

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair; Edward Reynoso, Sindy Morales Garcia, Nelima Sitati Munene, Ishmael Israel, David Ketroser, Metric Giles, Deb Barber, Rebecca Stratton, Leon Rodrigues, Elham Ashkar, Jennifer Munt

Committee Members Absent: Co-Chair; Acooa Ellis, Steven Chavez, Vayong Moua, Shirley Cain, Ruthie Johnson, Tie Oei, Claudia Cody, Kimberly Carpenter, Kadra Abdi, Leslie Redmond

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Reynoso called the regular meeting of the Council's Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:09 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, 2016.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Approval of the agenda was moved by Leon Rodrigues. A motion to amend the agenda was made by Metric Giles, and seconded by Rebecca Stratton. The motion asked that two items be added to the agenda: a discussion of the committee absence policy and a discussion on the attendance of previous meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes of the November 1st meeting was moved by David Ketroser, and seconded by Ishmael Israel.

WORK PLAN CONSULTANT REVIEW

Michelle Fure, Manager of Public Involvement, introduced Emilie Hitch who responded to the RFP for a consultant to help facilitate the creation of the committee's work plan. Emilie detailed her background in applied anthropology and experience working with MnDOT on the I-94 revitalization project. Emilie then answered questions from members of the committee:

1. What are some examples of the community engagement in your prior projects?
While working with MnDOT on the I-94 project, the process started with one on one meetings. It is important to form a relationship with someone before starting to answer some of the bigger questions. These meetings are intended to listen to people in communities on what to do next, who should be consulted, and what issues communities have been working on and should then be prioritized. This is different than the normal process for MnDOT, and will mean that they can move on from doing business the "old way"
2. The committee earlier had mixed opinions on bringing in the consultant. What is your vision of what your role will be? Will you be working with the committee in meetings and subgroups/committees? How do you work with power dynamics?
The consultant's understanding of the role is that it is fluid. It is important for everyone within the group to participate fully in the process and, in order for that to happen, there needs to be a "third-party" facilitator who can take notes, write things down and take a different perspective.
Power dynamics lead to difficult conversations. The consultant would help the committee decide how they want to deal with power dynamics, address each other, and what rules to set so everyone feels they can fully participate. A core value of this process is to be knowledgeable about leaving people out. The consultant's role won't be to be present at all meetings, but to be focused on the "deliverable."
Helping create the group's norms, principles and guidelines could happen in full committee meetings, or in small groups. After that happens, the work will be done.
3. What is the length of time of the consultant contract?
The contract is by dollar amount, and the work would be structured to meet the committee's expectations around timing.
4. Previously, the committee did not want to belittle the expertise of committee members in the process of using a consultant. It's important to move towards



the idea of co-creation. How would the consultant come together with the committee to do work with the committee?

The idea of co-creation is key, and then it would be important to know the existing expertise present in the room, so that expertise can manifest itself. Having a consultant allows for everyone to participate fully. There is no singular way to achieve the goals; if someone feels they want to step up in a particular skillset, that would be encouraged and welcomed. Through this process, the hope is that shared leadership can be the model going forward.

5. What is the timeline for the contract to be finalized?

Michelle Fure agreed to provide dates and deadlines at a later meeting date.

ABSENCE POLICY AND ATTENDANCE DISCUSSION

After being added to the agenda, the issues of the committee's absence policy and attendance was put before the committee by Metric Giles for their thoughts. The ensuing conversation included the following:

- Having two meetings a month is challenging, particularly because the understanding at the beginning of the committee (reflected in the committee charter) was to have meetings at least once per quarter
- Doing work similar to starting this committee takes a long time. The committee decided to meet more frequently in an effort to have things in place by the end of 2016
- What is the committee's commitment to showing up at the table going forward? We decided to meet more frequently, but lost some people along the way
- The urgency that the committee feels seems to be based on the way the Council has traditionally operated, instead of how the committee should operate going forward. At a certain point, the question of "Is this working for everyone? Is this what you were signing on to do?" should be addressed. There should then be a back-up plan if people are unable to, or don't want to, follow through
- Attendance might increase after bylaws are passed and more tangible outcomes are seen through meetings.
- The Met Council is not going to revisit the equity commitments put forth in Thrive MSP 2040, and current events underscore the importance of the committee spending time coming together.
- Are people not attending meetings because of the time commitment or because they no longer feel value in attending the meetings?

Discussion then shifted to the Council's Equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP)

- The presentation regarding the Council's ESAP during the November 1st meeting disrespected the EAC. How is the committee's voice being heard? Some on the committee contacted the ESAP consultant and received no response. Can the committee have an impact?
- What aspect of the community is the Council trying to access by holding ESAP meetings that isn't represented by the committee? Otherwise the EAC seems redundant, and comes across as something that exists to merely "check the box."
- Part of the urgency behind ESAP from Council staff is that there is some confusion regarding expectations about equity work. There is not a plan in place that flows from the equity section in Thrive, and that plan is needed. Staff felt that the ESAP was more of an administrative exercise.
- It has been noted before that similar bodies have not been able to gain traction within the Council. Was it ever contemplated how the Council would work with an advisory committee like the EAC? There needs to be some information that helps explain the disconnect on how staff seems to not know how to work with a committee like this. There are other organizations that have had to discontinue equity plans because they were too contentious, and hopefully this does not happen with the EAC.
- Originally, the focus of the committee was supposed to be policy. However, those policies are informed by a long process based off of Council operations. The EAC will have limited influence over Council policies unless it is included early on in this process. Internal practices have to be shifted to help produce the external policy.
- Work like this takes time, and members who are serving two-year terms might not see results in their term.

- The Council Members on the committee should carry a message through to Chair Duininck about the confusion and redundancy between parts of the ESAP and the EAC

BYLAWS DRAFT REVIEW

Due to time constraints, the committee did not fully review the draft of the bylaws. IT was determined that members will read the drafted bylaws and provide feedback to Cedrick Baker and Co-Chairs for the next meeting on December 6th.

There was some discussion on providing feedback on bylaws electronically:

- Sometimes email isn't the best way to communicate. What is the best way to engage or communicate with the committee?
- There should be an effort made that in emails sent to the committee to see who has not read emails, and reaching out to those members individually.
- Should there be an alternative to email for correspondence? Perhaps through text messages? This might only benefit one or two members of the committee, though.
- At a certain point, not attending meetings or reading emails somewhat forfeits the commitment made by committee members.
- Should the committee reopen the option for electronic voting?
 - There was a change in bylaws drafts after the initial copy was provided to the committee. More votes were received and the updated version did not allow for electronic voting.
 - Electronic voting can help with inclusion of all members.
 - However, delaying work through electronic voting or because of low attendance can be harmful to the committee's work.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Kevin Murphy
Recording Secretary