

MYEC Community Conversations Meeting

July 27, 2023

Attendees

Community Members

Mark Jackson

Denise Jasso

Nicki Hendrix

Flannery O'Clobber

Josh Frank

Jessica Havlir

Lokni Muniz

Nona Allen

Raquel Ortega

Jay L. McCullar

Gail Gresham

Alexandra Scarpello

Joaõ Paulo M. Connolly

Bill Wallace

John Evans

Chris Wintersinger

Austin Rosewood Community Development Corporation Board Members

Frances Jordan (chair)

Nelson Linder (vice chair)

Joana Ortiz (secretary)

DeWi Smith

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department Staff Members

Suzanne Piper

Patricia Rossett

Claudia Conner

Adrienne O'Keefe

Justin Schneider

Discussion of the Past

Group Shareout

Mission is still timely. More accountability is needed. Opportunity for more programming.

Maintenance/upkeep were discussed but what about programming

Grassroot efforts/door to door with people are needed to get a representative sampling.

Opportunity for a mission statement with continuous improvement built into it

Important to preserve this as a territory/marker of history

Time to clean house- make sure things are working, functioning, open

Liven up the programming that reflects culture. Keep it at the center.

Used to be a better bond. Hurts to have the conversation without everyone represented. Management company. The participants are here and desire collaboration with the Management company.

Youth sports but adults need a place too. It is hard to move from something that was stable to nothing. Church, community, friend groups, etc. are important

Feels more like a community with representation of all the parties.

Wishes for the Mill management to see the community and care about the community.

Disconnect between the great facilities and great local organizations where this place makes sense.

Roller derby has 6-7 leagues in the area from this community. Need access to a place to skate that is safe (heat considerations). This facility has the amenity and the derby does not supplant the daily activities. The attempt to work with management has been unsuccessful regarding: lack of engagement, lack of transparency and lack of reasonable fee expectation

Offered child skate lessons, care of floor, investment of time has been offered by the derby unsuccessfully

Potential for those who can galvanize community to enliven the place and strengthen the programming. From experience of film/theater- offering the screen could bring creators forward

Difficult time with the word "community" The history is important because the conversation does not feel as honest as it needs to be. Why was this space created? "Local youth" target audience but that specific target audience no longer here. Who is the target audience of the Millennium for? Concerned it won't attract black and brown people. Does not see the individuals from the housing around here attending programming here. The City invites people out to how to "put a bandaid on the bigger problem of disappearing black and brown people" but ignores the larger question of the intended audience of MYEC history. The dated amenities don't attract groups to do programming here. Expressed fear that the City is creating another safe place for more people that are not black, brown and indigenous.

Additional communities in addition to the derby are potential

Historically, this space was created specifically to be a safe space for black and brown youth. The culture it represents is still important.

This is a cultural heritage district. 2000 surveys. Schools left because kids left.

Recovery requires commitment. Economic commitment.

How do you get them back? Marketing. Black folks do not have the options. Requires empathy.

Without housing, the businesses are going to die.

Cost of living- kids cannot afford this facility. Needs commitment to provide activities. Marketing will bring the kids back.

COA needs to accept responsibility to spend money. Reparations. Cultural district needs more investment and marketing to the folks who had to leave. The schools are gone, the people are gone.

Millennium served its purpose at the beginning. Now it is used as a building. With the changes in the community and in Austin. How do we use the building and maintain the mission.

The City lacks honesty with the story of MYEC. Tell it like it is- the real evolution of what is happening to MYEC. Can't be in denial specifically about black people and brown people.

So important to have black and brown people at the table. To engage with- what do you want to see here? When you come here, what do you want to see. Came as a child and black/brown people were here.

What is the COA's mission here? COA needs to listen to black and brown people. Non black and brown residents need to listen.

Resident remembers 11th/12th Street black and brown businesses that were thriving back in the 80's. Shared the community.

Promise Keepers-are they still around? Can they lend their expertise to address hurdles.

In addition to marketing, outreach to youth organizations doing great work in this area. They would love to be able to bring kids to the MYEC. AJC, NAACP, in addition to others. You have to get people back by being in community with them. You can bring them back, you have to be committed and investment is needed. Gentrification pushed those out to Pflugerville, RR and even Elgin. But working and spending time, including church, in this community are still stakeholders. Engage with the people doing the work. They are in need of it and highly motivated to bring kids back. Concern about turning this into just another spot for new residents.

Discovery: Evoke and Illuminate the Millennium as it Now

Group Shareout

1. Considering how the community has changed, what is uniquely wonderful about the community now?
2. What do you love about the Millennium as it is today?
3. What are the challenges you see with the Millennium as it is today?

Dream: Imagine and Express what the Millennium Could Be

Group Shareout

1. What role do you imagine the Millennium could play in the future?
2. What is needed to achieve that vision?
3. What challenges/barriers/concerns/fears do you have about your vision for the future of Millennium?

We really need to be talking to the "right" people. We need to speaking to the people with history here. Expressed that it feels wrong to be having this discussion without those with the history and connections.

Communicate with youth organizations and invite them back in an inclusive way. Outreach without gatekeeping/red tape. Admin considerations re: paperwork, insurance are hurdles. Corporations might not have been willing to cut that red tape.

Attendees wanting to listen.

The undercurrent is similar: it needs to be the individuals here AND be authentic. Desire has to be here to do so- built on trust. Nothing will grow here unless there is collaboration and efforts to work together.

Gatekeepers need to hold the gate open and commit to connection. Who is it open for? How is it managed.

Opportunities for programming built by communities that might be building new. If there are not groups grounded in this place and doing the hard work to activate, it won't happen.

When the building was opened, the amenities were old, even then. The "rooted in the community" is missing. More hands are needed to do the work. People willing to utilize the space during the times where other programming is not. Wants a seat at the table.

Three people here since the pandemic- short staffing is a real issue.

The ideas of doing other programming brings up the issue "Is it what Black people want?" Are we asking the community to do they want this? Are black youth empowered to participate and have ownership?

Video games at other places are so advanced compared to the amenities here. Re-investment is important.

Passionate about the venue- the people that are here care.

Honest conversations are important. The City does not listen to black people. 1) three cultural centers in the City (AARC, MACC, Carver) the Carver has been stuck in stage 1 forever. The other two are further along.

Black people need a space to put their shoulders down. The "opening the door" for black people is a slippery slope because the black community has been forced out.

Black people have been pushed out. Using the word "community" is troublesome because Black people have been traditionally left out or "fed last"

The challenge- it is painful. This place was meant for black and brown children. Vital to acknowledge AND do something. Not just acknowledge.

The people here are the right people but not the ONLY right people. We need to get the youth.

Speaking of this space, but it is representative of what has happened in this city by white people black and brown people.

This is the start- what's next?

More conversations. Questions about solicitation and next steps. This space is a contested space- what are those other interests? Community engagement about this space will hold space for influence. COA is committed to show up for next steps.

Interested in bringing ideas. Budget 1 town Hall on August 3rd- District 1 6pm at the Carver.

Reflect on this space. What is your vision?