



Track 2: *Community Engagement Task Force*

Sept. 12, 2007 Meeting #10 Minutes

(Approved Nov. 8, 2007)

4:00 p.m. - Room 132 City Hall

Task Force attendees: Russ Adams, Diann Anders, Kathleen Anderson, John Bernstein, Mark Fox, Don Fraser, Elena Gaarder, Diana Hawkins, Jeremy Iggers, Mary Keefe, Anne McCandless, Repa Mekha, Matt Perry (co-chair), Jessie Saavedra, Jeffrey Strand, Joyce Wisdom, Long Yang, Shirley Yeoman

Task Force attendees absent: Mohamed Ali, Chris Morris, David Rubedor

City staff in attendance: Erik Hansen, Council Member Diane Hofstede, Luther Krueger, Jennifer Lastoka, Cara Letofsky, Barb Lickness, Council Member Robert Lilligren (co-chair), Alicia Scott

City staff absent: Council Member Cam Gordon, Greg Simbeck,

Facilitators in attendance: GrayHall - Nora Hall, Karen Gray

** indicates comments by non-voting members*

Administration

- **Introduction** – A co-chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he is happy to be back.
- **Minutes** - The minutes were approved
- **Other:**
 - A co-chair noted that we will be voting on the full report tonight and said what we are voting on is a draft that will go out to the community. My impression is that based on community outreach there will be some changes.
 - The community engagement coordinator reviewed the handouts, which included a draft of the report, a results tracker showing votes to date, and a voting sheet that describes the items we will need to vote on today.
 - A task force member pointed out that the approval percentages we are using do not take into account votes that were tentative. Something that has a low percentage might have had a lot of debate.

Review of items

Line #3 – Community engagement should be consistent regardless of who you are or who is in charge at any given time.

Comments:

- Be careful with the word consistent – things can be fair without being consistent.
- This doesn't match with idea of the matrix, which says it might not be consistent.
- Someone suggested changing the wording to "predictable and fair."
- It's hard to describe what fair is.
- Predictable is hard to include to.
- It shouldn't be dependent on who is in power.
- Predictable means - I understand when the rules are.
- There was a motion to strike line #3.
- Even if the document says it in 25 ways, something of this importance needs to be stated in black in white.
- This speaks to due process.

The motion to strike the line prevailed.

Line #31 – Develop more formal ways to include independent government boards in the community engagement system (ex. School Board, Park Board, County, etc.)

There was no discussion on this item.

A motion to keep this line as is prevailed.

Line #49d and #81 – Require city staff who work in the community to have cultural orientation and community engagement training.

Comments:

- I vote against “require.”
- In my view, all staff work in the community.
- Do all staff work in the community?
- *Some in finance, etc. don’t. There are some 4,000 people who work for the city and not all of them are in contact with the community.
- Training should be ongoing.
- As someone who has worked for the city, as far as I’m concerned this is a waste of staff time. Staff who are going to be disrespectful are going to do it anyway. Supervisors need to step in. This takes the responsibility off the supervisors.
- Maybe the City could stretch itself and do training that is not so classroom based. I’m in support of keeping it and strengthening it. The training could come from the communities.
- *I agree that sometimes it’s hard to change a dog’s stripes. But I work with a lot of different cultural communities. There are things that not everyone realizes.
- It has already been addresses that this in not for all 4,000 employees. I have to say keep it as required and add “supports.”
- I’m opposed. This sets up divisiveness – which communities are a topic of training?
- Nothing is going to have force of policy unless approved by the Council and Mayor. I think it’s important to have the formal recommendation - that we have it in the report.
- In my culture, you don’t look in my eyes. I would like to see stronger language.
- I support keeping it required. What we really want to have is competence. Maybe it’s the supervisor’s job to make sure people in the field are competent.

A motion to keep this line and add “ongoing” prevailed.

Line #53 and #63 – The constituents of the group should have access to the decision-making process and/or control of the organization so that the organization’s work reflects the constituents’ desires.

Comments:

- I would like to replace “should” with “must”.
- To clarify, does this mean we are cutting out everything in the old line #53 (Represent, and provide for the participation of, the interests of all segments of the entire community, including, but not limited to, homeowners, renters, property owners, business owners, immigrants, non-English speakers, low-income residents and communities of color. Groups that primarily represent the interests of one segment of the community or concentrate primarily on one issue are not eligible.)?
- This concerns me. I think the words are wrong. I think #54 (The group must be able to demonstrate how it is representative) covers it.
- Would this rule out religious organizations?
- It’s sometimes hard to know what constituents means. This goes back to the whole idea that representative is not enough. It’s about broad deliberation. I strongly feel we need recommendations that go beyond representative groups.
- What kind of organizations are we talking about? Would we be doing this with religious or fraternal organizations?
- I think the previous characteristic is accurate. It may not be complete enough but it is about groups that will receive official support from the city.
- I’m frustrated that the group has not been able to include the matrix, which would address this.
- I would say I support broad-based deliberation. I feel that that language is important. In some cases, this isn’t happening. At some point we should talk about how to monitor that.
- There may be some organizations that don’t claim to be representative so we shouldn’t force that on them.
- *Can someone, maybe the community engagement coordinator work on wordsmithing this and we’ll come back to it?
- I hope we don’ mandate that groups produce this. That’s a big responsibility to put on groups.
- *It shouldn’t be an unfunded mandate.

Line #57 – Hold regular open meetings and take positive steps to encourage all interested parties in any issue to attend and participate. Also, all written information of the organization (including books, minutes, membership lists, etc.) must be available for review by any member of the organization. A group may deviate from this rule only in case of labor and legal disputes.

Comments:

- *This is already a law. Why are we discussing it?
- The group would have to give performance reports. We need to get the wording right.
- *It's a state law. You're allowed by state to close a meeting for certain things.
- Not all organizations abide by that.
- I move to strike this.
- I think it's important that we move the language forward from the Citizen Participation Guidelines but are we going to have community engagement auditors? These requirements have costs associated with them. We need to be realistic on some of these requirements.
- If the timeline is based on impacts to the City's budget, maybe these issues that have budget implications should be noted.
- I'm going to vote against the motion. This is about official support. The City should put some requirement on those groups.
- I would vote against the motion. Not carrying this language forward would be rewarding to people who currently don't pay any attention to it.
- I'm speaking in favor of the motion to strike if it's already a legal requirement.
- What we're really looking for is accountability to the policy that is already there. Maybe we need a new recommendation on enforcement.
- *I don't think it says anywhere in the report that we need to follow all existing laws.
- Is it possible to role accountability into the line #53 rewrite that is being worked on?

A motion to strike this line and include it in the line #53 rewrite prevailed.

Line #77 – Provide cultural communities that do not have a city advisory committee the opportunity to do so, providing equal access.

Comments:

- *Track 1 is about advisory committees. This issue is being dealt with someplace else.

A motion to strike line #77 prevailed.

Line #79a or #79b – 79a) Community organizations that receive resources for community engagement should provide information on how to participate in city processes to the community they represent. (or) 79b) Cultural community organizations should provide information on how to participate in city processes to the community they represent.

Comments:

- Why couldn't it say cultural or community?
- Are we just talking about groups that represent a geographic area? (It was noted that the task force has voted to include cultural and affinity groups among those that can receive resources)
- It was noted that the language should be broad enough to cover all the organizations eligible for resources.

A motion to keep line #79a prevailed.

Line #83 – Allocate resources and staff for administration of adopted NRP Neighborhood Action Plans and existing contracts beyond 2009.

Comments:

- I first propose this. I think it's imperative. The City Council has reviewed all the action plans. We will be remiss if we don't address the continuity of implementing those plans if NRP closes its doors.
- Track 3 is clearly where this belongs.
- I'm not going to talk about how I'm going to vote but this is not talking about Track 3 – it's not post-NRP.
- *My understanding of the timeline was because of the potential to move funding. I clearly think this need to go before the Council.

- I think it's important to include and endorse because NRP is our best standing community engagement tool. We should say it should be finished.
- Since it appears that there's not a lot of place in Track 3 for community engagement discussion I think it's important that we include it.
- This shouldn't be overlooked. You must remember that 80 percent of program funds go to support things like Phat Summer and park infrastructure. It's not about funding program staff.
- When I originally saw this I was not in favor of it. Upon further reflection and in looking at our charge #5 (Describe the official support {financial or otherwise} necessary for this organizational structure to succeed), I think this is the most concrete thing we can do to support that charge.
- *This also includes the NRP staff at the City, not just neighborhood staff.

A motion to keep line #83 prevailed.

Return to Line #53 and #63 (and \$57) – The constituents of the group should have access to the decision-making process and/or control of the organization so that the organization's work reflects the constituents' desires.

Comments:

- *Suggested worshipping – The group should represent the interests of its community, utilize broad and inclusive deliberation, encourage interested parties to participate and abide by state laws regarding open meetings.
- What if the group doesn't claim to be representative?
- Maybe "operate democratically."
- I like the language a lot. The thing I find very troublesome is that organizations that get support can sometimes not represent the body they claim to.
- This doesn't leave any room for the hierarchical organizations.
- What group would the City give resources to that is authoritarian? There are other laws we may want to include.
- Representing the interests of a community doesn't make sense.
- I'm in favor of moving the opening meeting thing out of there and putting it by itself.
- I can imagine a case where a decision might be made by a group of elders. It's hard to get people to show up let alone deliberate. This might be higher functioning than some groups are capable of.
- I would argue that only holding formal community meetings is a very tired model.
- A decision-making process doesn't mean deliberation.
- I'm trying to figure out about groups that don't fit the model here, such as the Red Cross. Do we want to exclude the city from providing staff assistance to them?
- Is this new paragraph going to include the idea that the organization would abide by open meeting laws?
- New suggested text – Representative groups must demonstrate that they use broad, open and inclusive deliberations on behalf of their constituents and comply with all applicable laws.

A motion to use the new suggested text prevailed.

Charge # 5 in "How the Task Force Met the Charge" – The Task Force did not focus on creating a section in the report to specifically address official support, however, support is addressed throughout the report.

Comments:

- Suggested additional text: Successful implementation of the community engagement system will require political will and the financial support of the Mayor, City Council and other jurisdictions, to uphold the principles within the report.
- We could include the piece about NRP here. It diminishes that statement by not including it here.
- I think the NRP piece will stand on its own.
- *Keep in mind that this is in an introductory area.
- To make a new section about support is leaping considering time.
- *This is only a draft.

A motion to add the new suggested text prevailed.

Matrix text in characteristic section – In addition to these “Characteristics of community organization that can receive resources to engage the community,” the Task Force discussed creating a “Level of Engagement” matrix that the city could use to determine eligibility for resources based on level of community engagement. The matrix, based on a spectrum, could be used both at the organization and issue level, and could identify the expectation of both the city and the organization based on where the issue or organization fell on the spectrum. While the group did not have time to fully develop this concept or agree on a specific matrix, there was some momentum for this concept in the group. An example matrix is included as an appendix to this report.

Comments:

- I propose including the matrix in the text of the report instead of in an appendix. It doesn't have to be filled out. What's important is how it functions structurally.
- *Since we are running short on time, I suggest we resolve the matrix issue and then deal with results as a whole and then continue discussions about the outreach plan post our meeting time.
- I regret that we are not including all 4 versions of the matrix. I don't want to vote for one of these without context.
- I think it's a great idea. It needs work and we can't do justice to it so I tried to find language that showed how much we want the city to follow up on this.
- I want to go back to what you were talking about on outreach. A task force member emailed a question we need to look at that question and answer it.
- On the matrix, all these filled out things look like we made a decision.
- I like language that says we have the idea but haven't set out how it would be used.
- Maybe a version without any of the boxes filled in the text with a filled in version in the appendix, and make it clear that it's not agreed upon.

A motion to include a matrix in the body of the report in an empty form as a structure that can be used and a more completed version in the appendix failed.

- My objection to the language is the focus on resources – it's more than that. And also, it doesn't show the two-way.

A motion to include the language as presented with edits prevailed.

Edited text: In addition to these “Characteristics of community organization that can receive resources to engage the community,” the Task Force discussed creating a “Level of Engagement” matrix. While the group did not have time to fully develop or discuss this concept or agree on a specific matrix, there was some momentum for this concept in the group. An example matrix is included as an appendix to this report.

Report as a whole

Comments:

- We need to vote on the report as a whole.
- If it's a draft report. (A co-chair noted that the group will reconvene after community outreach).
- Is it acceptable for me as a task force member to not support the report as a whole and not support a piece of the report? (A co-chair indicated that this is ok)

A motion to approve the report prevailed unanimously.

Adjourn