

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 28, 2018

Committee Members Present: Nelima Sitati Munene, Edward Reynoso, Mohamed Sheikh, Miah Ulysse, Shirley Cain, Jennifer Munt, Harry Melander, Aarica Coleman, Metric Giles, Anthony Sanneh, Ruthie Johnson, Tie Oei

Committee Members Excused: Sonya Lewis, David Ketroser, Tommy Sar

Committee Members Absent: Leslie Badue, Leon Rodrigues, Samantha Pree-Stinson

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Sitati Munene called the regular meeting of the Council's Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda was moved by Cain and seconded by Oei.

The meeting minutes from July 17, 2018 were moved by Cain and seconded by Ulysse.

PUBLIC INVITATION

Sitati Munene acknowledged the recent Metro Transit video depicting an altercation between a passenger and a Metro Transit Police Officer. Reynoso shared that there will be a full investigation into the incident and the findings will be released to the public.

Committee members requested to discuss the subject when the investigation report is released and to receive an update at the September EAC meeting.

WELCOMING THE NEW OEO DIRECTOR: CYRENTHIA JORDAN

Wes Kooistra, Regional Administrator, introduced Cyrenthia Jordan, the new director of the Office of Equal Opportunity. Cyrenthia said it was great to meet committee members in person and invited members to reach out to her personally.

REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN UPDATE

Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst in Community Development, Emmett Mullin, Manager of Regional Parks and Natural Resources, and Amanda Lovelee, Parks Ambassador, followed up their presentation from May and July regarding the Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP) Update. Throughout the past few months, staff have gathered committee members questions and comments and have compiled a follow-up memo to address committee member questions.

Amanda developed an Equity Discussion Board as a tool to guide the overview. The tool broke down the Council's role in equity work relating to parks by category: planning, funding, and usage. Committee members were encouraged to direct the conversation to whatever topics they were most interested.

Throughout the presentation and discussion, committee members had the following comments and questions:

- You need to find out what are the barriers to accessing the parks. How do you incorporate those barriers into the plan?
- It is hard to make a recommendation on the equity measures if there aren't clear equity goals.

- I have heard that language around equity in the RPPP update changed from 'strengthen equity' to 'promoting equity'. This dilutes the intention from something that is measurably more intensive to did you make an attempt to promote equity or not.
- The conversation around accessibility should be broadened to include other groups of people. How do we build awareness about what amenities are available?
- We know already people are attending the parks in the non-urban regional areas, just not people of color. This is very intentional. I don't think we should be talking about equity and then go back to talking about regional balance. That is changing the conversation to be focused on equality and equal distribution.
- Implementing Agencies should work towards creating a welcoming environment in their parks. An important component of creating a welcoming environment is hiring diverse parks staff.
- In particular, there is an identified need to hire and engage Native American communities.
- How are you complying with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how are you measuring that? The response in the follow-up memo was not properly answered.
- Parks don't offer the same amenities in the suburbs and urban areas. How can you make them more equitable?
- Disaggregating data is important. I really don't understand why the response in the follow-up memo is that it is too expensive.
- How are you doing the community engagement? What is your measuring tool? What is the goal for park usage by communities of color? How are you coming up with that goal?
- Will community members be at the table to decide who receives the equity grants?
- Geographic preference should be an additional consideration for the grant. For example, the difference between quality of parks in South and North Minneapolis is severe. Can the grant program give preference to applications located in Can the grant program give preference to applications located in areas of concentrated poverty, including areas of concentrated poverty where 50% or more of the population is people of color and indigenous people?
- Applicants should have to submit their plan to recruit and make their parks accessible. Questions would address: What would you like your usage to be? What is your plan?
- People who are running the parks should receive an equity score based on their level of awareness. They might not be able to put in a prayer room at every park, but if we know they have an equity plan, they are thinking critically about what is not accommodating about their parks.
- In the follow-up memo (Question 3), parks staff do not speak to how they plan to overcome the capital funding limitations.
- Think about a matching program. If the Council funds can only be put towards capital improvements, Implementing Agencies should be required to match this funding with their own dollars. Then the matching funds can cover what the Council cannot. That way the Implementing Agencies have to come up with an equity plan.

- Committee members would like parks staff to come back to talk about the grant program.

Committee members agreed they would like to submit an official written statement as the Equity Advisory Committee. Staff will summarize the discussion and collect committee member feedback. At the September EAC meeting, committee members will finalize and approve an official recommendation.

INITIAL EAC REVIEW REPORT BACK

Oei provided an overview of the review process and a summary of review findings. The Review Subcommittee consisted of committee members Cain, Sitati Munene, Johnson, Ketroser and Oei. Throughout the review process, several themes emerged; the subcommittee created a summary document to the highlight findings.

- A concern raised by several committee members was the need to clarify the role and purpose of the committee.

Sitati Munene and Reynoso clarified that the role and purpose of the EAC exists in the official committee charter and bylaws; whereas there is a document, based on the responses in the review, there are some differing desires and expectations from committee members and staff about what the committee should be accomplishing. In order for the committee to be effective, we need to clarify the role and purpose and expectations. The retreat will be a space to further define and clarify purpose and role and come up with concrete next steps

A committee member asked that members who cannot attend the retreat also be invited to engage in conversation about purpose and role.

- Concerns were also raised about ensuring the longevity of the committee beyond the gubernatorial transition.

Wes Kooistra, Regional Administrator, stated that the committee's charter was passed by the Council; therefore, it would require official Council action to disband the committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Co-Chairs Sitati Munene and Reynoso had several updates for the committee:

- As a reminder, the EAC retreat will be rescheduled from September to early October due to committee member availability.
- The September EAC Meeting is currently scheduled on Yom Kippur, as such, it will be rescheduled to Tuesday, September 25.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Yolanda Burckhardt
Recording Secretary