

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair; Edward Reynoso, Co-Chair; Acooa Ellis, Jennifer Munt, Kadra Abdi, Metric Giles, Ruthie Johnson, David Ketroser, Steven Chavez, Tie Oei, Rebecca Stratton, Deb Barber, Leslie Redmond

Committee Members Absent: Elham Ashkar, Claudia Cody, Shirley Cain, Kimberly Carpenter, Sindy Morales Garcia, Ishmael Israel, Vayong Moua, Leon Rodrigues, Nelima Sitati Munene

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Reynoso called the regular meeting of the Council's Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:13 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2016.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES.

A motion to amend the agenda to move reports before the bylaws was made by Steven Chavez, and seconded by David Ketroser. The motion carried unanimously. The amended agenda was approved by Edward Reynoso, and seconded by Steven Chavez.

A motion to amend the minutes of the November 15th meeting was made by Rebecca Stratton, and seconded by Deb Barber. The motion was that the minutes be corrected to remove a mistaken duplicate name from the committee members absent at the November 15th meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the amended minutes were approved by Rebecca Stratton and seconded by Deb Barber.

REPORTS

Equity Strategic Action Plan –

David Ketroser and Tie Oei both attended the first stakeholder meeting for the Council's Equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP). David reported that the first meeting seemed to be unorganized, and included attendees brainstorming ideas about what would be equitable or how to further equity. David said that the discussion showed a lack of expertise on the subject. When asked why the ESAP meeting was being held without going through the EAC first, David was told that the ESAP would be coming to the EAC for advice and feedback after the plan was complete. It was also said that the ESAP was planned prior to the formation of the EAC. David's recommendation was that the ESAP could be stopped until further help could be provided to the stakeholders. Tie shared that there could have been more time dedicated to the planning of the plan, rather than a presentation on an equity-related literature review. David then mentioned that, throughout the conversations, there was an emphasis placed on racial equity specifically.

A discussion then ensued and members of the committee asked David and Tie questions about their experience:

1. Were there resources provided that could be given to the EAC?
They had not finished assembling the materials, but these materials would be sent to Cedrick and circulated to the EAC.
2. What did the emphasis on racial equity look like?
It was determined that the starting point for ESAP would be racial equity. The thought process behind this was similar to the saying of "a rising tide lifts all boats." Also, many organizations across the country are leading with race because it is where most disparities are focused. However, this does not mean that other aspects of equity will not be discussed.
3. What was positive from the meeting?
The attendees were making their best effort. However, it could have been better if there were more community members in the meeting that have more experience dealing with topics that were addressed.

4. What is the focus of the second meeting?

The second meeting is a continuation of the first meeting. There were a lot of notes collected from the first discussion, and the second meeting will be dedicated to going through those notes. These notes can then be sent out to members of the EAC, as well.

5. Was it ever considered to include Council Members in the ESAP?

The ESAP was considered an internal issue that would involve staff doing the work. Council Members were not considered to be a part of these meetings.

6. Would it have helped if Council Members were present at the meeting?

It is unclear whether Council Members would have fit the structure of the meeting or the discussion.

Council Member Chavez then discussed that Council Members should receive invitations to subsequent meetings. They have experience working with the Council and have a lot to add. This point was echoed by Council Member Munt and Metric Giles. They felt it was important to have all stakeholders present at the table, and that differentiating between the policies and operations of the Council could be a hindrance to its progress.

7. Are ESAP meetings public?

The meetings are not public. They are meetings among Council staff, and invitations were extended to the EAC.

Meeting with Chair Duininck –

Co-chairs Acooa Ellis and Edward Reynoso then shared a report from their meeting with Chair Duininck, Regional Administrator Wes Kooistra and Deputy Regional Administrator Meredith Vadis. Co-Chair Reynoso carried the frustrations to the meeting and communicated that committee members, himself included, were upset. Co-chairs shared that they brought up meeting times for the ESAP meetings. These meetings were initially communicated to have flexible times, but when asked further they were told the times would not change. They then mentioned that the ESAP would come to the EAC prior to the third stakeholder meeting, and that an opportunity for the EAC to weigh in was necessary before the committee would endorse any part of the ESAP.

One barrier that was found in this meeting is the scope of the EAC, and whether policy is the sole purview. Co-chairs mentioned at the meeting that if something has to do with equity, it should come before the EAC. This would be different from the normal Council process, where the Council is the subject matter expert, because the EAC represents a collection of subject matter experts in issues regarding equity. The disagreements over the EAC's scope were complicated by a lack of adherence to timelines and attendance to planning meetings from members of the Council staff. Wes Kooistra committed that staff would attend these meetings and that materials would be provided to the committee in advance. This would help the EAC provide feedback on presentations from staff, rather than discussing it at a later meeting after the committee had time to process the information.

Co-chair Ellis reiterated that the EAC's charge does not solely list policy as the scope of the EAC. Chair Duininck agreed that this could include internal matters if there were issues where the EAC indicated their interest. Co-Chair Ellis clarified that this did not represent a "blank slate" for the EAC on operational matters, but rather a place to provide input on matters where the EAC should be a part of the conversation.

Co-Chairs shared that they reemphasized the value the EAC has to the Council. A foundation of mutual trust has to be developed in time, but the members of the community have a lot of communal knowledge. Co-chairs expressed that they wanted EAC members to know their concerns had been raised to Chair Duininck throughout the meeting.

BYLAWS DRAFT - REVIEW

A motion to approve the drafted bylaws was made by David Ketroser, and seconded by Rebecca Stratton. The motion passed. Metric Giles abstained.

WORK PLAN CONSULTANT DISCUSSION

Co-chair Ellis provided some background information regarding the subgroup that was formed to discuss the EAC's norms, vision and bylaws. This group started meeting in September and helped form a survey that was sent out to members of the committee. Through this survey, there was support for an external consultant to come and assist with the creation of the committee's work plan. This work plan would be based on the World Café activity from October 4th, results of the survey, and the discussions of previous meetings.

Michelle Fure, Manager of Public Involvement, described how an important portion behind the creation of the EAC was the committee's ability to create their own work plan. Michelle also emphasized that the committee should feel free to decline taking up issues that they do not want. The work plan can be used to communicate principles to the Council. Michelle discussed that there may be an initial problem aligning the timelines of the EAC and the Council's subcommittees. It would then be incumbent on staff to build time into their work so that the EAC can provide their input. This would represent a critical piece of the collaboration that would help utilize the expertise of committee members.

Emilie Hitch, then walked through an initial plan for the committee's work plan creation process. This stemmed from notes from the World Café activity, survey results, drafted bylaws, and meeting minutes. This process will utilize similar aspects of different shared leadership models. The criteria and process for evaluating issues would be decided among the committee, potentially in small working groups.

Emilie outlined four big themes from the document listed above, along with specific aspects of those themes.

- I. Mutual accountability
 - a. Transparency
 - b. Visibility
 - c. communication
- II. Resilience
 - a. Trust
 - b. Respect differences
- III. Partnership with the Metropolitan Council
 - a. Disruption
 - b. Measurable checks and balances
- IV. Shared leadership/power
 - a. Participation from all
 - b. Shared decision making

Emilie further expanded on some of these themes, and outlines important questions for the committee to address throughout the process.

- Mutual accountability would not only be with the Council, but also with the community and the networks of members of the committee.
- There is a difference between a fragile trust and a resilient trust. Previous discussions of the committee illustrated that the committee's work is not only about the present, but for not doing business as usual and continuing to do so in the future.
- How will the committee have strong connections to work through volatile times? Respecting differences is key.
- With regards to partnership with the Metropolitan Council, how will the committee bring forth its knowledge?
- How can the committee utilize the disruptive force? How can the Council or community learn from this group because of how the group has worked together?
- What will the power dynamics be? How will the committee distribute power among different stakeholders?
- What will the mechanisms be to ensure participation from all? How will there be shared decision making?

The committee then discussed their reactions to the themes:

- There should be an emphasis about learning about geographic issues within the region. This could be done perhaps through a 15-minute presentation in meetings about a Council district.
- The committee is used to working in a state of conflict, and a solid foundation helps counteract that. After creation of the work plan, the committee can make sure the foundation is created so that it can be sustainable long term
- The work plan should be fluid, so that the committee can evaluate what works and what does not work. The foundation for the committee can be built with the work plan.
- A priority should be made in the work plan to have a meet-and-greet with the community, to help establish a base and foundation for the committee
- The committee should make a commitment to move forward with using the shared leadership model for the work plan process.

Emilie then described prior experiences with other programs or agencies. They usually have common elements:

- Key principles (these can be represented by the four themes already outlined)
- Core competencies
 - All groups have decided what skills they want all members to have. How does everyone get on the same playing field with these competencies?
- Mutual accountability
 - This is particularly important around goal setting, checks and balances, measures and indicators.
- Distributed decision making
 - Are there particular work groups that are given decision making authority? How do smaller subsets of the group work together? How are decisions made? Are there other stakeholders involved?
- Open feedback process
 - Willingness from everyone around the table to learn and provide/receive feedback in a productive manner
- Measurement

The committee then discussed these elements and asked a few questions about what the steps were going forward:

- The goal is to have the work plan developed by the end of January 2017. Emilie can do research between now and then. The first meeting in January 2017 will set the parameters for the work, and the next 2-3 weeks can allow for subgroup meetings to get the work done
- Work plans for Council standing committees have been provided. Additional materials can be provided to the committee.
- Core values should be created before the official organization of subgroups

The committee then decided on the four following subgroups, and discussed their scope:

1. Equity Advisory Committee Impact on the Metropolitan Council
 - a. Design the EAC partnership with the Metropolitan Council in terms of both existing (i.e. Thrive MSP 2040) and future policies or frameworks
 - b. Consider roles, responsibilities and expectations of multiple stakeholders (Community, Committee, Council, etc.)
 - c. Create and map mutual accountability metrics
2. Mission of the EAC
 - a. Work from existing themes and core ideas to solidify the guiding/key principles of the EAC
3. Community Relationships and Transparency

- a. Discuss and design how the EAC will be in relationships, dialogue and deliberation with the committee.
 - b. Design how the EAC will bring community expertise into the decision-making process
4. Criteria for Evaluation, Prioritization and Measurement of Content
- a. Create a draft framework for the how the EAC will determine which issues it takes on, at what time, and with what level of impact
 - b. Develop criteria for evaluating, prioritizing and measuring outcomes for content brought to the EAC

Based off of these subgroups, committee members discussed some of the logistics about how the work would look going forward:

- Attendance for subgroup meetings will be important in order for the work plan to get started
- Attendance for subgroup meetings can be difficult in December and January. Perhaps subgroup meetings could be done over the phone.
- Emilie will set up a document on Google Drive that can allow for online contributions.
- Committee members agreed to take initiative to reach out to other members regarding joining subgroups. Contact information for committee members should then be included as part of the Google document.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Kevin Murphy
Recording Secretary