

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 7, 2016

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair; Edward Reynoso, Co-Chair; Acooa Ellis, Jennifer Munt, Kadra Abdi, Nelima Sitati Munene, Tie Oei, Ishmael Israel, Metric Giles, David Ketroser, Steven Chavez, Elham Ashkar, Kimberly Carpenter, Leslie Redmond

Committee Members Absent: Leon Rodrigues, Claudia Cody, Sindy Garcia Morales, Ruthie Johnson, Rebecca Stratton, Deb Barber, Shirley Cain, Vayong Moua

A quorum not being present, Co-Chair Acooa Ellis started the meeting at 6:07 pm, proceeding to the public invitation and subsequent business items.

PUBLIC INVITATION

During the public invitation time, the committee was addressed by Russ Adams from the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A quorum being present at 6:24, a motion was made by Acooa Ellis, and seconded by Tie Oei, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 17th meeting was made by Edward Reynoso, and seconded by Ishmael Israel. The motion passed unanimously.

EAC'S METROPOLITAN COUNCIL PRESENTATION - UPDATE

Co-Chair Ellis discussed the presentation made by co-chairs, Tie Oei and Leslie Redmond to the Metropolitan Council at the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 1st. Acooa felt this was a great way to provide the Council with updates on where subgroups were and their progress in their work. Co-Chair Reynoso added that the goal of the meeting was to have a conversation with the Council about what steps have been taken with the EAC so far. This included how the EAC's work has taken more time than originally expected, but that it was necessary to ensure that the committee was able to fully create processes.

Through the conversation, members of the Council started to brainstorm potential work items for the EAC, which were provided in the handout for the meeting. Discussion on some of these items then followed:

- What does the scoring process of the regional solicitation represent?
Regional solicitation is a process that the Council and Transit Advisory Board (TAB) go through every two years to determine how to spend federal transportation money. In that process, each proposed item is scored and a certain amount of those points are dedicated to equity.
Council Member Chavez added that there has been some pushback about this scoring process since the equity portion was added. One way the EAC could help is to analyze the results to see if the equity scoring is effective.
- Regional Administrator Wes Kooistra is moving forward with efforts to connect Council staff with the chairs of the four Council standing committees. They would then communicate potential items for the EAC for each of the four standing committees.
- There is some desire for the EAC to provide a rubric or assessment towards equity on items of the Council's budget
- In times where there is the political will, the members of the Council should consider leveraging the networks of members of the EAC to help get work done.

SUBGROUP PRESENTATION – WORK PLAN FRAMEWORK

Members of each of the four work plan subgroups then shared their progress with the rest of the committee:

The group on the EAC's impact on the Metropolitan Council summarized their work in a letter sent to the Council, staff and the EAC. They felt that the EAC hasn't been able to achieve the work they were tasked with, and merely keeping busy with the formation of the work plan. They also brought up concerns about members whose terms on the EAC end in 2018 who might not feel they are able to do their job in that timeframe. They expressed interest in seeing the documents used during the formation process of the EAC when the Metropolitan Council met with different community organizations.

The subgroup on the Mission of the EAC discussed their framework about the mission of the EAC. There was some discussion within the group about whether their focus should be on defining the mission of the EAC, or the tools that will be used to accomplish that mission. While the mission of the committee was outlined in the EAC charter, members of the committee felt that the mission was not well known or focused enough. Emilie Hitch, a consultant from Rabbit LLC who has been assisting the committees with the work planning process, identified four guiding principles that stem from the EAC's mission:

1. Mutual accountability
2. Resilience
3. Partnership with the Metropolitan Council
4. Shared leadership with power

Members of the subgroup on Criteria for Prioritization and Evaluation of Content walked through how they felt that a rubric would be the best way for the committee to evaluate items. This would allow for the committee to be able to select which items they would take on. While a lot of their conversation was about selecting items based on where the EAC could have a larger impact, Tie Oei mentioned in the meeting with the Committee of the Whole not to fully dismiss the EAC on items that may be "half baked" or mostly developed. The subgroup agreed to send out their final recommendations to the rest of the EAC.

The subgroup on Community Relationships and Transparency outlined how they felt that, in order to engage the community, the EAC had to establish three levels of trust as a committee:

1. Trusting each other
2. Trusting the Council Members on the EAC
3. Establishing trust with the community

These levels of trust would allow for the committee to be effective. The subgroup also iterated that the committee should recognize that there will be some issues where the EAC does not have expertise, in which case the committee should place trust on the experts on that particular issue.

To discuss the reports of each of the subgroups, a motion was made to suspend the rules for easier conversation. The motion was moved by CM Steven Chavez, and seconded by Kadra Abdi. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Ellis then started the conversation by looking at the four principles that were agreed upon by members of the mission subgroup. These represent the vision of the community that will answer the question "how will we know when we are successful?" Three ideas were identified by the committee.

1. Transparency
 - a. With the Council
 - b. With communities
2. Metropolitan Council Interaction
 - a. Policy recommendations
3. Engagement with impacted communities

Discussion around these ideas then followed:

- Is there an impact distinction between equity and racial equity? Relevance to race is outlined as part of the proposed evaluation rubric, but it should be listed explicitly to ensure that it is not overlooked in the EAC's vision.
- Where should equity be explicitly placed in the mission? Should it be placed under each of the guiding principles? Or should it be more of an overarching goal under which the principles fall?
- The established mission is too broad. How can we add ways to measure the progress of this mission?
- Earlier documents of the EAC had included that the EAC would consult with the community "when possible." The group agreed to delete the words "when possible"
- The overall lens for the committee should mirror the definition of equity in Thrive MSP 2040. This outlines equity on the basis of race, ethnicity, income and ability
- Using "equity scorecards" have been used by other institutions. The committee could ask for these to look at each division of the Council to discuss its progress on equity
- When it comes to measurement of progress, will we measure reactively or as an indicator or guide? The way the committee establishes how it will measure progress should be more of a guide to ensure that things are not being done the same way in case problems arise
- Time should be devoted to looking at how to evaluate items and divisions of the Council before being able to provide recommendations.
- After criteria is set, items can be brought to the EAC to determine when or whether the committee will discuss them, what priority they will have etc. After this, the items would go through discussion and evaluation. Ultimately, they would leave the EAC as recommendations and an accompanying guide on how to use those recommendations.

Co-Chair Ellis then asked about how members of the committee viewed the prospect of an additional meeting longer than two hours, most likely to take place on a weekend. CM Chavez reiterated that the committee can't continue to be caught up in process, and that the Management Committee meeting on February 8th would include an item with a recommendation for the Equity Advisory Committee to evaluate. Kadra Abdi supported the notion of a longer weekend meeting if it could be used as a way to re-engage members of the committee

Co-Chair Ellis summarized that there was interest in having a longer conversation on the committee's vision, guiding principles, calendar of Council decisions, rubric for evaluating items, and the equitable development scorecard used by the Council through Corridors of Opportunity. Another recommendation was that the committee select some work items and start their process of evaluating and discussing these items. Through this process, the committee would be able to find any inefficiencies or challenges in their process and adjust accordingly for future items.

To finalize the meeting, Co-Chair Ellis reiterated the following action items for the committee:

- By February 10th, respond to a Doodle poll sent out by Cedrick Baker about meeting availability for the longer weekend meeting
- Look for an email with Council standing committee work plans and the Council's tentative standing agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Kevin Murphy
Recording Secretary