**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

August 20, 2018

6pm-8pm

Seattle City Hall, Room 370

**Commissioners present:** Alison Turner, Ben Mitchell, Emily Kim, Felix Chang, Maria Jose Soerens, Natalie Curtis, Patricia Akiyama, Sonj Basha**,** Thais Marbles **Commissioners not present:** Bereket Kiros, Carol Redfield, Julie Pham
**Staff present:** Danielle Friedman

Meeting Opening

* Approved Agenda and Minutes
* Leanne Do is the new appointee for Council District 4 and she attended the meeting as a guest.
* Public Comment- Skip Knox said the RSJI training at the CIC retreat left a lot to be desired. Thank you for having public comment at the beginning and the end.

General Review of Commission and Work

The CIC has been meeting for a year. They wanted to take this time to review and revisit some of the biggest umbrella ideas and see **why** we are doing it, **what** we are doing and **how** are we doing it.

**The Why:**

**Mission statement:** Establishing public engagement and outreach principles and directing the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) to lead a city-wide effort that results in the timely implementation by all city departments of equitable outreach and engagement practices that reaffirm the City’s commitment to inclusive participation.

**The What:**

**The stated roles of the commission:**

* Provide advice on priorities, policies, and strategies related to equitable civic engagement and public participation in City decision-making processes. This includes the review of initiatives, strategies and proposals brought forward by the City, as well as ones identified by the Commission.
* Provide feedback on the development of City departments' community involvement plans with a focus on implementing more equitable engagement strategies and identifying new ways to increase civic participation in City processes.
* Develop and periodically amend bylaws and a work plan that enable the Commission to organize itself, perform its work, and advance program and policy proposals consistent with its mission.

**The How:**

Revisited the vote the members took about how the CIC wanted to do the work:

* Innovative Community involvement and outreach methods
* Facilitate city meetups (between committees, departments, council, communities)
* Engage communities and build partnerships

This looks a little different than first envisioned, but we are mostly doing this work by meeting up with partners, engaging city departments, creating innovative plans, etc.

**Defining Equity**

This is an important concept for the CIC to revisit. A core topic of discussion and how do we define that personally, institutionally, and as a group. We all have different points of view and it is important to come up with a shared definition.

Group placed ideas of what they thought equity is on sticky notes and placed it on a big sheet of paper.

**Action:** Co-chairs will review the responses and come up with next steps.

Workgroup Report Backs

All workgroups were asked to answer these questions:

* What are the top learnings from your work group’s research and what open questions remain?
* Who in the City (department / council member / community) would benefit most from your findings? How so?
* What/where are the greatest opportunities for your work group to advance equitable engagement in Seattle in 2018? Why? What are potential barriers?

**Resources workgroup:**

Learnings: Still looking for ways to connect to the City in midst of many transitions in DON. Sahar was our contact at DON but now she left the city and we are looking for someone else in DON to work with about advising on outreach about the affordability portal. Need strong relationships at DON and then make sure timing lines up.

Who would it benefit? Would benefit DON and the community

Opportunities: Finding someone to work with. Have a stronger cadence of meeting with our working group. Opportunities to identify new initiatives with new DON leadership. Opportunities for relationship building with DON staff. Opportunity to help build some trust with community members around resource allocation (a long-term goal). Have some training around budget is allocated and then share that with community members.

**Best Practices workgroup:**

Learnings:

1. Community engagement continues over different levels of a participation continuum (varies widely from informing the community vs. we have a relationship and share power with the community).
2. Existing community engagement efforts in the City are siloed by department limiting their potential impact and outcomes. Knowledge isn’t shared and varying amount of resources. Need to collaborate more. Uncoordinated activities result in over access of the same people in communities.
3. Progress is not prioritized when there is no plan, metrics or set goals to track it. Lack of clear community engagement vision, goals and definitions.
4. Community engagement work is on-going, continuous and long-term. Should build relationships and not be a check the box activity.

Who would it benefit? Connect across the city by linking with RSJI, Mayor and City Council, Seattle IT and HR, departments who are on the lowest level of engagement. Community members and employees who do the work of community engagement.

Opportunities and barriers: Help shape the future of DON’s mission. Create recommendations and questions to guide city staff in engagement efforts (combine with the Racial Equity Toolkit?). Start an online gallery to share departments successes on engagement work. Have a public award ceremony by Mayor to award department doing good engagement work to raise awareness and foster healthy competition. Creating goals and metrics. Creating a taskforce that we can inform. Pushing the city to have a city-wide community outreach calendar or schedule. Have a city-wide shared resource list.

**Feedback to City departments workgroup:**

Learnings:

1. The best way for departments to get feedback is to come to a meeting with a short presentation and 3 questions that they would like answered. We wouldn’t have time as a commission to do a lot of work outside of the monthly meeting.
2. They should not have a fully baked plan, but they should have a start.
3. If the commission seeks out initiatives to work on it would need to have a very strong equity component at its core.
4. Would like a report on if our feedback was used, why or why not, and what was useful or hard about it.

Benefit: City departments and CIC

Opportunities and barriers: Once we create these guidelines, then we can do outreach and let people know we are available for consultation. Perhaps can do a bigger push to specific departments who may need our feedback more due to low level engagement strategies. Having a plan for keeping it fresh in people’s minds that we are here (not just a one-time awareness).

**Charter workgroup:**

Learnings:

1. Understand how our bylaws relate to how we form our norms and how they interact with each other. Understanding that this is a living process and will change over time. Nothing is set in stone in that regard.
2. Majority of City employees do not know about us or what we do. Important to inform people about what we do.
3. We need to keep ourselves informed of what other commissions are doing but there is no set way for this to happen. Each commission is one their own. There is no formal way that commissions talk to each other.

Benefit: Mayor’s office, DON, boards and commissions liaisons, CIC members, sponsored councilmembers office

Opportunities and barriers: Making sure we are not duplicating what other commissions are doing or being in opposition to what they are doing. Make an annual report about what we have accomplished to be transparent. Practice equity and model it in our conversations and actions. A barrier could be letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. Create a shared resource hub just for our commission.

Prioritizing Goals

Out of the presented priorities the CIC prioritized working on the following things throughout the end of the year:

* Recommendations and questions tied in with RSJI toolkit
* Outreach/push to departments of interest for awareness of CIC
* Annual report of CIC impact; developing metrics/evaluations; resource hub for commission internal use

In the future, think about dissolving some internal work groups and merging. Need to make sure that workgroups are collaborating and not duplicating efforts.

**Action:** Break into your workgroups (or combine) and chat through what your workgroup might look like. Digital copy of workplan will be sent out to complete after the meeting.

Public Comment

Donna Hartmann-Miller said Neighborhood Council System has been working on this for years. She is upset that they dissolved the Neighborhood Council system and now there is no system to replace it. Now there is no communication from the city to the neighborhoods and there needs to be something created to help with this. During the meeting, CIC didn’t talk about neighborhood district councils or the community, but mostly focused on city departments. I would like to hear more about community involvement, instead of RSJI. The council and community see you as representatives of your community, but you have a different role which is advising. Please communicate about your role.