

Green Zones Workgroup
Meeting #3: Unconscious Bias Workshop
Tuesday, June 7, 2016 5:00-8:00pm
Gandhi Mahal
DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Working Group Members Present: Gayle Bonneville, Emily Stern, Jim Terrell, Karen Moe, Louis Alemayehu, Max Holdhusen, Michael Guest, Michelle Chavez, Patrick Hanlon, Rosa Tock, Roxanne O'Brien, Yolonda Adams-Lee

City Staff: Julianne Leerssen, Gayle Prest, Kelly Muellman, Siri Simons, Stephanie Zawistowski, Tamara Downs-Schwei

Guests: Janice Downing, Tony Orange, Say Yang

Working Group Members Unable to Attend: Amber Haukedahl, Ginger Cannon, Guinevere Baptise-Johns, Jennifer Swanson, Kent Peterson, Shalini Gupta (alternate: Say Yang)

The meeting began at 5:12pm.

Tony Orange and Janice Downing, from Common Sense Consulting@Work, facilitated an unconscious bias workshop for the group. The purpose of the workshop was to clarify the dimensions of diversity, identify how unconscious bias impacts individuals and group processes, and create a space for open, honest conversation.

Dimensions of Diversity [5:42p]

Janice described the dimensions of diversity, which include individual identities (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity), the way we are (e.g. class, education, appearance), and what we do (e.g. job title, pay scale, office location). Group members reflected on which dimensions of diversity they identified with most, shared their reflections in pairs, and briefly discussed the topic as a large group.

Definitions [6:05p]

Janice explained that an implicit bias is a positive or negative attitude held towards a person, thing, or group at an unconscious level, while an explicit bias is an attitude that a person is consciously aware of having. She explained that biases and racism can have effects on three different levels: organizational, group, and individual.

Danger of a Single Story Video [6:14p]

Discussion: Defining the purpose of the group [6:41p]

Group members discussed their own interpretations of the purpose of the Green Zones working group. Understandings of the group's purpose varied included: picking a focus area within the group to define a focus area and strategies; trying to come up with recommendations that are palatable to decision makers; strategies to make the City self-sufficient in terms of energy and food; be conscious and intentional about not negatively impacting overburdened communities of color; and developing an initiative that is innovative, never been done, pushes the envelope and is based on the identified need.

Group members broke out into small groups and brainstormed any simple stories or biases that could affect the committee's success.

BREAK [7:02pm]

Discussion: Micro-inequities & Micro-affirmations [7:12pm]

The workshop facilitators introduced the concepts of micro-inequities, which are cumulative patterns of subtle, semi-conscious, devaluing messages, which discourage and impair performance and engagement, and micro-affirmations, which are cumulative patterns of subtle, semi-conscious, valuing messages, which encourage and enhance performance and engagement. The group briefly discussed the importance of noting existing group dynamics and putting in the effort to make all members feel welcome.

In small groups, participants brainstormed ways to address micro-inequities and increase the use of micro-affirmations. Workgroup members offered ideas such as being positive, not shaming others for missing meetings, and using accessible language. The group also discussed the importance of addressing inequalities in the context of the city as a whole. Multiple participants expressed interest in generating trust and a shared understanding of the history of the group.

Landscape Diagram [7:40p]

Janice shared a "landscape diagram" to show that right now the group might feel disorganized and uncertain about their purpose. In the coming months, the group will move closer to certainty and agreement. Janice encouraged the group to consider how it can move forward toward certainty and agreement, instead of backwards. Then the group brainstormed how each member could contribute to moving the group forward, generating the following ideas:

- Don't walk out
- Don't give up
- Don't attack
- Don't assume
- #takeafewdeepbreaths
- Share stories
- Don't dismiss
- Be transparent
- Share information
- Remember colonialism
- Human lives matter
- Check your privilege
- Remember that the powers that be don't care about any of us
- Take chances
- Be positive and helpful
- Remember that no matter how much you think you understand, you don't actually understand
- Ask questions
- Really listen
- Check your personal temperature
- Remember that it feels like there is a basic level of trust

Call to Action: Janice encouraged the group to lean into trust and respect based on the shared foundation created during the first three meetings.

Meeting Adjourned [8:10p]