

# **Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

**Committee Members Present:** Smith, Schreiber, Munt, Elkins, Cunningham, Đoàn, Melander, Kramer, Commers, Chávez, Wulff, Haigh

**Committee Members Absent:** Van Eyll, Brimeyer, Duininck, Reynoso, Rummel

## **CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 4:05PM on Wednesday, February 20, 2013.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

It was moved by Chávez, seconded by Commers to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2013 regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

## **BUSINESS**

### **Background on today's discussion—Libby Starling**

The Fair Housing and Equity Assessment was the focus of the meeting. Completing the FHEA is one of the conditions of receiving the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The FHEA work also provides us a lens into the conversation of equity, which is an emerging principle of the Council's work on Thrive MSP 2040. There are some very specific decisions that HUD has asked us to make in regards to the FHEA. Myron Orfield and Ed Goetz are the guest speakers today to provide policy insight and data that will give the Council more information to assist in making these decisions. HUD has asked each region that is doing an FHEA to start with two definitions. The first is to come to an agreement about what identifies a racially concentrated area of poverty (RCAP). As a starting point, HUD has suggested regions define an RCAP as areas in which more than half of the families are families of color and at least 40% of the population is families in poverty. Our region does not have the extreme levels of concentration that can be found in other metropolitan areas, so the Council must determine what levels make sense for our region. The first decision the Council will need to make is to determine what the thresholds are for RCAPs: what is the threshold of financial poverty, and what is the threshold of race and ethnicity?

### **Review of data on poverty and race in our region—Libby Starling**

Libby presented a PowerPoint detailing data on poverty and race in the region which utilized maps and data from the U.S. Census Bureau to illustrate the levels of severity and location. The Twin Cities has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest poverty rate among people of color at 24.3% in the 13 county area, but the Twin Cities is the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest at 9.9% when it comes to the overall poverty. In 2010, 24% of the region was people of color. In 2040, we expect 43% of our population to be people of color.

### **Presentations to the Committee**

#### **Myron Orfield, Director, Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, University of Minnesota**

Orfield stated that one thing that is important to realize is that the Fair Housing Act is a powerful law. Recent rule-making by HUD regarding disparate impact is quite clear. Orfield quoted 24 CFR Part 100 Implementation of the Fair Housing Act's Discriminator Effects Standard; Final Rule, Section 500 which says a practice has a discriminatory effect where it actually or predictably perpetuates segregated housing patterns. The obligation to affirmatively further fair housing is a powerful one; it is much broader than the obligation not to discriminate. The obligation is for an agency to use its resources to secure a racially integrated metropolitan area. Orfield presented a series of maps of the region that illustrated the demographics in Twin Cities schools and the region.

**Edward Goetz, Director, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota**

Goetz stated that he agrees there is a need for affordable housing in the outlying areas of the region, but that he disagrees with Professor Orfield's idea that we should curtail affordable housing in the core parts of the metropolitan area. Goetz quoted Mondale at the time of the passage of the Fair Housing Act: "the basic purpose of this legislation is to permit people who have the ability to do so, to buy any house offered" and "obviously the Fair Housing Act is to be read in the context of the entire bill, the objective being to eliminate discrimination in the sale or rental of housing." He stated that there are two objectives in the Act: the objective to end discrimination or facilitate choice in housing, and the objective to achieve or facilitate integration. The second objective has been read into the Act by the courts.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:38PM.

Emily Getty  
Recording Secretary