

Council Chair Charles Zelle

Council Members

Abdirahman Muse

Deb Barber

Kris Fredson

Molly Cummings

Phillip Sterner

Reva Chamblis

Susan Vento

Chai Lee

Francisco J. Gonzalez

Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson

Peter Lindstrom

Raymond Zeran

Robert Lilligren

Wendy Wulff

Christopher Ferguson

Judy Johnson

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 10, 2021 4:00 p.m. Council Chambers

IN ATTENDANCE

Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Zelle called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 12 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Vento, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Wulff

Not Recorded:4 Atlas-Ingebretson, Ferguson, Johnson, Sterner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Zelle noted that a roll call vote is not needed for approval of the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Lee, seconded by Vento to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 Council meeting.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 13 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Vento, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Wulff

Not Recorded:3 Atlas-Ingebretson, Johnson, Sterner

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda (Items 1-4)

Consent Agenda Adopted

2021-55: That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize the City of Rogers to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for regional parks.

2021-60 SW: That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2021-2024 TIP to reduce the scope and increase the cost of St. Louis Park's CSAH 25 Beltline Boulevard Pedestrian project. The scope reduction is necessary because elements of the project are being completed through other projects.

2021-61 SW: That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2021-2024 TIP to include funding for MnDOT's lighting upgrade on US 212.

2021-62 SW: That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2021-2024 TIP to add an additional location and additional cost to Richfield's West 77th railroad gates installation.

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Lilligren.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 16 Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Johnson, Gonzalez, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Wulff

BUSINESS

Community Development – Reports on consent agenda

Environment – No report

Management – No report

Transportation – Reports on consent agenda

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Information Item: Equity Advisory Committee 2020 Work and Draft 2021 Work Plan

Nelima Sitaiti Munene, Co-Chair, and Anita Urvina Davis and Sarah Rudolf, members of the Equity Advisory Committee, gave an update on the Equity Advisory Committee's (EAC) 2020 work and draft 2021 work plan. The EAC was established by the Council in 2015, implementing

recommendations from the previous Equity Working Group. The purpose of the EAC is to advance equity outcomes in the region, advise on the development of policy, recommend best practices for assessment and monitoring performance, and to contribute as a community voice in the Public Engagement Plan. The EAC operates under Council bylaws and meets monthly. The EAC has 21 members, including four Metropolitan Council members, eight geographic members, nine at-large members, and two Co-Chairs. In 2020 the EAC formed four subcommittees, increased engagement, received continued support from the Office of Equal Opportunity and increased interest in equity and the EAC. The EAC provided advice on staff projects and initiatives including Metro Transit Network Next community engagement. Committee members are also participating in Citizen League’s review of Metro Transit system safety. The 2020 strategic planning outcomes clarified the process for how the EAC will submit formal recommendations to the Council; created a workflow on how information will be looped back to the EAC; provided recommendations, advice and collaboration with the Council; and established sub-committees within which the EAC will accomplish work in four priority areas.

Urvina Davis then shared the EAC 2021 draft workplan. The EAC’s 2021 annual workplan is a guide for the committee’s meeting agendas and reflects the work priorities. The workplan is developed annually and is action-oriented and focused on outcomes. The workplan affirms commitments made in the Metropolitan Council’s Thrive MSP 2040 plan to make residents and communities full partners in decision-making, including implementation of a Public Engagement Plan. The four priorities of the EAC 2021 workplan are: affordable housing, public transit, One Metro partnerships, Council operations.

Council Member Gonzalez, Co-Chair of the EAC, acknowledged the hard work of the committee on this workplan. Gonzalez also acknowledged and thanked Sitaiti Munene for her work as she is stepping down from her role as Co-Chair for the EAC. Council Members had questions and comments about how the work of other committees has been supported by the EAC, environmental issues as they relate to the EAC priorities, and subcommittee leadership. Council Member Johnson asked who the main staff person is for the EAC; Cy Jordan, Director of Equal Opportunity (OEO), replied that she is currently staffing the EAC as well as Assistant Director of OEO, Ashanti Payne, and executive assistant Erena Anderson until a new staff person is hired. Council Members also discussed financial support and the budget for the EAC.

It was moved by Johnson, with a second from Chamblis to accept the draft workplan.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 16 Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Johnson, Gonzalez, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Wulff

2. Information Item: Electric Bus Update, Metro Transit

Wes Kooistra, General Manager, Metro Transit, gave an update on the Electric Bus Pilot Program at Metro Transit. Kooistra began with a clarification that an upcoming procurement of biodiesel buses does not indicate stepping away from electric buses and that Metro Transit is still dedicated to the Electric Bus Pilot Program. Metro Transit is one of the first Transit agencies in the country to begin a 60-foot electric bus pilot. In 2017 Metro Transit was awarded a Low/No Emissions grant of \$1.75 million. In 2018 eight electric and six diesel buses were procured for C Line service. In February of 2019 the first METRO C Line electric bus was delivered; in April and May of 2019 four of eight depot chargers and first of two on route chargers were delivered before the METRO C Line

opened in June. The electric buses offer a smoother, quieter ride, no tailpipe propulsion emissions, and when the route chargers work, range performance meets pilot program expectations. Customers like and want electric buses and the C Line provides a good opportunity for experience and evaluation. However, due to the unreliability of the chargers, Metro Transit is unable to implement the original service plan based on the lack of availability of on-route chargers. Both depot and online chargers were available for 152 or 631 days. Diesel buses were available on an average of 90% of days while electric buses were available on an average of 72% of days. There were just 10 days with all electric buses and chargers available. The alternative service plan required five more diesel buses to cover the lost range. The electric bus pilot program has been suspended three times, including March 2, 2021. Today all chargers are shut down and planned for replacement. Kooistra stressed that New Flyer, the electric bus vendor, has been a good partner and has been responsive to the struggles of the pilot program.

Upcoming business item 2021-53 authorizes a base order of 143 60-foot diesel buses, with options for 29 additional buses. Based on the results of the Electric Bus Pilot Program it was determined that the electric buses do not have the range and reliability needed for longer routes, and the current planned routes are not the best next step for electric bus program growth. There are still plans to advance the Electric Bus Program; the new Minneapolis Bus Garage was intentionally designed to accommodate electric buses in the future. Metro Transit also has a partnership with Xcel for an electric vehicle proposal, as well as an opportunity for an FTA Low/No Emissions Grant. The next steps for the Electric Bus Program will be to expand the pilot program to 40-foot electric buses rather than 60-foot buses.

Council Members had questions and comments about the biodiesel bus contract language, public comment and accessibility of business items, the plan for this technology or a shift to a different technology, as well as the communications plan for public engagement and for sharing this information with the public. Council Members asked about the viability of hybrid buses; Kooistra responded that hybrid buses do cost approximately \$1 million, and the fuel economy is not much greater than diesel buses. Chair Zelle noted that the greatest benefit to the environment comes from more passengers per bus rather than the fuel economy of the vehicle.

3. Information Item: Quarterly Southwest LRT Update

Postponed due to time and rescheduled to the March 17 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

REPORTS

Chair: none

Council Members: Council Member Vento asked if there is a way that Council Members can all share their comments prior to the meeting. Michelle Fure responded that she will work on a solution. Council Member Johnson also asked if questions and comments that are sent to some Council Members could be sent to all Council Members.

Regional Administrator: Mary Bogie shared that Transit workers are now eligible for vaccinations. Transit staff are working on a vaccination plan. They are expecting to have vaccines available in the next few weeks. They are also encouraging staff and Council Members to use the State of Minnesota Vaccine Connector website.

General Counsel: none

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council Meeting of March 10, 2021.

Approved this _____ day of _____

Recording Secretary