

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Wednesday, April 20, 2011 10 a.m. to Noon
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

ATTENDEES:

Will Allen, The Conservation Fund; Ole Amundon, The Conservation Fund; Robert Belew, Center for Collaboration; Mayra Bontemps, Harris County; Amy Boyers, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Toni Candis, Harris County; David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; Meredith Dang, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Lisa Deckard, city of Huntsville; Garrett Dolan, Rice University; DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation; Lori Feild-Schwarz, City of Galveston; Emiliano Herrera, Neighborhood Centers Inc.; Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness; Mike Huddle, Montgomery County; Michael Kramer, City of Houston; Sungmin Lee, City of Houston; Curtis McMinn, United Way of Greater Houston; Cheryl Mergo, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Gina Mitteco, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Kelly Porter, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh, Interested Citizen; Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future; Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Andrea Tantillo, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amanda Thorin, Houston-Galveston Area Council; Amanda Timm, Local Initiative Support Coalition; Sarita Turner, Local Initiative Support Coalition; Jazmin Varela, The Conservation Fund; Monique Ward, METRO; Joe Webb, Blueprint Houston; Amy Webb-Cabrera, Houston Advanced Research Center; Lily Wells, Port of Houston Authority; Geri Wells, Center for Collaboration; Nicholas Williams, Houston-Galveston Area Council; and Chelsea Young, Houston-Galveston Area Council.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

2. 2010 Census

Dmitry Messen with H-GAC presented key highlights from the 2010 Census data recently released for the region.

3. Value of Ecological Capital

Victoria Herrin with Houston Wilderness and Will Allen and Ole Amundon with The Conservation Fund discussed potential strategies for capturing the benefits of ecological capital in the region, including a new project to develop a green infrastructure plan for the region.

4. Certify Quorum

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

5. Approval of March 22, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by David Crossley, seconded by Monique Ward, to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

6. Technical Advisory Group and Regional Transect Groups

Gina Mitteco, H-GAC staff, requested guidance from the Coordinating Committee regarding the process for soliciting and appointing membership to the Regional Transect Group and the Technical Advisory Group, the roles of these groups, the structure of their meetings, and communications with the Coordinating Committee.

Points of Discussion:

- The Technical Advisory Group should be technical experts who will look at data, metrics, best management practices, and root problems.
- The Regional Transect Groups will look at issues from geographical and local contexts.
- Each group will have different roles, but there may be some overlap in both membership and activities.
- H-GAC staff could develop recommendations for a sub-group to work from. That would make the selection process move faster.
- The Peer Exchange Group would be a good source to send applications to.
- The expertise for both groups should come from broad areas.
- We don't want to miss the value of potential overlap by keeping the groups and topics separated.
- Both groups will make recommendations to each other and the Coordinating Committee. H-GAC staff will take these recommendations, under the guidance of the Coordinating Committee, and develop a draft Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. The Coordinating Committee will review and approve the final plan.
- If more funding is needed to accomplish this, does the Coordinating Committee need to apply for additional grants? (the budget for the program is funded by the HUD grant)
- A sub-committee should be formed to discuss the processes. We may be able to take a look at Houston Advanced Research Center's Foresight Project as a model. We need to make sure this process doesn't create more silos.
- The Houston Planning Commission's process could be used as a model. The Commission appoints a sub-committee chair and then the chair works with the Planning staff to come up with a list of names for the Commission to consider. This process encourages a balance within the group. Sub-committee members can also recommend technical experts. Then they open the meetings up to the public, and then bring the issues to the experts. This process offers input, with oversight from the Planning Commission.
- We can tap into groups that already exist at H-GAC, such as the Gulf Coast Economic Development District Board. H-GAC's committees already reach out to the entire region.
- If discussions are facilitated by Coordinating Committee members, the concern of creating silos will be lessened.
- The sub-committee needs to examine the outputs these groups will produce. That will inform the make up of the group.
- The sub-committee needs to develop a format in which these groups will present information back to the Coordinating Committee.

- Creating silos will be a constant issue we will face throughout the planning process. That could be lessened if we are all in the same room. We need to look at what technology is available to support interaction.
- What role can the public engagement consultant play to help grease the wheels? (The public engagement consultant will have little to do with developing and managing the Regional Transect and Technical Advisory Groups.)
- The sub-committee should review the process before H-GAC solicits memberships.
- We need a subcommittee, but we should also consider employing an appreciative inquiry approach. We could do this in a process of a two-day forum instead of breakout conversations.
- Someone should research available communications technology prior to the first subcommittee meeting.
- The Regional Transect and Technical Advisory Groups will review one another's work products.
- Public engagement drives the work of the Regional Transect Group and the Technical Advisory Group. The work will be done through interaction with the public.
- How is the public educated through these groups? (Technical groups will be framing the issues and offering possible solutions.)
- The Coordinating Committee needs a document detailing what the Regional Transect Group and the Technical Advisory Group will do.
- The sub-committee will be formed by volunteers, with the Coordinating Committee officers empowered to check for gaps within the group.
- Volunteers included Joe Webb, Donna Rybiski, Amar Mohite, Emiliano Herrera, Mayra Bontemps and DC Dunham.

Action: Donna Rybiski made the following motion:

A sub-committee should meet to discuss:

- How can the meetings of the groups be structured to facilitate open exchange of ideas and allow interested members of the public to engage?
- What is the best way to ensure exchange of information among the groups, and between the groups and the Coordinating Committee?
- How should members be selected/appointed and what criteria should be used?
- What is the ideal size of the groups?
- How can we reach out to potential members to generate interest in serving in the groups?
- What are the roles and responsibilities for the groups?

The motion was seconded by Joe Webb.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

Follow up discussion: Chuck Wemple recommended the sub-committee meet within the next two weeks to begin discussions. He also charged H-GAC staff with bringing communications options back to the Coordinating Committee for consideration.

7. Updates

The Coordinating Committee officers added additional reviewers to both governmental and non-profit representatives on the committee reviewing the public engagement consultant proposals. Eleven proposals were submitted. The short list interview candidates will be notified on April 26, with short list interviews scheduled for May 2.

HUD has provided some information on the Preferred Sustainability Status for our region. Details are forthcoming, but basic information can be found at this link:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecann_cmt

8. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Coordinating Committee.

9. Announcements

Public Housing Authorities will meet with Coordinating Committee members and H-GAC staff to learn more about what role they can play in the planning process. The meeting will be from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, April 26, at H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor.

METRO will be hiring at least three people soon. METRO will also host a series of long-range planning meetings, starting May 10.

10. Next Meeting Dates

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

Wednesday, June 29, 2011, 10:00 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

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

11. Adjourn

Action: The meeting adjourned at 12:08 P.M.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC

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