed to meet the match commitment for the grant. Cheryl Mergo has been in touch with Coordinating Committee members to discuss how they can capture and report all of their match. All match reports must be submitted to HUD by the end of the month and can include activities through the end of the month.

11. Other Business

No other business was presented.

12. Announcements

No announcements.

13. Future Meeting Dates

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

14. Adjourn

Following a motion by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by David Crossley, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC
713-993-2443
meredith.dang@h-gac.com