

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Sustainable Communities Planning Grant**  
**Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium**  
**Thursday, May 26, 2011 10 a.m. to Noon**  
**H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor**

**ATTENDEES:**

Dennis Bassinger , Port of Houston Authority; Mayra Bontemps , Harris County; Antoine Bryant , The Bryant Design Group; Toni Candis , Harris County; Meredith Dang , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Ron Drachenberg , Fort Bend County; Joanne Ducharme , Montgomery County; DC Dunham , Bay City Economic Development Corporation; Lori Feild Schwarz , City of Galveston; Mike Kramer , City of Houston; Christy Lambright , Harris County; Sungmin Lee , City of Houston; Sherry McKibben , City of Huntsville; Cheryl Mergo , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Gina Mitteco , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Kelly Opot , Harris County; Diana Ponce De Leon , City of Houston; Kelly Porter , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh, Citizen; HM Ruthe , Houston-Galveston Area Council; 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 Timm , Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Amanda Thorin , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Monique Ward, METRO; Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development Corporation; Joe Webb , Blueprint Houston; Nicholas Williams , Houston-Galveston Area Council; Margaret Yancey , Greater Houston Builders Association; and Chelsea Young, Houston-Galveston Area Council.

**1. Regular Business – Call to Order**

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**2. Certify Quorum**

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

**3. Approval of April 20, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

**Action:** Motion made by Donna Rybiski, seconded by Joanne Ducharme, to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

**4. Public Engagement Consultant Selection Process**

Allen Richey, representative from the Public Engagement Consultant Selection Team, reported that 10 members of the selection committee met for an 11-hour day to interview the top five applicants for the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Public Engagement Consultant. The five firms interviewed were:

- Design Workshop
- Edelman
- America Speaks
- AECOM
- Fregonese

Each firm was asked a series of standard questions, as well as given a timed period for presentations. Each firm had different strengths and weaknesses. The Selection Team recommended AmericaSpeaks as the first choice and AECOM as the second choice.

**Action:** Jeff Taebel made a motion that the Coordinating Committee accept the Selection Team's recommendation and present it to the H-GAC Board of Directors in rank order if AmericaSpeaks agrees to add a local planning consultant to their team. Christy Lambright seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

*Discussion:*

- AmericaSpeaks has expertise in other regional plans across the country, including planning projects in Indiana, New Orleans, the Washington DC area, Ohio, and California.
- AmericaSpeaks was the only firm with mega town hall experience.
- AmericaSpeaks listed capacity building as part of their philosophy
- Working with a project manager from outside the region will be beneficial, however, including a local planning consultant will also be beneficial.
- A concern is how heavily AmericaSpeaks 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.
- H-GAC will not select the local sub-contractor for AmericaSpeaks, but will ask AmericaSpeaks to select their own local sub. A suite of local planning firms is available through H-GAC's PlanSource (pre-procured and contracted).
- The Coordinating Committee still plans to work with the plan AmericaSpeaks proposed.

*Next Steps:*

- The recommendation will be presented at the H-GAC Board of Directors meeting in June. H-GAC will enter in a contract with the Public Engagement Consultant.
- The Coordinating Committee needs to start considering scoping issues
- The Selection Team, and others, could be a part of the scoping team

**Action:** Joe Webb made a motion that the Selection Team continue as the scoping team, with an invitation to other Coordinating Committee members to participate. Amanda Timm seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

*Discussion:*

- It takes a month following H-GAC Board approval to get all the budgets and contracts signed. The scoping group could meet simultaneous to that month.

## **5. Technical Advisory and Regional Transect Groups**

Invitations to join a Technical Advisory or Regional Transect group were sent out to 5,766 e-mail recipients. The invitation included an explanation about the make-up of the groups and an interest application for completion. H-GAC has already received 50 completed forms.

A sub-committee met to develop the general functions and operating procedures of the groups, and to develop a nomination/recruitment process and timeline. The process and timeline was presented to the Coordinating Committee as follows:

- Coordinating Committee members will actively recruit and contact individuals they would recommend to serve on the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect Groups and encourage them to complete the Workgroup Participation Form by June 17.
- The Work Group Subcommittee will meet on June 22 to review applications and nominate individuals to serve on each of the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect Groups.
- The Subcommittee will aim to place individuals in groups that match their expertise and interest while also ensuring each group has adequate representation.
- The Subcommittee will identify gaps in participation for various work groups and recommend targeted recruitment to fill necessary gaps.
- A recommended slate of nominees for work group participation will be presented for Coordinating Committee approval at the June 29 meeting.
- Additional individuals will be recruited and nominated by the Subcommittee for approval at the July 26 Coordinating Committee meeting.

**Action:** Donna Rybiski made a motion that the Coordinating Committee approve the nomination and recruitment process and timeline for the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect groups as presented. Joe Webb seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

*Discussion:*

- The Coordinating Committee needs to emphasize why someone should be interested in participating.
- A follow-up with greater emphasis on why participation is beneficial will be generated.
- More information about the benefits of participating are available online.
- Throughout the three-year planning process, additional members may be added as the need arises.

## **6. Preferred Sustainability Status**

The Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS) was devised by HUD to award up to 2 bonus points for applicants that are in the region that received a Sustainability Planning grant or that didn't receive the grant but scored high enough to earn Preferred Sustainability Status. To receive the bonus points grant applications must demonstrate that they are consistent with the Regional Plan for Sustainability. HUD said that each region can develop their own process with some required parameters. H-GAC is already receiving applications.

Applicants requesting PSS sign-off would be required to submit to H-GAC staff (the designated Point of Contact on the HUD PSS website), the following materials:

1. A complete copy of the grant application or a summary if the complete copy is not available

2. SF424 forms that indicate the applicant, funding program, budget breakdown and narrative of the project
3. Local letters of support if applicable
4. Response (a short narrative is acceptable) to the following 3 HUD criteria:

(1) The applicant is engaged in activities, that in consultation with the designated Point of Contact of the HUD designated Preferred Sustainability Status Communities, further the purposes of the regional planning grant program;

(2) The applicant's proposed activities either directly reflect the Livability Principles cited and contained in HUD's General Section to the FY2011 NOFAs or will result in the delivery of services that are consistent with the goals of the Livability Principles;

(3) The applicant has committed to maintain an on-going relationship with the HUD Preferred Sustainability Status Communities for the purposes of being part of the planning and implementation processes in the designated area.

**Action:** Joe Webb made a motion to adopt a checklist potential and as well as a vehicle by which the Coordinating Committee can review the PSS by e-mail. Mike Kramer seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

*Discussion:*

- Applicants know about PSS based on NOFAs and RFPs.
- H-GAC recommended that the Executive Committee be responsible for reviewing the applications and making the determination, due to the short turn around time needed to make the decision.
- The Executive Committee, according to the Coordinating Committee bylaws, is to run meetings, but have no authority.
- A check-list could be developed that the applicant must meet to receive PSS.
- The problem could be not getting a complete application and a quick turn around time.
- The minimum number of responses could be absent a certain number of negative votes. By default, a non-response would be a yes.
- A minimum number of responses are still needed.
- Christy Lambright, Mike Kramer and Joanne Ducharme volunteered to participate in a group to flesh out the check list and PSS approval process.

## **7. Inventory of Existing Plans**

Meredith Dang distributed a template for Coordinating Committee members to use to input existing plans. Coordinating Committee members should utilize the template to input their plans by the June Coordinating Committee meeting.

## **8. Other Business**

Amanda Thorin, H-GAC staff, presented a technology update. H-GAC has purchased GotoMeeting and GotoWebinar to facilitate offsite participants in meetings and webinars.

H-GAC is working on a website template to use until further branding takes place as part of the public engagement process. The new website will be located at [www.gosustainablenow.org](http://www.gosustainablenow.org) and is tentatively scheduled to go live sometime in June.

Nicholas Williams, H-GAC staff, reminded Coordinating Committee members that two copies of the signed MOUs were due to H-GAC for delivery to HUD by June 1, 2011.

#### **9. Announcements**

The Coordinating Committee had no announcements.

#### **10. Next Meeting Dates**

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

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

#### **11. Adjourn**

**Action:** The meeting adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

#### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC  
713-993-2443  
[meredith.dang@h-gac.com](mailto:meredith.dang@h-gac.com)