

Meeting Minutes

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Tuesday, December 15, 2015 – Urban Research Outreach and Engagement Center (UROC)

Meeting attendees: Debra Behrens, Raya Esmaili, Braulio Carrasco, Doron Clark, Ishmael Israel, Queen Kimmons, Jeanne Montrese, Nick Cichowicz, David Boyd, Dennis Houle, Tessa Wetjen and David Zaffrann.

NCEC members excused: Antione Martinneau, Francisco Segovia, and Nasser Mussa.

NCEC members absent: Eric Gustafson.

1. Introductions

Call to order: Chair Ishmael Israel called the December meeting of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission to order at 5:12p.m.

Approve Agenda:

Motion: Boyd moves, seconded by Cichowicz, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion on improving City/Community relations

Chair Israel shared that the December meeting of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission is being held in a different format to hold a conversation with the community regarding the recent events that are related to Police/Community relations.

Tonight the commission is looking to discuss two questions:

1. What actions can the City can take that could improve the relationship between the City and community members?
2. What specific policy or rule or structure changes could the City make that would improve the relationship between the City and community members?

Here is a summary of the comments made for each question throughout the meeting:

Question One: What actions can the City can take that could improve the relationship between the City and community members?

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department at 612-673-3737. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Para asistencia 612-673-2700 - Rau kev pab 612-673-2800 - Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500.

City Planning

- Look at the City's 10 year Comprehensive Plan and see how affordable housing can be addressed.
- Zoning – include neighborhood/community right to review community planning-plans (CPED). Administrative review.
- Staff designated to support business owners of color do not have enough knowledge or experience to be helpful. Especially in business support.

Leadership

- Council Members need more preparation to understand and work with community.

Contracts and Funding

- Change process to get City contracts – shouldn't have to do with City Council but should be clear and supported with in procurement office. Not reliant on "who you know".
- Find structures or ways to fund neighborhood and community efforts to revitalize self. Put an emphasis on Plymouth Avenue revitalization.
- Assess department/City level budgets to understand breakdown of spending. Evaluate if communities equally benefit/Return on investment.

Youth and Civic Engagement

- Use City structures to support training young men to become leaders. Bring Police and City Officials into these community groups.

Communication

- Where are structures or consistent opportunities for open comments from public.
- Use systems in place, already owned by the City, to bring together all the communication. Such as Minneapolis Public Schools, neighborhood organizations, block clubs, etc.
- Figure out ways to map out and make it clearer how people can access the decision making.
- Develop clear ways to have an "open" or "community" meeting standards. How are they communicated, when is it held?
- Find ways to put "community members" into all planning from the beginning.
- Figure out a way to make individuals feel more welcome or connected with the City.

Police Relations

- Revise/change police accountability. Police should hold their own liability insurance.
- Have a system to gather stories of individual experiences with Police.
- In Police body cams, where does the footage go? The policy is in process.
 - Ways to demilitarize
 - Ways to take into account past behavior, screen for racism.
 - Those who hire/lead those who kill and misbehave should be held accountable.
 - Civilian Review Board, have community members on it.
- People need to feel Police and others are working for them – not to be fearful of.

Other

- Restorative Justice/reconciliation process.
- Bias training or specific research activities to help people understand impact of own bias.

Question Two: What specific policy or rule or structure changes could the City make that would improve the relationship between the City and community members?

Youth and Civic Engagement

- Get the children more involved through after-school programs in working with schools regarding civic engagement.

Communication

- All departments and commissions should be working together, before they try to bring the community to meetings. Get the right players in the room.
- Go back to basics and figure out what interests people. Translate the communication so that residents can relate. Use plain language.
- Hold scheduled meetings with the community (e.g. quarterly), communicate in advance.
- Reach out to the community before a tragic event happens. Too many emotions at work after something happens.
- NCEC members should be better known to the community.
- NCEC should stand up for the section of the community who do not feel welcome or heard by the rest.
- Have the commission meetings broadcast at better times.

Leadership

- Hold the City Council Members accountable. Leaders in the community need to step up.

Other

- Resources, partnerships and translators to support “Know your rights” program.
- Take a look at what worked well and what didn’t in the past. (What is going on my street).

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:15p.m..