

Quality of Life Community Update October 3, 2005

Due to everyone's involvement with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, Chief Michael McDonald has postponed the presentation to council. The presentation of the implantation plans will be October 27, 2005. The community co-chairs are also planning to host a community meeting on October 22, 2005, at Huston Tillotson University. This meeting will give the public a preview of the council presentation and an opportunity to learn the specifics of the implementation plan. Because most of the teams were prepared to present their plans to council, they are taking this time to hone their power point presentations and talking points.

Business Economic Development:

Implementation strategies have been developed for each of the nine recommendations. They focus on making it easier for African American businesses -especially small and/or new ventures, to do business in the city. The Capital City African American Chamber of Commerce is taking the lead in this area with an emphasis on creating partnerships throughout the city, reducing fees, energy costs and taxes as part of an incentive package from the City (much like the City offers large firms they are trying to locate here) and requiring corporations who receive tax incentives/abatements from the City to do business with M/WBE's.

Neighborhood Sustainability:

Implementation strategies have been developed for each of the seven recommendations. They focus on developing a comprehensive approach to mitigating the negative effects of gentrification and creating strategies that make affordable homeownership, small business development and capacity building.

Arts, Culture and Entertainment:

Implementation strategies have been developed for each of the ten recommendations. The team has met with stakeholders in the arts and the entertainment industry to share progress met so far. This team was also instrumental in having a new art gallery space placed in the Street Jones building on E.11th Street. Still to be named, the new gallery currently houses an exhibit of stained glass art.

Health:

Implementation strategies have been developed for five of the nine recommendations. The core of the health recommendations focuses on addressing health disparities in prevention and treatment. The subcommittee has identified sufficient resources to initiate the following recommendations: Northeast clinic – Austin Community Care Services Department received funding for an incubator clinic that will be established in north Austin temporarily. The plan is to establish need for expanded services and move to far northeast in near future. There are three strategies to concentrate education, screening and

referral service to African Americans in the ZIP codes heavily occupied by African Americans emphasizing prevention. These include radio, television and billboards campaigns to educate African Americans.

Police and Safety:

Implementation strategies have been developed for each of the ten recommendations. The emphasis is on training and disablement rather than deadly force and includes the following measures:

- 1) Accountability for police officers who use excessive force and violate the rights of Austin citizens.
- 2) The refusal of police officers to use video cameras according to departmental policy should be met with maximum discipline and swift sanctions.
- 3) Joint community based police training will be utilized as a means for creating greater understanding and insight concerning cultural sensitivity issues.

Employment and Education:

Implementation strategies have been developed for each of the nine recommendations. One important recommendation is that the City reviews its own hiring and compensation practices to ensure that African Americans are hired in appropriate numbers throughout City government and in making management decisions that impact areas outlined in the Community Position Paper.