

# INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE MEETING

July 19 2023

Minutes

Chair: Kate Baxter-Kauf

Secretary: Catherine Plessner

Staff Contact: Alexa Golemo

Attendees: Marsha Barry, Kensey Lipstreuer, Athena Adkins, Lynn Ihlenfeldt, Steve Boyd-Smith

## **I. Introductions**

There were no new attendees.

## **II. Approval of April 2023 Minutes**

Motion for approval made and carried.

## **II. Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) Field Trip Recap (Agenda Pp. 3-4)**

We visited the MNHS in leu of a June ITF Meeting. One of the things we learned is that the part of St, Paul that hangs down into the river was originally part of Fort Snelling. It was called the Reserve Township until the 1880s and has an interesting land transfer history involving Zebulon Pike. There's useful information to help figure out where restrictive were put on properties. We uncovered more questions than answers. It will take more digging using maps that show land transfers. There are groups of local churches that are working together and would be good resources. Lynn volunteered to help put that together. We also want to visit the City Room in the George Latimer library. We would also like to invite Macalester Professor Chris Brown to talk about his book on the Native American history of the neighborhood and the confluence on the river.

## **III. 2023 MGCC Demographic Survey Results**

ITF has been conducting this survey since 2016. We have a enough data to see trends of change or no change. We expanded gender options to include more than male and female. We followed the Census categories but hope to expand further. The data is an internal survey of MGCC Board and Committee members, 28 responses this year. We compare with Mac-Grove data and Citywide data to help recognize inclusivity and equity trends in MGCC. The Board and Committee Retreat focused on recruiting, onboarding and retaining volunteers to foster equity and inclusion. Some of the barriers we've identified in the past have included how we define the neighborhood.

Do we help everyone who lives, goes to school, works, worships or plays, as defined by the District Council, feel welcome, or only those who live here? There are also all kinds of values wrapped up in designation of owners and renters and what do we consider participation? We want to think about all the ways people participate. Sometimes people aren't available for evening meetings but manage to show up for a topic they feel strongly about. If we're talking about inclusivity then we may need to define participation differently or have a common understanding and work to get to that particular goal. Our data set is small and repetitive and there may be a better way to gather data now that we have a track record.

#### **IV. Next steps for Inclusivity Task Force**

There is still work to be done. We can decide what kind of work. We can be a resource for Community Building, HLU, and Transportation as they think through what it means to be Inclusive. And then to be honest that Inclusivity is not code for Race. We talk a lot about race but Inclusivity is about how we are able to meet our goals across both similarities and differences. Race is the front door at this moment, in this state and country. It's important, but it's not the only thing. Inclusivity is important to everybody so it can't be just ITF's responsibility, it needs to be everyone's responsibility. Inclusion and Equity should be at the center of everything we do. We don't want people to think ITF has it so they don't need to do anything.

Members expressed a desire to go forward on the Equity Score Card as a tool to Inclusivity Decision Making. It was noted that there's been some mixed feedback from some members of the community at-large. We need to see a level of interest from MGCC members as a whole in order to pursue that idea. The Score Card can be confusing to people. It requires a lot of understanding in areas to get the concept. It may be time to clarify our goal and determine whether the Scorecard helps us pursue the goal for our community.

The Guide to Inclusive Decision Making has been well utilized and received in many committees and we are committed to helping others improve. A member noted that she carries it with her to note who is missing at our meetings and ask attendees to think of ways to involve them.

This task force began with the following Resolution passed Nov 12, 2015:

*Be it resolved:*

*MGCC will convene a task force of Board and community members charged with not only determining a solution for increasing board representation for currently underrepresented groups in our community, including but not limited to renters, students and minorities, but also ensuring that membership to all MGCC committees is open to all members of the community and that no committee or subcommittee shall exist that includes only membership to a particular subset of community members, nor shall any committee or subcommittee exclude membership to any subset of community members.*

*The MGCC Executive Committee will convene this task force, which will include a member from each committee. The task force will report to the full Board of Directors.*

The past several years the Board has signed off on goals and participation projects for the calendar year that ITF tries to implement. This may be a time to think about the goals and whether this is the right form to pursue them. How do we talk about participation that is both inclusive and doesn't accidentally increase the barriers of the very people we're trying to talk with. What are the underlying values and assumptions? Who does the existing policy or procedure benefit and who's at a disadvantage? Break it down to its parts to find out. Then analyze what really works, what is not aligned and what has potential. Then you go back and recreate. If we choose, for example, renters as the group we think is most marginalized in our neighborhood then we would use universal design principals to put renters in the middle to design the policy, practice or procedure. This process would be valuable if there are things we or other committees are noticing that might be helpful to analyze. One of the things that social change movements need is hope and vision. People often get involved in a movement because they're angry and afraid. People stay in a movement for hope and vision. The question for MGCC is: What is the hope and the vision that encourage people to stay?

There is agreement that there's more work to be done. There's the history piece, discussions to clarify our current goals, work on the Mac-Grove Guide to Inclusive Decision Making and incorporating it into the committees, looking at the systems that are in place from the perspective of who we consider the group who is the most under represented or with the least access. The potential for some speakers on the history piece is a goal. The idea around the vision is something to think about and put out to bring in more board and committee members and keep them. There's work to be done!

## **V. Adjourned**

Respectfully Submitted  
Catherine Plessner