Minutes

Equity Advisory Committee

Meeting date: August 18, 2026 **Time**: 6:00 PM **Location:** Virtual

Members present:

- ☒ Co-Chair, John Pacheco Jr., District 5
- ☒ Co-Chair, Carmeann Foster, at large
- ☐ Yassin Osman, District 7
- ☒ Dr. Tyronne Carter, District 3
- ☐ Toni Carter, District 14
- ☒ Michael Luseni, District A
- ☒ Taiwo Giwa, District B
- ☒ Samiira Isse, District C
- ☐ Anita L. Urvina Davis, District D
- ☐ Zakariya Abdullahi, District E
- ☒ Sabrina Tapia Contreras, District F
- ☐ Odell Brown, District G
- ☐ Vacant, District H
- ☒ Elizabeth Jones Stephens, at large
- ☐ Ibrahim Owolabi, at large
- ☒ Robert Blake, at large
- ☒ Marquita Stephens, at large
- ☐ (E) Brian Xiong, at large
- ☐ (E) Astrid Benedetto, at large
- ☒ Markeya Knight, at large
- ☒ Mitchel Hansen, at large

☒ = present, E = excused

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Council Co-Chair Carmeann Foster called the regular meeting of the Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Council Co-Chair Carmeann Foster.

Agenda approved

It was moved by Robert Blake, seconded by Dr. Tyronne Carter to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried**.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Elizabeth Jones Stephens, seconded by Michael Luseni to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2026, regular meeting of the Equity Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public invitation

No registrations for public comment received.

Information

1. Livable Communities (Emily Seddon and Leila Malow, Livable Communities, Community Development)

Marquita Stephens (MS): My question has to do with how far into the project once it's been built does your interest end? And as part of your review process to determine whether you're going to go forth with a project, what do you consider?

- Emily Seddon (ES): That is an excellent question. When we're looking at housing projects in particular the requirement that we have is that they maintain the affordability that they committed to in their application for a period of 15 years. That usually also corresponds to often Federal funding that's in the project, or State funding that's in the project, and has much more robust compliance monitoring than the Met Council does. Because our funding is so small, our grants are often closed and completed, right, they've spent all of the Met Council money, sometimes before the project is fully built. And so, in our grant agreement we have this commitment where the project will maintain its affordability for 15 years. And we continue to stay in touch with other funding partners and the project itself if they're willing after the fact but that initial relationship is the grant period and the 15 years of compliance.

Elizabeth Jones Stephens (EJS): I have a couple questions, but my first one is, are there any pressures or challenges that this grant process is facing in our current climate or future state of existence that we should be aware of?

- ES: I think that we're incredibly fortunate to have our base funding written into statute so we're not susceptible to some of the Federal changes that have affected certain projects and funding sources, but we do still feel the market pressures and the market realities of how the affordable housing system is set up in our country. So I'd say that never having enough funding is one of the challenges that we have. In this most recent round we received nearly three times the requests of what we were able to fund, just to give you kind of the scale of how much money people would look for from the Met Council in order to meet the housing need. In addition, there's been a real big push in growth and building new housing in the Twin Cities, and I'll give a little plug for the Community Development Committee meeting that's right after Labor Day, there will be a presentation about housing production trends. But in addition to all that housing production, all of the housing that we built 30 years ago is now in really desperate need of repair and so we're having these competing pressures of wanting to keep building new housing because we know we need that as well as making sure that we're maintaining the assets that we invested so much in 30 years ago. So not enough money is our primary pressure.

EJS: The other question I had, I live in St. Louis Park, and so if the DFL candidate, Ron Latz, gets to be in our Senate, he has talked about creating a regional housing navigator program with a housing choice voucher account to help decrease administrative burden. Does this apply to this program specifically? The second side of this, Lynette said when she was running that landlords are able to reject applicants just because they use housing vouchers. Are you finding any resistance in the ability to administer these because of administrative inefficiencies, so it looks like Ron Latz is trying to improve that? You're building the buildings, but are you having any problems with getting them filled because of landlords "discriminating"?

- ES: I'm not familiar with that policy proposal, and actually Terri Smith who will present next is the real housing voucher expert. What I can say is we want to ensure at the Met Council

that places where our money is invested are accepting housing choice vouchers. That has been the case for a really long time. Within Imagine 2050 the Council formalized that mechanism. The Livable Communities program now requires that if we're investing in housing, the project must accepts Section 8 or tenant-based vouchers in order to be eligible for our funding. That is the really key piece of alignment that we are working on with the Imagine 2050 implementation. We're pretty sure it was happening before, most public funding sources have this kind of requirement that you can't discriminate two people based on the source of their income or how they're paying their rent, but we're taking steps now to make it more formal.

Mitchel Hansen (MH): My question is more about projects serving American-Indian people and led by American-Indian organizations. When these organizations are selected, do you go to the tribal bands and their leadership to find out which organizations are actually representing them to do this work? For example Mille Lacs, White Earth, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and Bois Forte, as well as the TEC and individual RBCs?

- ES: I appreciate you bringing those community voices into the conversation. I know the Met Council overall has consultation procedures with tribes and tribal nations. I can speak specifically to how the Livable Communities program works, but those bigger questions we may have to rely on Torri and her team to get you connected to the right people. For the Livable Communities program we are often working in a city with a tribal entity who is developing housing for their members so it could be really specific to a community. Or it could be a non-profit organization that is serving the American Indian community as a whole. And the Met Council has a definition for what we consider the American Indian led organization which includes who's in leadership there, it doesn't matter their affiliation, but the identify of people who are in leadership there, so it could be cross-nation as well. So they are involved in the application process with the city.
- MH: I think the frustration stems from certain bands have blood quantum and when organizations are selected, if a local organization is led by someone who doesn't technically meet those qualifications at their actual own band or within the Chippewa nation. You're dealing with people that are representing these nations but the representation is their RBC or tribal councils, so I was asked to ask when these vetting processes are happening, when specific organizations are being chosen, that the RBCs and tribal councils from these individual bands and the Chippewa Tribe and the Dagouan Sioux are involved in the process.

Robert Blake (RB): The Emerging Developer program, I know that we're constantly trying to create entrepreneurs in our communities, to push them, to develop them, because they know the communities best. This seems like a really excellent program, how does that operate?

- Emily Seddon (ES): Entrepreneurship, wealth-building is embedded in a lot of the Met Council goals in Imagine 2050. The way that it operates within the Livable Communities program is that we give extra points to emerging developers of color in their application to give them a boost up. We know they might not be the fanciest grant writers, they might not have the biggest project, we want to be sure that we're doing what we can to put them on equal footing. The points is one way, our team also does technical assistance during the application cycles so anybody who wants to talk about their application, ask questions about the questions, know about how does their project align with Imagine 2050, to really get the support as they're filling out the application, our team does that one-on-one. What the Met Council doesn't have the capacity to do right now, but there are some other great programs in the Twin Cities, is provide that learning of how do you become a developer. We don't offer that through the Met Council, but we work closely with programs from Ramsey County, Hennepin County, and the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, LISK, and Urban Land Institute to connect with people who are in those learning programs that are run by those organizations and letting them know that this funding is available to them.

MS: Emily, how do we reach you?

ES: You can reach me via email, via phone, or stop by the Met Council. In the presentation is email information for both me and Leila. My email is: Emily.seddon@metc.state.mn.us

2. Metro HRA Overview (Terri Smith, Director, Metro HRA, Community Development)

CM Tyronne Carter: I'd like to learn more about the Bring It Home program, so anything you can send me on that, I'd appreciate it.

Announcement

Lila Eltawely – October 20th Meeting will be a retreat at the Wilder Center from 5-8pm. We will be providing dinner at the event. The retreat will be in place of our regular meeting.

- Yes: Robert Blake, Elizabeth Jones Stephens, Carmeann Foster, Marquita Stephens, Samiira Isse, Mitchel Hansen, Michael Luseni, Markey Knight, Sabrina, Dr. Carter
- Maybe: Taiwo Giwa

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Equity Advisory Committee meeting of August 18th, 2026.

Approved this 17th day of November 2026.

Council contact:

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