

**RecQuest Racial Equity Subcommittee
Kickoff Meeting Notes – 5/17/16**

Attendance

CAC: Beth Hart, Laura Johansson, Arlene Zamora, Brian Nalezny

Public: Dishon Madison, Vina Kay, Lynne Crocket, Jake Virden, Tracy Nordstrom, Mike Tate, Isa Kibira

Commissioners: Jon Erwin, Meg Forney

Staff: Colleen O'Dell, Jamie Neldner, Michelle Kellogg

Welcome and Purpose

Jamie Neldner

Introductions and Ground Rules

Michelle Kellogg

Group chose not to establish Ground Rules

Overview of Calhoun-Harriet Master Plan equity subcommittee process

Vina Kay & Tracy Nordstrom

- The equity subcommittee for the Calhoun-Harriet project was formed because Vina was hearing from Calhoun/Harriet project staff that there was a group on the CAC that wanted a deeper conversation about race. She suggested creating a space and time to talk about race. She credited MPRB staff for taking on a new initiative with this subcommittee. Anyone on the CAC was invited to attend (10-12 people did, mostly white). Voices for Racial Justice hosted meetings. Vina was unsure how process was going to go, but she was very pleased with the turnout. Open agenda (vision for the lakes, etc.) – what emerged was beautiful and organic.
- Many ideas were put on the table, but they came up with about 8-9 recommendations total. Strongest recommendation from the subcommittee was reinstating the name Bde Maka Ska. This was the centerpiece recommendation.
- Leadership organically emerged from the people that participated
- The entire CAC used a racial equity lens on every decision they made
 - I.e. – transportation to and from, toilets, access to water
 - If you don't have basic facilities, it tells people – if you don't live here, you're not welcome here
- How did they maintain balance between race and other equity issues?
 - Committee grappled with this. Explicit on race, but not exclusive (economic, LGBTQ, gender, etc.). They lead with race – it's deep, historical oppression.
 - Parks should and could pave the way from an equity standpoint – it provides public spaces where people come together
 - Important to not leave anyone behind
- “Fuzzy” territory exists with the MPRB because no “official” commitment to leading with racial equity

Question for Commissioners/staff: Timeline for MPRB to commit to racial equity framework?

- MICHELLE - Group of 7 staff (we are a part of Government Alliance on Race and Equity [GARE] with 13 other MN jurisdictions), so MPRB will have a racial equity action plan by the end of the year
 - Will contain measures and goals (workforce equity, contract equity, staff training, etc.)
 - Commissioners are going through a process with the Director of GARE, Julie Nelson, regarding government's role in advancing racial equity, using a racial equity toolkit, etc.
- FORNEY – Example of successful outcome of the process so far – the vetting matrix for 20 Year Park Plan.
- ERWIN – Each part of MPRB is going through this
 - Closing the Gap plan – part of the measures are concentrated areas of poverty, density of children, etc.
 - Are we fulfilling our mission? We might not be fulfilling our mission as well as we could be.
 - Should we rewrite that mission statement to reflect our community that lives in Mpls now?

Question – what is definition of racial equity?

- MICHELLE -
 - Equality means everything is the same
 - Equity means we are providing people with resources they need
 - Racial equity is a process as well as where we are headed
 - People of color are not faring as well as white community members (graduation rates, incarcerations rates, etc.)
 - Are our policies and practices working for the entire community? Or are people being left behind?
 - Transforming the way we do business (budget allocations, etc.)
 - Being race neutral perpetuates inequity

COMMUNITY - People of color don't feel welcome and understanding of the process. People can't access a process if they don't feel welcome in the first place

TRACY –

- Identify deficits and then combat with engagement and process
- It's hard to get to Lake Harriet if you don't have a car – MPRB is a powerful organization and a part of the bigger picture in government
- There is no solution or end – it's a constant process and a way of thinking.

VINA –

- VRJ and Hope Community grappled with working with MPRB. They are used to working with government organizations from the outside. They are working with MPRB to make systems change – inside/outside influence. (i.e. – when CAC is done, they are still organizing in the community).
- Equity Subcommittee – ended up being an inside/outside effort (CAC members AND community members)
- MPRB staff work better when working with organizations from the outside

MICHELLE –

- Everyone has a part in the solutions (MPS, community groups, etc.), so we're working together in order to make progress in the same direction.
- RecQuest will determine the size, space, programming guidelines, potentially budget and staffing for neighborhood recreation centers.

Question – What was the time commitment for the additional committee? Frequency of meeting?

TRACY –

- Calhoun-Harriet equity subcommittee met about 6 times in person
- 12 official meetings for the CAC
- About 6 open houses
- Relaying info back to community constituencies
- Equity subcommittee started with visioning

Question – what was Arlene's reason for recommending the formation of this subcommittee?

She knew what was happening with the Harriet/Calhoun project and she wanted the same considerations and efforts involved with the RecQuest project. She wanted to hear what they did and learn from their successes and efforts. She has been doing research on how MPRB is going to spend the money in the 20 Year Plan. She wants to make sure the conversation continues around race.

TRACY – when the subcommittee gets together, everyone brings their own questions/sensibilities/fears/constituency/family. Everyone helped shape the process. People felt scared and tense, but it was a safe place and everyone moved forward and worked as a team. They got an almost unanimous vote when they moved their recommendations forward to the CAC.

VINA – this subcommittee can make recommendations to full CAC in order to use framework for recommendations, Calhoun/Harriet made specific recommendations to the CAC, the thing that really grounded them was a visioning session. I.e. - what do we imagine for the rec centers in Mpls (NOT what needs to happen but what you want to experience when the project is completed)

COMMUNITY-

- Hope Community leads project called Politics is Local and would be happy to share mater
- The process should be for people that don't come to meetings
- Timeline – development of white supremacy compared to a MPRB specific timeline and people interact with their personal history, talk about racial equity, be honest about redistribution of wealth, genocide – real talk
- It would be a victory if there were more people involved

Open Discussion

What could be the unique role of this Subcommittee?

- Want to see things actually happen
- How can we make rec centers safe and usable?
- Build staff capacity to address equity
- Racial equity matrix for programming decision making
- How do we measure equity?
- Outreach to community about project, meetings
- Convincing people why the recommendations will be important
- Mission statement for subcommittee
- Concern - can neighborhood access the amenities (i.e. – fields)?
- Government leaders united in their commitment to racial equity
- Community engagement – going to the community
 - Gather qualitative feedback from community
- How do we not duplicate processes?
- Place for deeper conversations about institutional and systemic racism and analysis

Next Steps

COMMUNITY-

- Would like to get out into communities and parks and dialogue with community. Process seems less complicated right now. He feels better about process.
- Community engagement is not sitting in a room like this. It's going into the community where people are and listening to them there. People will start valuing when they start seeing change.

CAC MEMBER - Determine -what is this subcommittee doing differently than the CAC? Concern about duplicating efforts. This group should have deeper conversation about systemic, institutional framework of racism – not enough time at the CAC level. Go deeper and do systemic analysis – different and unique from RecQuest CAC.

COMMUNITY - when will this end? People should have access to process as it evolves.

- This subcommittee is open to public and CAC
- Future meetings should be at parks and in the community and not at MPRB HQ
- Do visioning at next meeting
 - I.e. - What do we hope RecQuest looks like from a racial equity standpoint?