

## Minutes of the

### MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

**Committee Members Present:** David Ketrosor, Ishmael Israel, Nelima Sitati Munene, Metric Giles, Shirley Cain, Edward Reynoso

**Committee Members Excused:** Leon Rodrigues, Tie Oei, Ruthie Johnson, Jennifer Munt, Harry Melander

**Committee Members Absent:** Kadra Abdi, Leslie Redmond

A quorum not being present, Co-Chair Reynoso started the meeting at 6:12 pm, proceeding to the public invitation and subsequent business items.

#### Discussion with Chair Alene Tchourumoff

Chair Tchourumoff thanked committee members for welcoming her back to the Equity Advisory Committee. The Equity Advisory Committee's charter called for a review after its second year. Chair Tchourumoff stated that the purpose of the review would be to gather recommendations for improvements to the function of the committee overall—with the anticipation that the recommendations influence the onboarding process for new committee members. The Chair stated that the process of the review will be designed collaboratively with committee members and suggested forming a subcommittee to design the scope and process of the review.

The Chair opened a dialogue with committee members. Committee members had the following comments and suggestions in regard to onboarding new committee members:

- A process should be identified to teach new committee members what they need to know about the Metropolitan Council without causing members to lose sight of why they are on the committee.
- New committee members could receive access to the onboarding information that the current committee members had, but don't have to go through the classes. The material could be accessible online and new committee members could select items and subjects they have immediate interest in.
- Onboarding was a one-way street, with committee members getting information, but did not get an opportunity to discuss what they brought to the table.
- In addition, onboarding should focus on what the committee has achieved thus far, rather than the breadth of the Met Council's work. There is time to learn about the Council, but committee members need to know what the purview of the committee is.
- New committee members should learn about the Met Council purview in context of how the agency impacts their communities, and how their communities can have a voice.
- It is recommended that new committee members be onboarded in June, after the review and changes are implemented. It's going to be hard to wrap up the review by May.

The committee members had the following discussion regarding improving the overall function of the Equity Advisory Committee:

- Committee members have felt that their knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences are not valued on the committee. The committee should create a culture on the where staff and committee members learn from each other.

- The committee should re-focus its attention from the Council to the community. The committee should create a measurable process to ensure accountability to community. Protocol has been very lopsided on the committee; it operates with a Met Council process. The committee needs an interactive process that also reflects community values. The committee should create a process of including community members in the meetings, particularly people of color, who have had to learn how to interact with white systems. At this table, the committee needs to have a way of changing the norms to include community.
- At most committee meetings, staff present and share insight. Giles would like to ensure community experts has the same equitable opportunity.
- There is a basic assumption that the Council knows what all the ideas and solutions are, and the committee can nudge them into a more equitable choice. Committee members would like to be involved in determining the menu options. Ultimately, the Council is going to make a decision; but the committee could provide creative solutions and ideas that the Council doesn't see.
- The committee cannot complete its mission in two hours per month; however, that is how the committee was established. The committee needs to rethink the structure creatively.
- Committee member Giles asked Joo Hee to come forward to speak to the committee.

Joo Hee, from the Metropolitan Alliance for Stability, said that staff has not succeeded thus far to take the input of the committee and turn it into meaningful action. The culture of the committee must be different than the rest of the Met Council and how it functions. The committee only gets to make a decision based on a predetermined set of options. Remember that committee members are here because they represent communities that are being harmed by policies. When they ask to slow or pause the discussion, it's because they see that it is important and can have a long-term impact on their communities. In addition, committee minutes have not been posted for months.

Chair Tchourumoff thanked the committee for their insights and recommendations and demonstrated her personal commitment to ensuring changes to the committee be implemented. The Chair asked committee members how they would like to structure the review, and committee members discussed the following comments and questions:

- It would be good to complete the review before the new committee members are seated; otherwise, the committee runs the risk of repeating past mistakes.
- Please clarify what a review would entail.

The review would be an opportunity to evaluate how the committee functions, particularly structurally and procedurally. This could be achieved through focused individual interviews. Committee members could identify what has been working well and what hasn't been working well.

- The committee should examine successes as well, for example the discussion around the fare increase.
- An outcome of the review should be some sort of evaluation and action plan. Then we know that things are really going the way they could be on the committee.
- Short of being in state law, the Met Council could dismantle the committee at any point. However, if the committee is fully functioning, it's inertia, it's hard to stop something that's working and moving. It's easier to end the committee if it's not working. It is important that new members be seated as soon as possible.

Chair Tchourumoff thanked committee members for their comments. The Chair would like to design the scope together, begin the implementation during May and June, and report out the findings in July and August. Committee members were instructed to contact Yolanda Burckhardt to volunteer for the subcommittee. The first subcommittee meeting would be over the next couple of weeks.

### **Overview of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update**

Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst in Community Development, provided an overview of the Regional Parks Policy Plan and how the Metropolitan Council develops policy plans. Dan asked committee members what they were interested discussing or learning more about; he suggested coming to the next committee meeting to dive deeper into topics of interest for committee members.

Committee members discussed the following comments and questions:

- The park system has a horrific set of accessibility issues, although 15-20% of the population has a disability.
- Please discuss next month the demographic breakdown of community members who utilize the parks.
- What is the oversight of the Council to have compliance with our partners? The Council has a long way to go, how do you influence your partners to be equitable?
- Curious to know how the partnership works with the other systems, particularly in terms of funding.
- How do low-wealth communities get to the parks to begin with?
- How can parks use recreational programs to increase physical activity?
- Can we talk about safety in parks?

Dan thanked the committee members for their questions; he looks forward to discussing the topics at the next committee meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Yolanda Burckhardt  
Recording Secretary