

Children's Planning Council Meeting

November 16, 2005

9:30 a.m.

Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 140
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012

Present: Honorable Michael D. Antonovich
Lauraine Barber
Angela Carter, representing David Sanders
Samuel Q. Chan, representing Marv Southard
Priscilla Charles-Carter
Rabbi Bernard Cohen
Lupe Delgado, representing Darline Robles
Duane Dennis
Amy Enomoto-Perez
Jeff Farber
Dorothy Fleisher
David L. Fleming
Terence Harwick
Larry Lue
Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd
Jacquelyn McCroskey
Colleen Mooney
Elisa Nicholas
Julie Paik, representing Philip Browning
Danny Ramos
Margarita Ramos, representing Russ Guiney
Marsha Ramos
Lisa Cleri Reale
Richelle Rios-Huizar
Bruce Saltzer
Lari Sheehan, representing David Janssen
Beatriz Olvera Stotzer
Sharon G. Watson
Kimberly West, representing Roy Romer
Phillip L. Williams

Staff: Yolie Flores Aguilar
Paula Angeles
Ernesto De Guzman
Renee Loza
Deanne Martinez
Rebecca Nadybal
Ben Rodriguez
Cesar Sifuentes
Janet Sparks
Laura Valles
Michelle Tillett
Chrysta Wilson

Chair Michael D. Antonovich brought the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. and asked that Council members and the audience introduce themselves.

Approval of the Minutes of September 21, 2005

David Fleming moved that the minutes of September 21, 2005, be approved as mailed. Phillip Williams seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chair's Report: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

Chair Antonovich acknowledged the hard work of members and staff in achieving this year's accomplishments, which include:

- Reconstituting the SPA 6 Council
- Through the SPA/AIC Councils, convening 64 community forums
- Holding two school readiness summits, one for school leaders and one for city leaders
- Coordinating a successful countywide Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign
- Issuing the second phase of Safe Haven recommendations
- Completing the Council's evaluation, strategic direction, and succession plan
- Receiving Communications Crystal Awards for the Children's ScoreCard and Youth Engagement reports
- Receiving the Fifth District Ford Anson Human Relations Award

Antonovich expressed his pleasure and pride in having chaired the Council in 2005. In 2006, its fifteenth year of helping the county improve outcomes for children and families, Supervisor Yaroslavsky will serve as chair. On behalf of the Council, Olvera Stotzer thanked Antonovich for his service, saying that the Council's achievements would not have been possible without a chairman who came to every meeting and provided support and advice to make sure that children are served.

Foundation Board Update: Phillip L. Williams

- ◆ The Foundation Board has completed the executive director's annual performance review, which it carries out in partnership with the Executive Committee. Sam Chan, a member of both, once again coordinated the effort and did an exceptional job. Williams praised Yolie Flores Aguilar for her talent, eloquence, and leadership, and for the many strategic innovations she has brought forward in her role as executive director. "Her performance review," he said, "was a resounding *bravo*."
- ◆ The Foundation Board has conducted a self-assessment of its operations and structure, addressing its composition, leadership, and committees, as well as strategies to continue

working in collaboration with the Council's Executive Committee. As a result of these discussions, the Foundation Board will expand its membership by one or two more individuals, and form three committees—fiscal, personnel, and program and development. The last will focus on the revenue-generating opportunities within some of the Council's program areas, not on the programs themselves. The Foundation Board continues to be clear that its responsibilities are strictly fiduciary and legal in nature, and that all program work remains under the purview of the Children's Planning Council and its various committees. Foundation Board members do, however, want to partner with the Council and the Executive Committee to ensure alignment between the organization's vision and goals and its financial and employment dimensions.

- ◆ The 2004–2005 financial audit has been completed and the Foundation Board awaits the auditors' report, which will be presented in January.

Executive Director's Report: Yolie Flores Aguilar

- ◆ CPC staff from both the central office and the SPA/AIC Councils gathered together last month for the first in a series of quarterly day-long, all-staff meetings that will focus on building relationships and working as a team despite being dispersed throughout the county. Sam Chan facilitated a unit on leadership development, and it was a very successful day. Other Council members will be invited to participate in these meetings periodically, starting with a small panel of those with the Council from the beginning, to share their perspectives on its history.
- ◆ In addition to the awards mentioned by Chair Antonovich in his report, the Council yesterday received a 2005 Community Star award at a workshop sponsored by Citibank.
- ◆ The school readiness summit targeting cities will take place tomorrow, and more than 150 municipal leaders have signed up to attend. Flores Aguilar thanked Marsha Ramos and Lisa Cleri Reale for their help in outreach and planning.
- ◆ On October 26, the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) adopted the youth engagement belief statement, values, and principles outlined in the Children's Planning Council's 2004 report *Our Voice is Your Future: Giving L.A.'s Youth Real Voice and Real Power*. In the month prior to that, the ECC convened a series of focus groups to listen to youth views on the probation and foster-care systems.
- ◆ Flores Aguilar introduced new staff:
 - Dayson Traylor, American Indian Children's Council community organizer
 - Kevin Davis, SPA 5 community liaison
 - Michelle Tillett, program assistant to the community planning and engagement team

Flores Aguilar also announced that Mark Masaoka, formerly with SPA 4, has been hired as the new SPA 3 council coordinator.

- ◆ A list of proposed meeting dates for 2006 was included in member packets. As soon as they have been confirmed with the incoming chair's office, a finalized list will be issued.

Executive Committee Report: Beatriz Olvera Stotzer

- ◆ As members recall, the Council took initial action at its September meeting to approve recommendations for its strategic direction. The discussions necessary to finalize these recommendations were “a remarkable process,” Olvera Stotzer said, and helped to make clear the commitment and work they will take from everyone. Even though addressing all concerns and expectations was difficult, participants ultimately agreed on the following.

Recommendation 1 Maintain/deepen the Children's Planning Council's three arenas of action:

- Strengthen the capacity of communities (SCC) to act on their own behalf.
- Build a countywide commitment to the five outcome areas (BCCO).
- Transform the systems (TS) that impact children and families.

Recommendation 2 Reframe the relationship between those three areas of work so that the work of strengthening community capacity drives the other two areas:

SCC → TS + BCCO → 5 outcomes of child well-being

Recommendation 3 Maintain the work of data and the Data Partnership as a cross-cutting function. Establish a base for ongoing discussions around the data and partnerships needed, especially in communities, so that data becomes relevant to communities and communities help inform and contribute to the Council's data efforts, and determine the relevancy of data for themselves.

Recommendation 4 Develop a cross-cutting function (similar to the Data Partnership) to develop and support policy action. In particular, the Executive Committee should take the lead in establishing an ad hoc policy action work group, ensuring that its participants reflect the various stakeholder groups. Key questions to consider include:

- What is meant by ‘policy?’
- How is a policy agenda developed within the Council?
- Who drives policy action within the Council?
- How will the Council ensure that policy actions do not contradict its commitment to building community capacity, and that they augment the relationship-building aspects of its asset-based community development (ABCD) model?

Recommendation 5 Create alignment between the Council's revised organizational structure and staff roles at the operational level; clarify all staff roles. In addition, ensure that collaboration between and among areas of work is embedded in staff roles and responsibilities; address staffing and resource issues, including financial resources.

Terence Harwick expressed his appreciation for the recommendations' having been distributed in enough time for him to share them with his SPA Council, and relayed several questions asked by that group. With regard to the relationship between functions and formal committees, in recommendation 2, Olvera Stotzer explained that the work team will examine operational issues to make sure that implementation is possible. The concept of strengthening community capacity is the driving force for discussion and consideration, but is not the sole prism through which items coming before the Council will be seen. Olvera Stotzer likened the concept to gasoline; it isn't the car, but it's needed to run the car.

Interactions between the three arenas of work and the cross-cutting policy action function must still be worked out. The SPA/AIC Councils are an integral part of the process, and representatives from those councils sit on the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and on the Children's Planning Council itself. The goal is for anyone interested to participate and attend those meetings, so that overall communication can be enhanced. (Committee meeting dates for 2006 will be posted on the Council's website as soon as they are scheduled.) Even though the Building Community Commitment to Outcomes Committee no longer meets formally, "that work is general, and we're not giving that up," Sharon Watson said. "We couldn't do our work without the acceptance of the five outcome areas."

Danny Ramos drew a similar parallel with the work of transforming systems: "It's not just a committee," he said. "Feedback from the community forums, meetings with department representatives, hearing what the community says about service delivery—all that tells us that county departments are finally talking to each other. *That's* transforming systems. And the Children's Planning Council is an all-terrain vehicle. The ground will continue to change, and we have to get everyone in the car. We're a catalyst that produces the driving force. It's a formula that all groups should use."

Colleen Mooney reported that the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee looked at the strategic recommendations very carefully, and unanimously endorsed them. Under recommendation 2, committee members went further, deciding to develop plans to complete the process of fully aligning the SPA/AIC Councils with asset-based community development (ABCD) principles. Jeff Farber encouraged everyone to attend community forums, mentioning a very powerful SPA 7 gathering last night.

Olvera Stotzer thanked everyone involved in developing the recommendations for their energy and direction. The county is now hearing the voice of the community and is understanding how that affects its work, and partnerships are being built that are based on trust.

Phillip Williams moved that the recommendations be adopted, and Larry Lue seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

- ◆ As part of the 'next steps' of the strategic planning process, the Executive Committee formed two ad hoc work groups to develop the strategic plan itself, and established a starting point and a timeline for their work. (A list of work group participants was in member packets.) The workgroups met jointly this morning to begin planning the work, which will start in January and should be completed by May 2006. Regular updates on their progress will be given.

- ◆ As members recall, the themes that surfaced from the 64 community forums conducted by the SPA/AIC Councils earlier this year were shared at the September meeting, and three councils presented their experiences. At Olvera Stotzer's request, Sam Chan led a discussion of the implications of these forums, inviting members to explore concrete next steps and priorities for the Council to pursue as it works in partnership with the county and other key stakeholders to address the concerns and aspirations of families countywide.

Connecting with and honoring communities on their own terms is essential, Chan suggested, citing issues raised at a forum hosted by the American Indian Children's Council regarding county support for healing techniques indigenous to Native peoples. How can a medicine man be brought from Arizona? How can a sweatlodge be built? The conditions for success have changed, Chan said, and collective leadership must recognize the importance of 'being' as well as 'doing'—being present, being genuine, being open to what others are saying.

"What are the current conditions, or ones that the Council can help create," he inquired, "to support community engagement and community-building? How do we see ourselves evolving as we move to action as well as planning?"

Priscilla Charles-Carter wants the work of the Council and the faces of its members to be more visible in communities, perhaps by taking meetings to other locations. "Residents need to know how committed the Children's Planning Council is," she said. Bruce Saltzer suggested that issues identified by communities be brought to the Council for problem-solving, to make use of members' resources and expertise. Danny Ramos referenced a discussion at the September meeting in which the consensus was that moving into the community should not be a function of Council staff only, but of Council members. He would like regular monitoring and reporting—beyond the work of the SPA/AIC Councils—about how the community is being informed. "We must first become who we need to become," he said, "and then become the essence of what we need to cause."

Olvera Stotzer expressed her desire for the Children's ScoreCard to become relevant in terms of how the community sees the impact of the Council's work, and how it becomes real. What organizations and public agencies are coming together as a result of the ScoreCard findings on obesity, child abuse, children killing children? Duane Dennis mentioned the different schools of thought on how to build community, and called for a conversation around the Council table to reach consensus on the types of training needed.

Ramos praised county efforts toward giving the community a voice, stating, "The community wants to move to action." He suggested that the Children's Planning Council and the SPA/AIC Councils perhaps sponsor events around health and obesity (5K or 10K runs, for example) that would serve as publicity for the Council and also help families. Chan stressed the importance of follow-up and continuing to 'be there' once communities are engaged and prove their commitment.

Referring to the strategic direction recommendation on policy action, Jeff Farber encouraged the Council to promote policies that change the way resources are delivered so they are truly community-based. The fact that the system doesn't financially support American Indian mental health practices is a policy issue, for example, and when people challenge depart-

ments to work with them to resolve issues like that, "it can be a big win-win," Farber said. "We'll have made the difference."

In SPA 8, Colleen Mooney said, community-building means working in a neighborhood context to define what residents care about and what can make their lives better. Although listening is an important first piece, it's not enough. Resources must be allocated so that people can act on things they care about. The Council's mini-grants (\$1,000 and less) have been the most powerful and concrete thing it has offered to the community, allowing people to make a difference in their neighborhoods. The question still remains as to how county resources can be allocated, too, so that this becomes 'business as usual.'

Angela Carter reinforced the timeliness of the questions Chan posed, saying that a definition of a common language is essential. The Department of Children and Family Services is in conversations with the community, doing capacity-building, and trying to translate that into opportunities to reunify families and prevent detentions. The department is open to revising its Requests for Proposals (RFPs), if necessary, to make sure it is linking with the activities it needs to build upon.

Lisa Cleri Reale emphasized the power of publicity—the Council's work can't remain in a silo. It will be relevant and valuable only if disseminated, and if the Council leverages power with others. Marsha Ramos also spoke to the communication aspect: during her recently concluded year as mayor of Burbank, she spent a great deal of time on relationship-building, meeting with groups and listening to them. "Yes, there are gaps," she said, "but plenty of services exist. The problem is that the most vulnerable populations have no idea what is out there." Cities must become aware of the Children's Planning Council and its work.

Duane Dennis acknowledged the importance of valuing communities, listening to them, and linking them to resources, but also recommended formalizing those procedures to ensure that all SPA/AIC Councils go through the same process. Charles-Carter returned to what she termed the defining question: *what do we do?*

Chan rounded out the discussion by thanking everyone for their collective wisdom. Next year the Council will celebrate its fifteenth birthday—its *quinceñera*, as Flores Aguilar has termed it—and members need to look at how to guide its development at that formative age. With the convergence of the growth of its staff, the SPA/AIC Councils, and its capacity, this is an exciting time. "Now we need to share our power and wisdom and effort," Chan said, "to go from *being* to *doing*."

Children's Planning Council Evaluation Report: Jacquelyn McCroskey

McCroskey thanked Chair Antonovich for his very important leadership this year and for being a constant and supporting "stabilizing voice," as she put it. McCroskey herself has been involved with the Council since before its inception, and the findings of the evaluation report have suggested to her that a video about the Council's beginnings would be a valuable tool to explain the seeds it sprang from.

As part of its 2001 strategic plan, the Council requested an evaluation, and in 2003, it engaged an evaluation consultant firm, Public Works, Inc. Over a nine-month period between November

2004 and April 2005, this firm administered a survey to and held in-person and telephone interviews, as well as two focus groups, with key Council stakeholders. Over 175 individuals responded to the survey, and approximately 90 participated in the interviews. Consultant Mikala Rahn presented preliminary findings in March, and McCroskey's presentation today is the final report, written with publication assistance from the Cornerstone Consulting Group.

The evaluation sought to determine whether the Council's work has changed behaviors, strengthened relationships, and helped to mobilize communities to improve the lives of children. Overwhelmingly, the data suggests that those closest to the work of the Council believe such changes have indeed occurred. The evaluation findings were that:

1. **The Children's Planning Council has had considerable influence and impact** in terms of its strong relationship with the Board of Supervisors, its increased political and financial support, the good reputation of its leadership and staff, and changes made in county departments.
2. **Its work on key outcome areas has been a major contribution.**
3. **Its impact in its three arenas of action and its cross-cutting data work was predominantly rated a 'medium to high' factor in helping to improve children's lives.**
4. **The Council has fostered increased collaboration between county agencies and between county agencies and communities.**
5. **It has made the availability and use of data an important component in children's services planning.**
6. **It regularly produces publications to increase knowledge of child and family issues**, with the Children's ScoreCard being the most prominent and widely used data product.
7. **The Council has successfully promoted the importance of community engagement**, primarily through its system of SPA/AIC Councils.
8. **The SPA/AIC Councils are continuing to develop**, fostering collaboration and bringing people together through community outreach.
9. **The Children's Planning Council's structure with the Service Planning Area (SPA) boundaries is a monumental success for the county, but will need constant re-tooling** to manage inherent tensions.
10. **Continuing challenges remain:** staying comprehensive yet focused, remaining broad and inclusive, balancing process and product, dealing with the county's vast geography, and addressing racial and cultural issues.

Evaluation recommendations include:

1. **The importance of maintaining balance** between viewpoints that may seem at first to be competing (grassroots vs. top-down, human services vs. community organizing, centralized vs. decentralized, countywide vs. neighborhood-based, comprehensive vs. targeted, staff vs.

volunteer), recognizing that these choices are not mutually exclusive and that holders of these views need not be at odds

2. **Moving to community-building** with a greater emphasis on community and neighborhood engagement, while also recognizing the limitations the Council faces with that agenda
3. **Rethinking the Children's Planning Council structure**, including membership, committee structure, staffing needs, the SPA/AIC Council structure, the role of data, and the responsibilities of staff and volunteers
4. **Bringing data to the next level** by continuing to work on tying budgets to outcomes and assuring that communities are engaged in data development efforts

The evaluation committee welcomes comments and concerns prior to the printing of the final report.

David Fleming applauded the document as a great piece of work. "It's like going through a diary," he said. "When the Children's Planning Council was formed, we felt like it was a mouse trying to teach an elephant to dance, with the elephant being the bureaucracy. The smartest thing we did was asking the chair pro tem of the Board of Supervisors to chair the Council every year." Sam Chan said that McCroskey's presentation could be used as a storyboard for a Council video, looking at key events.

Rabbi Cohen sees much of the report as a continuation of the discussion about process—if there is no process, events become inflexible; without motion, history tells us, organizations collapse. "I keep saying that the Children's Planning Council is a very well-kept secret," he said. "We need to get the word out about who we are and what we do, and that we're available to be a bridge to move forward." It's taken 20 years to set the table, Bruce Saltzer said, and the significant challenge now is to look at everything through the filter of better outcomes for children and families—how the Council's work affects specific lives.

Rabbi Bernard Cohen moved to accept and disseminate the evaluation report. Phillip Williams seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

SPA/AIC Council Workplans

SPA 1 Miesha Watson Council, the SPA 1 council coordinator, spoke of the community forums as a primary building block in that area's workplan. The council created a community internship program in which 20 parents received stipends to plan, facilitate and organize the forums, arranging for everything from food and outreach to child care and translation. When the forums finished, the parents wanted to continue, and are now helping the council's two full-time and two part-time staff reach into outlying areas of the SPA. With assistance from First 5 L.A., the council is also creating a health initiative to address the area's lack of perinatal care and high rate of infant mortality, holding community focus groups with pregnant women to hear their needs and the barriers to care they encounter, and working with local hospitals and clinics. The council is also focusing on youth activities, bridging the divides between different areas of the region, and addressing housing needs, particularly the concerns of Section 8 tenants. It is trying to provide as

much training as possible to parents and staff, realizing that community organizing in a rural and semi-rural community is difficult.

Bruce Saltzer asked about how various SPAs come together on cross-cutting issues such as pre-natal care, and Watson Council said that the monthly field staff meetings offer a forum for exchanging best practices and successes, as do the regular Strengthening Community Capacity Committee meetings attended by conveners and staff. She also hopes the online community toolbox will become another vehicle for sharing and strategizing. Chair Antonovich's deputy offered help in connecting the SPA 1 Council with area health officers and other county representatives who may not yet be active in the council's work.

SPA 8 As a way to mobilize residents, Convener Colleen Mooney reported that the SPA 8 Council has held nine community conferences since 2001. Twelve Neighborhood Action Councils (NACs) meet regularly to work on self-identified projects, and convene twice a year to talk about common goals. Many NACs were formed in partnership with existing entities such as the Children's Clinic or the YMCA.

Mooney then presented 10 minutes of a 30-minute video produced by the council that defined resident-based power as the ability to perform or act effectively and to use one's influence over others to get things done. The video highlighted the work of NACs with regard to school and crossing safety, moving a dangerous freeway entrance, and neighborhood clean-up. The council intends to create additional NACs for foster youth, foster parents, and seniors. The geography of the SPA is large, and existing NACs cover most of it, though Mooney acknowledged gaps that they are trying to fill. Reaching the Asian/Pacific Islander population is difficult, as is ensuring socio-economic diversity, which Mooney sees as important as ethnic diversity. Co-convener Lauraine Barber expressed her appreciation to county departments for their involvement, particularly the Department of Children and Family Services.

Part of the Children's Planning Council's commitment, said Flores Aguilar, is to support parents to build on the community involvement activities shown in the video, including sweeping the school yards and serving as crossing guards in the neighborhood, to helping them develop the knowledge and advocacy skills to demand that schools and the government provide these efforts as they do in more affluent communities. Mooney said that the SPA 8 Council's approach has been to start with asking *what matters to you?* As parents clean up a school together, for instance, they build relationships. Then when advocacy issues arise, they are positioned to work together. Groups that are comfortable going before their school boards can impart advocacy skills to others. Elisa Nicholas, who is active in several of the NACs, commended Mooney for recognizing the strengths of those groups and building on their work. With training, they can make a positive difference, though it takes time to raise community leaders.

American Indian Children's Council Chrissie Castro, organizational coordinator with the American Indian Children's Council (AICC), explained the two prongs of that council's workplan: advocacy around the Indian Child Welfare Act, and youth being seen as both the community's biggest challenge and its biggest asset. With the emphasis on the asset-based topic (youth), volunteers have also become available for the deficit-based topic (the Indian Child Welfare Act). Improving the school readiness indicator of parent and family access to information networks has also served as a springboard for council efforts, and involvement has greatly increased.

Through the AICC, youth have formed United Native Youth L.A., which is bringing American Indian youth together even though they are widely scattered throughout the county. The group sent delegates to a UCLA leadership institute this year with an eye to creating a Native youth institute next year, perhaps at a camp.

Castro sees a tremendous need for connections within the American Indian community, citing one parent who told her that volunteering "was what she was put on this earth to do." Castro recently went through six months of being the council's only staff person, and she expressed thanks to the over 50 volunteers who helped during that time.

Conclusion Terence Harwick moved that the workplans of SPA 1, SPA 8, and the American Indian Children's Council be endorsed. Danny Ramos seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Public Comment

The SPA 5 Council's first annual partnership summit is scheduled for November 17, and more than 100 people are signed up to attend.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

Wednesday, January 18, 2006
9:30 a.m.
Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.