

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Race Equity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Date: May 20, 2021

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Location: MS Teams

Council members present: Biiftuu Ibrahim Adam, Debjyoti Dwivedy, Deran Cadotte, Johnathon McClellan, Larry Hiscock, Mahogany Ellis Crutchfield, Miamon Queeglay, Sheila Webb, Tekia Jefferson

Council members not present: Alexis Murillo, Amani Berry, Mukul Nautiyal

County Staff: Chela Guzman-Wiegert, Ge Lee, Mercy Das, Randy Larson, Robert Gruba, Steve Voller, Vinodh Kutty

Guests: Commissioner LaTondresse, Kyle Olson, Jessica Oaxaca

Meeting was broadcast on MS Teams live for public viewing.

- 1) May meeting agenda approved
Deran Cadotte moved to approve, Mahogany Ellis Crutchfield seconded. 9 Ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstain.
- 2) April meeting notes approved.
Mahogany Ellis Crutchfield moved to approve, Biiftuu Adam seconded. 9 Ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstain
- 3) Meeting with Commissioner LaTondresse

Chair of the Hennepin County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)

- County board approved 17.1 million for affordable housing investment, largest investment so far.

Vice-Chair of the Hennepin Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA)

- SW lightrail-it's not just about moving people, it's equity and climate investment;
- advocating for transit oriented development funds;
- community input is an area for improvement, contact commissioner with ideas to strengthen community involvement.

How can HRA encourage municipalities to follow through on affordable housing?

- increase availability of funds
- work toward more funds through new revenue streams such as bonding
- encouraging city councils to make pro affordable housing decisions
- we can all get involved in promoting and advocating for affordable housing in our communities

Vice Chair of the Public Safety Committee

- Focus on emergency response systems and mental health

Vote against Board Action Request 21-0158 (condemn the use of chemical weapons and "less lethal" projectiles by law enforcement against residents and demonstrators)

Member questions:

Q: If the reason some board members voted no was to bring in the Sheriff's office, what are plans to continue this conversation and come up with either an alternative or different policies around less lethal use.

A: Sheriff is an elected office and County Board of Commissioners have limited policy authority; board promotes public safety for all and when that happens, it causes a breakdown of trust in safety institutions. Don't support some actions in Brooklyn Center following the killing of Daunte Wright.

Q: Commissioners have authority over Sheriff's budget; what influence can that have.

A: The County Board of Commissioners is responsible for the Sheriff's budget and provide the budget based on needs and requirements. There is no way to force the Sheriff's hand because there are other laws that govern the Sheriff's office.

Q: A yes vote would've shown people that you stand with them. What discussions have there been since this vote?

A: Extreme discretion has to be used in using these tactics. Don't believe that has been the case sometimes. Continuing to engage with Sheriff's office. Sheriff's office is researching practices in other jurisdictions.

Q: Response to the recommendations in the April 19, 2021 memo by this Council sent to the County Board of Directors about chemical weapons and projectiles.

A: Haven't seen it, please send it.

4) Use of the Race Equity Impact Tool (REIT) in the budget process: Chela Guzman-Wiegert, Assistant County Administrator for Disparity Reduction presented on how the REIT was used by departments in the 2022 budget process.

5) Election Results: The following were elected to one year terms starting in August 2021.

Chair: Mahogany Ellis Crutchfield

Vice Chair: Larry Hiscock

Secretary: Miamon Queeglay

Deran Cadotte moved to accept the election results, Johnathon McClellan seconded. 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 abstain

6) Updates from Committee Chairs

Child Protection: Mahogany Ellis-Crutchfield

- Meeting in June with Village Arms who works with child protection and equity for children of color.

Civic Engagement—Sheila Webb

- Working to coordinate a virtual event for high schoolers to get their view on community engagement and what they are doing in their schools and planning a roundtable with League of Women Voters. Looking for additional members.

Housing—Larry Hiscock

- Have had two listening sessions with experts in housing.

Public Safety/Justice: Johnathon McLellan

- Working on cash bail; meeting with Representative Noor who's carrying this bill in the house. Setting up meetings with Sheriff's Office, questions have been submitted to start the process.

7) Annual Report timeline and format

REAC will make a 15 minute presentation to the commissioners in committee in November.

The report is due to the county on September 24th.

- June meeting all committee chairs will present an outline and areas of focus for the report.
- Reports will be complete by the end of July.
- August—leadership will review and edit report with assistance from County
- September meeting—report will be approved by the Council and sent to County Administration

8) Announcements and discussion

- Council has 12 members. Everyone participate in committees as much as possible. Farhia resigned for personal reasons. Commissioners Greene, LaTondresse and Lunde have to make appointments.
- Communication plan: There was discussion among REAC members and county staff about how the work of the REAC will be made available to the public.
 - Why memos and reports written by REAC are no longer posted on Hennepin.us website. *The role of the REAC is to advise the Board of Commissioners (Board). The board can decide what it wants to do with advise and suggestions from this Council; it is not the norm for advisory councils to publish or distribute their work.*
 - The work of REAC is public, why can't materials be made available publicly? *The responsibilities of the REAC have been spelled out in the BAR and governance documents. This body has powers bestowed by the County Board to focus on advising the board on priorities and practices around disparity reduction.*
 - Was the memo to the board regarding the killing of Duante Wright out of scope for REAC? *An annual report to the board is what is currently specified in the board action report and governance documents.*
 - Is there justification for restriction on contact with the board by the REAC? *There is no restriction on individuals contacting their commissioner. A structure has been provided on how this body can communicate with the whole board. If there are practices or policies that are seen as inequitable, include them in your report.*
 - Unlike other advisory bodies, the REAC sees a value in responding to events as they happen to increase citizen responses to the Board.

This discussion will be continued as a major agenda item at the next meeting.

9) Adjourned on motion by Deran Cadotte, seconded by Sheila Webb 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 abstain