

Minutes

Committee of the Whole



Meeting Date: April 20, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

- Chair, Charlie Zelle
- Judy Johnson, District 1
- Reva Chamblis, District 2
- Deb Barber, District 4
- Molly Cummings, District 5

- John Pacheco, District 6
- Robert Lilligren, District 7
- Abdirahman Muse, District 8
- Raymond Zeran, District 9
- Peter Lindstrom, District 10
- Susan Vento, District 11

- Francisco Gonzalez, District 12
- Chai Lee, District 13
- Kris Fredson, District 14
- Phillip Sterner, District 15
- Wendy Wulff, District 16
- = present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:01 p.m. on the following roll call.

Present	0	Zelle, Johnson, Chamblis, Barber, Lilligren, Muse, Lindstrom, Vento, Gonzalez, Fredson, Sterner, Wulff
Absent	0	Cummings, Zeran, Lee
Not Recorded		Pacheco

Agenda Approved

Chair Zelle noted that a roll call vote was not needed for approval of the agenda unless a Council Member offered an amendment to the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Lilligren, seconded by Sterner to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried** on the following roll call vote.

Present	0	Zelle, Johnson, Chamblis, Barber, Lilligren, Muse, Lindstrom, Vento, Gonzalez, Fredson, Sterner, Wulff
Absent	0	Cummings, Zeran, Lee
Not Recorded		Pacheco

Information

1. Local Planning Stories: Equity (Angela R. Torres, Raya Esmaeili)
Angela Torres, Manager, Local Planning Assistance, and Raya Esmaeili, Senior Planner, Local Planning Assistance, introduced Julie Farnham, City of Bloomington, and Cynthia Smith-Strack, City of Belle Plaine. Farnham and Smith-Strack shared stories of local planning initiatives in their respective cities. Julie Farnham and colleague Mike Palermo began with an overview of Bloomington, which is the fourth largest city in Minnesota and is becoming more

diverse as the same rate as the rest of the Metro area. Farnham and Palermo shared maps illustrating this change in diversity among residents. Bloomington has several regional transit connections, including the Orange Line BRT, Red Line BRT, and Blue Line LRT. Bloomington has regional and national destinations including the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge, regional parks and trails and the Mall of America. Future growth potential has been recognized in the South Loop, Penn American, and Normandale districts. Bloomington City Council's strategic priorities are: community amenities, community image, environmental sustainability, focused renewal, high quality service delivery, and inclusion and equity. Efforts around equity include Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) participation, an established racial equity vision statement, ongoing staff Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) trainings, identifying and eliminating barriers to diversify the city's workforce, the hiring of a Racial Equity Coordinator, the establishment of Racial Equity Action Teams (REATs), the development and adoption of a Racial Equity Business Plan, and participation in the "Just Deeds" Coalition. The Bloomington Community Engagement and Outreach Division was established in 2018 and is focused on internal and external outreach and engagement efforts. The approach to equity in the 2040 plan has included extensive community outreach and engagement.

Cynthia Smith-Strack shared information about the planning process in Belle Plaine, which is referred to as "Destination Belle Plaine 2040." Belle Plaine is a rural growth center midway between Minneapolis and Mankato and operates its own wastewater treatment plant and water distribution system. Belle Plaine has very few regional builders and has very little commercial and industrial growth as it is a small community on the edge of the region. Belle Plaine lacks private sector development partners which is the driving force of the comprehensive plan update. Destination Belle Plaine 2040 is a locally led, intentional and conversation-based process. It includes an examination of the comprehensive (comp) plan structure, cohesive elected leaders, and the role of staff to lead, listen and connect threads. The driver of equity and all comp plan work is the goal of "a perpetually sustainable, complete, and livable City for all people, seasons, and generations." The consensus priority for the city is sustained growth. Rural community engagement includes a quarterly "meeting of the minds" with the Council, appointed officials, senior staff, and the public, community events, a quarterly mobile meeting, and awareness of vision and results. Challenges and successes included having uncomfortable discussions, balancing abstract and granular issues, a commitment to trying versus arriving, multiple manifestations, politics, and staff integrity versus advocacy.

Esmaili asked each panelist if they have a definition of equity that they use in their plans. Farnham and Palermo responded that Bloomington does not have a specific definition, but they do have a racial equity statement in their plans. Smith-Strack shared that Belle Plaine defines equity as the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions, fair and equitable distribution of public services, and the equitable implementation of public policy and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy. Esmaili then asked what key elements are integral to advancing equity in each community? Comments from Smith-Strack included the importance of social health in Blaine, including healthy living and health policy. Farnham shared that Bloomington has a focus on voice, access, and removal of barriers for residents, regarding policies and services. Esmaili asked Smith-Strack to share challenges of addressing equity in a rural community. Smith-Strack shared that the largest challenge is the number of residents who do not believe that racial equity exists.

Council members had questions and comments about the adaptability of engagement in each community and hyper-local engagement, the role of the Community Outreach Coordinators in Bloomington, the importance of community engagement and ongoing conversations in rural areas, and broadband access in outer-ring communities. Council members also had comments regarding migrant workers and affordable housing options, navigating policy when



the opposition may hold prejudiced opinions, the increase in the property value of affordable housing in Bloomington, and the status of redevelopment projects in Bloomington.

2. Analysis of Thrive Commitments (Lisabeth Barajas)

This information item will be moved to a different meeting of the Committee of the Whole due to time constraints.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole meeting of April 20, 2022.

Approved this 4th day of May 2022.

Council Contact:

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