

Report to the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission

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Subject: NRP Transition – Future Roles for NCEC

Requested Action

The NCEC is asked to recommend to the City Council the appropriate future role for the Commission. Together with input from other stakeholders, this recommendation will inform the Council's decision on the roles of the NCEC and NRP Policy Board.

Questions to Address

1. What is the future role of the NCEC and what should be the focus of the Commission?
2. What is the appropriate timeframe for changes?
3. How can the Commission effectively ensure compliance with Community Participation Program standards for community engagement?

Background:

Two upcoming changes will require revising the role of the NCEC:

- Use of NRP Funding. For the period 2012 - 2013, the Community Participation Program (CPP) will be funded through Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) common area funds.

- Formation of New NRP Policy Board. State statutes require that all NRP funding be reviewed by the NRP Policy Board. The Policy Board will, therefore, be responsible for reviewing CPP funding requests, which had previously been the work of the NCEC. The Board will also continue to review NRP Action Plans and plan modifications. Since the existing joint powers agreement will sunset at the end of 2011, an agreement will be necessary to establish a new Policy Board.

Shifting the review of CPP funding requests to the NRP Policy Board will change the role of NCEC. The Commission is asked to discuss where its efforts should be focused.

Committee of the Whole Meeting

On October 15th the NCEC Committee of the Whole discussed the new role for the Commission. The notes for that meeting are attached.

At the Committee meeting, Commissioners raised questions related to the legal requirements for review of CPP submissions. These questions are addressed in an attached 2008 memorandum from the City Attorney's Office and summarized below:

Could the NRP Policy Board delegate review of CPP submissions to the NCEC? This question was posed to the City Attorney's Office which responded that the statutory requirement that NRP funding be reviewed by the Policy Board prevents this responsibility from being delegated to the NCEC.

Can the NCEC have a role in hearing appeals of CPP funding decisions? It was suggested that the appeals of CPP funding decisions by the Policy Board could be heard by the NCEC. This would allow appeals to be heard by an entity other than the Policy Board while relieving the City Council of the burden of reviewing appeals. Commissioners questioned whether this would be allowed given the requirement that the NRP Policy Board make funding decisions. The City Attorney's office has advised that the City Council could delegate the appeals function to the NCEC.

Resolution Establishing the NCEC

Since the creation of the NCEC in 2009, the Commission focused on creating the CPP program and making funding decisions. With CPP decisions moving to the NRP Policy Board, the Commission will have the time to address other areas of its charge relating to advising and advocating for community engagement. The following is the purpose statement from the City Council Resolution 2008R-402 which established the NCEC:

1. *Purpose:*

- a. *Provide overall direction to the next phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and be primarily responsible for the review of neighborhood plans and recommended approval to the City Council;*
- b. *Make recommendations on, and monitor the distribution and use of the basic Citizen Participation Services funds, which will replace funding through the City's Citizen Participation Program;*
- c. *Make recommendations on the criteria, formula, distribution and use of the Neighborhood Investment Fund and monitor its distribution and use;*
- d. *Recommend awards of grants through the Community Innovation Fund;*
- e. *Advise the Mayor and City Council on development or improvement of community participation policies, delivery of services and decision-making processes to systematize community input into City processes;*
- f. *Provide feedback to City departments regarding community participation and the City's adopted Community Engagement Principles and make recommendations for improvements to City departments and the City Council as appropriate; and*
- g. *Advise the Mayor, City Council and City departments on community issues and needs related to community participation and the City's community participation system; and*
- h. *Review, advise and make recommendations on the business plan and the budget for the City's Neighborhood and Community Relations Department; and,*
- i. *Actively assist in short and long-term planning, development and implementation of the City's community engagement system, including possible implementation of the 2007 Community Engagement Task Force recommendations; and*
- j. *Continuously evaluate its work and responsibilities to evolve with the needs of Minneapolis communities.*

Of the ten items listed in the purpose statement, only the first four activities involve review of the CPP program (sometimes referred to as the "next phase of NRP"). Also, of the first four, Item (a) is required by statute to be performed by the Policy Board. Under Item(b), the NCEC may make recommendations, but program monitoring is the responsibility of the Policy Board. The NCEC may work on Items (c)and (d) if funding becomes available.

Much of the remainder of the Commission's charge involves work on community engagement. This includes advising the Mayor and City Council on enhancement to engagement policies and recommending improvements to the engagement practices of City departments.

Discussion:

The questions the Commission is asked to address follow from the shift of CPP funding to the new Policy Board:

1. What is the future role of the NCEC and what should be the focus of the Commission?
2. What is the appropriate timeframe for changes?
3. How can the Commission effectively ensure compliance with Community Participation Program standards for community engagement?

Areas which the NCEC could focus on include:

- Developing recommendations for City departments to enhance community engagement practices. This work is underway in the City Department Community Engagement Task Force.
- Fostering greater understanding and interaction between engaged and under-engaged residents.
- Developing strategies and tactics to increase broader participation and civic engagement of all Minneapolis residents, particularly under-engaged residents.
- Representing the interests of neighborhood and community groups to Minneapolis elected officials and City Departments.

Below are specific examples of work the Commission could lead:

American Indian Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The American Indian MOU is intended to foster reciprocal paths of participation and success between the American Indian community and the City. It establishes a working partnership of dialogue, action and measurable results between the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID Group) and the Mayor and City Council of Minneapolis. The MOU establishes a workgroup of MUID and City representative to develop goals and objectives to be integrated into the business plans of City departments. This approach could serve as a model for engagement with other cultural communities in Minneapolis. The NCEC could take an active role in developing similar agreements and monitoring progress toward achieving integration of recommendations into the work of the City.

Neighborhood Assistance Project. NCR is exploring a new program to assist neighborhood organizations in engagement, particularly engaging underrepresented communities. In this program, neighborhoods would submit proposals for work in broadening engagement. The NCEC could select neighborhoods for a pilot program

where NCR neighborhood and access and outreach staff would form teams to assist each neighborhood in developing and implanting strategies to broaden participation in neighborhood activities.

Senior Outreach. The City is exploring how to better engage seniors in City projects and decision making. Working with the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee, the NCEC could recommend approaches and methods to involve seniors.

Boards and Commissions. The City benefits from the volunteer efforts of hundreds of residents who serve on more than fifty advisory boards and commissions. These boards and commissions represent a key component of community engagement to City actions and decision making. The NCEC can play a recruiting, training, and improving the effectiveness of these boards and strive to make them more representative of the city's diverse population and interests.

LEP/ADA Compliance. Eliminating discrimination and removing barriers is a key goal of NCR. We accomplish this by not only ensuring compliance with existing laws in regards to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and ADA compliance but by fostering an environment that encourages participation of all Minneapolis residents. This ensures that everyone can participate fully in all city and neighborhood programs, services and activities. This work needs strong champions that can demonstrate the added value of these goals and NCEC is positioned to play a leading role in advancing this important objective.

Immigrant and Refugee work. Minneapolis has experienced exponential growth in the number of foreign born residents over the past two decades. This brings both challenges and opportunities for our neighborhoods and city in general. Issues such as integration, race relations, neighborhood vitality, affordable housing, crime and others center on how we best address these complex and often misunderstood issues related to new arrivals. Again, NCEC in partnership with cultural communities, faith groups, non-profits, philanthropic organizations, county and state governments, businesses as well as the neighborhoods can play a vital role in making sure that Minneapolis not only meets the needs of its newest residents but thrives because of it.

One Minneapolis One Read. The Commission could lead on promoting city-wide cultural efforts such as the current One Read project. These efforts help generate broad discussion on a variety of topics related to building strong communities within the city.