

## Minutes of the

### MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

**Committee Members Present:** Co-Chair Edward Reynoso, Metric Giles, Rebecca Stratton, Jennifer Munt, Ruthie Johnson, Nelima Sitati Munene, Kadra Abdi, Ishmael Israel, David Ketroser, Sindy Morales Garcia

**Committee Members Excused:** Acooa Ellis, Harry Melander, Leon Rodrigues, Kim Carpenter, Leslie Redmond, Shirley Cain

**Committee Members Absent:** N/A

**Council Staff Present:** Wanda Kirkpatrick, Yolanda Burckhardt, Michelle Fure

### CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Reynoso called the regular meeting of the Council's Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:18 p.m.

### PUBLIC INVITATION

Lashella Simms encourages the Metropolitan Council's Equity Advisory Committee to improve community engagement efforts. Simms is part of a grant program administered by the Met Council; the organizations who received grant funding have not heard from the Met Council regarding the outcomes of said funding. Simms discussed that community members are unaware of the Metropolitan Council's community engagement efforts. Simms would like for community members to be on the agenda at the Equity Advisory Committee.

### EQUITY POLICY

Wanda Kirkpatrick, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, presented the draft Metropolitan Council Equity Policy. Wanda discussed that Metropolitan Council policies are high-level and broad – the procedures of a policy will determine the implementation and accountability structures. The development of procedures will begin after a policy is approved by the full Metropolitan Council. The Equity Advisory Committee would be involved in the development of the procedures for the Equity Policy. Wanda requested staff pull up established Metropolitan Council policies to serve as examples.

Members of the committee had the following questions and comments:

- Committee Member Ketroser commented that the definition for “Disparate Impacts” is exclusive to race and ethnicity—it doesn't include ability. Can we use a different definition, one that is more inclusive of other identities such as gender, ability and religion?

The definition of “Disparate Impacts” is the FTA's definition. Staff will look into other definitions that are more inclusive.

- Committee Member Sitati Munene asked about the process for approving the draft Equity Policy. What is the timeline? Is there an urgency?

The process to institute a policy is lengthy, as it must go before the full Council for approval. The Council must approve the Equity Policy before staff can work on the procedures for the Policy.

The Office of Equal Opportunity began working on this policy in early 2017. The Office of Equal Opportunity leadership identified the need for an Equity Policy, spoke with division directors and general managers, collaborated with divisional Equity Change Teams, and is currently seeking input from the Council's committees. The Equity Advisory Committee is the first committee to see the draft Equity Policy. After the Equity Advisory Committee approves the policy, it will go to Management Committee, and then to the full Metropolitan Council for approval. The end of February is when staff were expecting the Policy to go before the full Council. The timeline is ultimately dictated by how fast a policy moves through each committee.

- Committee Member Sitati Munene asked how the Equity Advisory Committee can be involved in how the Equity Policy will be implemented. How can the practices, policies, and procedures be measured? And how could an organization monitor itself? How can we assure accountability?

The Equity Advisory Committee will be involved in the creation of the procedures. The procedures will include internal and external procedures that will determine implementation and accountability structures. The Office of Equal Opportunity will be accountable for the development of policy procedures; the Equity Advisory Committee could take on this item as a work plan item. The procedures will be extensive and entail research and engagement from the community and Equity Advisory Committee.

- Committee Member Giles commented that in this draft Equity Policy, there isn't a collective engagement structure.

Co-Chair Reynoso said the draft Equity Policy is just the beginning of framing the work. The Equity Policy would give direction for Council staff to begin development of procedures. The Equity Advisory Committee will give direction in the development of these procedures, which could include a structure for community engagement. The Equity Policy will be the guiding framework for equity work at the Council.

- Committee Member Sitati Munene remarked that this policy is different than other policy plans. We as committee members should have a voice in how internal staff view equity. I am concerned about allowing internal staff to define equity.
- Committee Member Abdi said the draft was written without the input of Equity Advisory Committee Members, they were an after-thought. The Equity Advisory Committee is the last to know about the draft policy. Staff did not consider committee members in the process.

Wanda Kirkpatrick said this is the first Committee that staff have come to for feedback on the draft Equity Policy. Mrs. Kirkpatrick then reiterated that this is the time that staff planned to come to the Equity Advisory Committee for their assistance in shaping the policy before it moves on to the full Council for adoption.

Co-Chair Reynoso reiterated that the draft Equity Policy is a starting point and the importance of the Equity Advisory Committee Members' input. The Office of Equal Opportunity has given us something to work with; committee members can edit and change this draft policy however they want.

- Committee Member Stratton remarked that although some committee members may want to be involved in drafting the initial language for the Policy and that is great. Stratton said that as a member on this volunteer committee, she does not have the time to be involved in drafting initial language. Committee Member Stratton said she appreciated having a draft policy to comment on. Committee Member Stratton reminded committee members that the Council is a large organization and that small steps are progress. Stratton stated she was comfortable making edits and sending the draft Equity Policy back to staff and then moving on to work on the procedures.
- Committee Member Israel asked if staff will be doing community engagement for this policy. This committee should not be the only sounding-board for community.

Council Member Munt clarified that this policy is an internal document and that committee members may be referring to policy plans such as Thrive MSP 2040 or the Transportation Policy Plan, which are external-facing documents. Those policy documents undergo a process of community engagement.

Co-Chair Reynoso suggested walking through the draft Equity Policy section by section, if Committee Members are prepared to accept or suggest changes for each section.

- Committee Member Sitati Munene suggested including language such as “the Council will run every new policy through the Equity Advisory Committee.”
- Committee Member Giles said he doesn’t want to do this the same old way the Council always does.

Co-Chair Reynoso said this is not the typical process for creating internal Council policies. The Equity Advisory Committee is the first external (non-Council staff) body to see and comment on the draft Equity Policy.

- Council Member Munt suggested the Committee make changes to the draft Equity Policy as they see fit, and that staff will work with the General Counsel to ensure changes be included as intended.
- Committee Member Giles requested that the Equity Advisory Committee be included in the language of the policy.

Committee Member Abdi made a motion to table the discussion. Motion seconded by Committee Member Johnson. Motion passed at 7:50 pm.

Co-Chair Reynoso stated the Committee would resume discussion regarding the draft Equity Policy at the February Equity Advisory Committee Meeting. He asked committee members to come prepared with suggested changes and edits for the draft Policy.

## **WORLD CAFÉ DEBRIEF**

Co-Chair Reynoso led the debrief of the Equity Advisory Committee’s 2018 Work Plan World Café. Co-Chair Reynoso asked if Committee Members would like to create subcommittees to address specific issue areas for 2018. Committee Member Johnson discussed how the Standing Committee came to the idea of subcommittees. These topics came forward from the World Café in October of 2017. Committee Members will need to make a decision before the new committee members are onboarded because the subcommittees would theoretically inform the 2018 Work Plan.

Committee members asked for future clarification on the following questions:

- Can subcommittees have public community members?
- Can subcommittees meet through conference call?
- Can working documents be shared to the public through google drive?
- Does each subcommittee need a Chair and/or a Council Member?

Council staff will report back the answers to the above questions at the following Equity Advisory Committee in February.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Wanda Kirkpatrick gave many thanks to the outgoing Equity Advisory Committee Members. Wanda expressed her gratitude for the dedication and service of the inaugural members of the Committee.

Co-Chair Reynoso thanked committee members for their courage and willingness to sit on the Committee. There have been times of frustration, but the Committee Members have really played a significant role in advancing equity at the Council. Co-Chair Reynoso is confident the Council is moving in the right direction. The Committee played a role in pushing the envelope, and taking steps in the right direction. We are going to get there, thank you for serving.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Yolanda Burckhardt  
Recording Secretary