



EMPOWERMENT ZONE ADVISORY BOARD

City of El Paso – Community and Human Development Department – Empowerment Zone Grant (EZ)

AMENDED ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
BURLESON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CAFETERIA, 4440 BLANCO AVE, EL PASO, TX
MARCH 11, 2008
5:30 p.m.

The Empowerment Zone Advisory Board met in regular session at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m. Trinidad Acevedo was present and presiding.

The following Advisory Board members answered roll call:

Kwadwo Achampong,
Sally J. Andrade (Vice-Chair),
Park Kerr,
Rick Melendrez,
Soledad Muniz,
Han C. Park,
Edith Zuvanich

Late arrival:

Trinidad Acevedo (Chairman) at 5:54 p.m. during establishment of quorum

Absent:

Maria Teresa Orozco (unexcused absence)

Staff present:

Bill Lilly (Community and Human Development Director),
Marie A. Taylor (City Attorney's Office),
Isela Robison (Empowerment Zone Grant Coordinator),
Priscilla Arellano (Recording Secretary)

The following members of the public commented:

Philip Del Rio, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

1. Approval of March 5, 2008 Minutes

Motion made by Park Kerr, seconded by Rick Melendrez, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Minutes for the March 5, 2008 meeting.

2. Review and Discussion of Preliminary Strategic Plan Program and Budget Scenarios

Isela Robison presented three different scenarios for the Advisory Board to discuss. The scenarios offered the same projects/programs, a short description, and a potential budget for each.

Advisory Board adjourned for a brief break at 7:15 pm

Advisory Board meeting reconvened at 7:25 pm

3. Discussion and Action on the Proposed Revised Strategic Plan

The Advisory Board recommended that the El Paso City staff use the following criteria or characteristics for the application process that will select the projects to be funded by the \$3,750,000 of Empowerment Zone funds:

- **Empowerment Zone's Vision of Expanded Economic Opportunity:** There are two goals
 - (1) development of new entrepreneurs in the Empowerment Zone, and (2) workforce development linked to long-term career paths for residents of the Empowerment Zone. Awards should only go to projects that provide integrated services and/or technical assistance with support to achieve those two goals.
- **Awards of Empowerment Zone Funding through the Recommended Project Categories and Budgetary Amounts:**
 - Grantees must implement **comprehensive projects**: linking at least two-three categories, including the use of subcontracts for support services as needed;
 - Grantees must be able to achieve **demonstrable impact** within the time period for expenditure of the funds; and
 - Grantees must ensure **efficient, accountable administration** of the Empowerment Zone funds awarded.

In particular, the Advisory Board emphasized that one to a maximum of three major projects be funded; with Child Care and Transportation being viewed as support services for a comprehensive, integrated project and not as programs in and of themselves.

Project/Program	Description	Potential Budget	
1a. Small Business Technical Assistance/ Entrepreneurial Training	Provide training and technical assistance on business planning, development, start-up, marketing, expansion, and maintenance to existing and new EZ small businesses. (avg. \$5,000/business)	\$500,000.00	100 businesses (minimum)
1b. Small Business	Provide loans over an 18-month period (include up to \$100,000 administrative costs) Borrower must agree to receive technical assistance and submit a business plan. Program 1: minimum \$35,000 to maximum \$100,000 Program 2: minimum \$5,000 to maximum \$35,000 <i>The forgivable portion is proposed at 50%. The borrower would pay back full loan with interest. With timely repayment in full and compliance with additional requirements (EZ jobs), 50% principal will be returned to borrower as rebate.</i>	\$0.00	Funding from existing revolving loan fund program income
1d. Micro Business Forgivable Loans	Provide microenterprise loans - potentially forgivable up to 100% Borrower must agree to receive technical assistance and submit a business plan. Borrower would also be required to provide a 50% match.	\$400,000.00	NO minimum and \$5,000 MAXIMUM
2a. Marketing Budget Grants	(A) Provide small grants for marketing of EZ existing businesses (Grantee would be required to received technical assistance and provide a business plan) \$1:\$1 Match	\$50,000.00	Assist a minimum of 10 businesses
2b. Publicizing Tax Incentives to Businesses	Conduct outreach to the business community regarding the EZ tax incentives	\$50,000.00	
3. Façade Improvement Program	Provide façade improvement matching (\$1:\$1) grants to EZ businesses FOR START-UP BUSINESS OR PROPERTY OWNERS OF VACANT BUILDINGS	\$150,000.00	minimum 15 businesses with maximum \$10,000 grant
4. Small Business Incubator	Serve as an administrative and operational site for the small business assistance and entrepreneur training and for workforce training current or future employees of targeted small businesses and microbusinesses.	\$750,000.00	30 businesses; 85 jobs

5a. Outreach & Education	Provide outreach to and educate EZ residents and businesses regarding available job training and technical assistance services. Link EZ residents and providers/employers to job training programs and/or employment. Link EZ businesses to potential employees and technical assistance providers. (\$50,000 LINE ITEM TO MARKET VISION OF THE EZ PROGRAM AND CHALLENGE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS TO STEP UP TO THE PLATE)	\$250,000.00	1,000 outreached; 300 placed in job training/jobs
5b. Bilingual Workforce Development	Provide bilingual job training in such areas as customer service and manufacturing.	\$350,000.00	110 residents trained; 33 placed in jobs
6. Childcare	Provide gap funding for childcare assistance to EZ residents for day one attendance at job training or employment and transition to other sources of childcare assistance	\$300,000.00	1,000 children; 400 residents in job training/jobs
7. Transportation	Provide temporary assistance to residents - bus tokens for job training and initial three-month employment. At three-month point, offer \$1,000 subsidy for vehicle purchase from car dealer in the EZ. (maximum \$2,000/resident)	\$150,000.00	75 residents (minimum)
8. Furniture Project	Assign existing EPEZC furniture inventory to various nonprofit organizations providing economic opportunity activities/services, increasing their capacity for service delivery	\$0.00	
9. Administration FY'08 & FY'09	FY '08 Approved by City Council on January 8, 2008	\$800,000.00	
		\$3,750,000.00	

Motion made by Rick Melendrez, seconded by Sally J. Andrade, and carried to **APPROVE** Strategic Plan as amended.

AYES: Trinidad Acevedo, Sally J. Andrade, Park Kerr, Rick Melendrez, Soledad Muniz,
Han Park, Edith Zuvanich

NAYS: Kwadwo Achampong

ABSENT: Maria Teresa Orozco

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4. Set Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at S. El Paso Senior Center (600 S. Ochoa St.)

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5. Public Comments on Agenda Items

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6. Adjournment

Motion made by Park Kerr, seconded by Sally J. Andrade, and unanimously carried to adjourn meeting at 8:26 p.m.

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