

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Committee Members Present: Ruthie Johnson, Tie Oei, Jennifer Munt, Shirley Cain, Edward Reynoso, Metric Giles, Nelima Sitati Munene, Leslie Badue

Committee Members Excused: Harry Melander, David Ketroser

Committee Members Absent: Leon Rodrigues, Ishmael Israel

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Reynoso called the regular meeting of the Council's Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:16 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A quorum not being present at the beginning of the meeting, Co-Chair Reynoso continued to the first information item.

A quorum being present at 6:27 p.m., Co-Chair Reynoso returned to the approval of agenda and minutes.

The agenda was moved by Cain and seconded by Johnson.

The meeting minutes from November to April were moved by Cain and seconded by Sitati Munene.

EAC REVIEW AND NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING SUBCOMMITTEE

Johnson presented a report out from the EAC subcommittee's work from their May 3 and May 8 meetings. Johnson noted that new members will be appointed by the Council at the May 23 full Council meeting. The new members inaugural Equity Advisory Committee meeting will be June 19. The subcommittee will continue to prepare an onboarding process for the new members.

The following questions and comments were offered by committee members:

1. Munt commented that if she could do one thing over, it would be let committee members orient the Met Council before they are oriented to the Met Council. Munt noted that she would like to use the retreat to get to know each other and figure out how to work together.
2. Oei noted the draft interview questions were well thought out. Oei asked if committee member would like to divide and conquer the interviews.

Johnson answered that this is one of the questions posed to the full committee; otherwise, the subcommittee will explore options.

3. Cain remarked that community engagement is something that came up a lot. She inquired if the outlined plan addresses concerns of the committee members. Cain noted that she wants to make sure the stakeholder groups are representative. For example, what if no Native American groups were involved in the process of forming the Equity Advisory Committee?

Johnson asked that the subcommittee devise a list to ensure there is no group is missing.

OVERVIEW OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL'S 2040 REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN UPDATE

Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst in Community Development, and Emmett Mullin, Manager of Regional Parks and Natural Resources, presented on the update to the



Regional Parks Policy Plan. Last month, the committee requested several follow up items and questions.

Today, Marckel and Mullin prepared information to the follow up items below:

- Met Council – Implementing Agency relationship
- Use of regional parks by communities of color
- More equitable use of regional parks
- Accessibility of regional parks
- More use of regional parks

Throughout the presentation, committee members had the following comments and questions:

1. When talking about accessibility, are we talking about accessibility for people with disabilities? Or accessibility to the parks?

The presentation will focus on persons with disabilities rather than accessibility related to transit.

2. Who are the “implementing agencies”?

The implementing agencies, or IAs, are the organizations that own the parks. Implementing agencies come to the Met Council for regional funding. Regional funding makes up different percentages of and implementing agency’s overall operating budget. For some agencies, it’s as little as 8%, but others receive almost entirely regional funding.

3. Equity measures in the Regional Parks Policy Plan were slapped down by the legislature. When the Council wanted to prioritize funds for communities of color, they were denied the ability to do that. We want to spend money for research and outreach to make sure our parks are relevant for communities of color, but the legislature denied our ability to do so.

The Council has done some research. Raintry Salk, Community Development Research Analyst, conducted research about how parks could be more accessible for communities of color. There was some interest from the committee in seeing her research, so a summary of her work was brought today.

4. How is the Council is going about implementing the Park’s Equity Grants Program? Often times organizations that have resources can hire grant-writers. One model of doing a grant program is the City of Minneapolis’ Safety Commission. The City had applicants submit an idea and continue to build the idea during the selection process. Has the Council thought about how the grant program would be implemented?

Marckel asked for advice from the committee members. Currently the Equity Grant Program does not exist. For clarification, the potential grant recipients would be the 10 implementing agencies.

5. The money should not be poured back into the organizations that have created the inequities. Community members should be at the table making decisions about how the money is be spent, and also how the grant process should be developed.

This approach could be applied to the Equity Grant Program and staff would like to report back to this committee regarding the development.

6. The Council doesn’t need to recreate the wheel. There are models already that exist to replicate, they just need to be improved.

7. Has the Council used a community engagement process for the policy plan? Will community have input in this process?

There will be a public review process in the summer. Public engagement was also done on the existing policy plan.

8. The presenters were asked to clarify the mechanisms of accountability for a parks implementing agency to advance equity.

The Council has more authority over some agencies than others.

The role of the Met Council to review master plans. In this last version, there was an increased expectation for community engagement. That has been one great change.

9. What is the purpose of community engagement on the project?

The purpose is that more voices are part of the process when we are updating the plan. Last time, many voices were missing.

Cain agreed with lack of voices represented and offered that she can make connections to Native American organizations.

10. Does the Council ever work with the organization Parks and Power? They are already doing this work, and they could be a key partnership.

Marckel responded that he cannot answer a lot of specific questions regarding community engagement efforts, because the Council's community engagement staff conducted the research. The Council is always navigating doing thorough engagement but also being good stewards of public money. The Council's Public Engagement Plan is our guidepost about how to go about community engagement.

The Council is in process of hiring a parks ambassador.

11. Staff were asked to pass around the job posting so committee members can help spread the word regarding the parks ambassador position.

12. Can the Council can disaggregate the data by race in terms of park use?

The Council is considering the best ways to disaggregate the data. The Committee should keep pushing the Council to do this.

Could implementing agencies be asked to collect disaggregated data?

Some of the parks agencies do not have research staff. The Council supports the agencies that do not have research teams.

13. The Council needs to address the historic inequities, and the Council needs to stop pouring money into the agencies that have always had the money. The Council needs to hire people that represent people they are trying to engage.

14. There was only one Native American involved in the research.

The research was done four to six years ago, before there was an EAC. That is why the committee is so important.

15. Is the Council checking off the ADA guidelines? The Council should be checking off equity guidelines.

There is an equity toolkit. The Minneapolis Park System is way ahead, perhaps because they have had more time to think about this. This toolkit will be a screening process for the update and we will use this for future processes.

16. The parks update should focus on racial equity and the committee would like to see a year-end report on progress.

17. Are all parks subject to ADA requirements?

There are ADA transition plans. All new projects must be ADA compliant.

18. All the parking lots should be ADA compliant. We need to address accessibility for folks with disabilities along with people of color, because both groups are overlooked.

19. It was requested that a draft Regional Parks Policy Plan come before the committee before it goes before the public.

A draft plan will come back to the committee in July.

20. It was requested that committee members get a list of the implementing agencies.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Yolanda Burckhardt
Recording Secretary