



Mayor's Initiative on Equity and Equality

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Councilman Denny Whayne Conference Room • Busch Municipal Building 4th floor
840 N. Boonville

Members Present: Saehee Duran and Doug Neff, Co-Chairs; Rita Baron*, Christa Moss, Mike Powers, Francine Pratt**, Bob Roberts, Robin Robeson, and Jeff Schrag.

Members Absent: Barbara Block, Justin Clark, Christian Lewis, John Oke-Thomas, Jeanne Skahan, Carol Taylor, and Shurita Thomas-Tate.

City Council: None.

Staff: Anita Cotter, City Clerk; Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Taj Suleyman, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Janeth Hernandez, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Intern.

Others: None.

Clerk's Note: * Rita Baron arrived at approximately 6:30 PM

** Indicates participation via Zoom

Welcome

Doug Neff, Co-Chair, welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting, which began at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Roll call was conducted. Present: Christa Moss, Mike Powers, Francine Pratt**, Bob Roberts, Robin Robeson, Jeff Schrag, Saehee Duran, and Doug Neff. Absent: Barbara Block, Justin Clark, Christian Lewis, John Oke-Thomas, Jeanne Skahan, Carol Taylor, and Shurita Thomas-Tate.

Approval of September 21, 2021 Minutes

The Initiative members reviewed the draft minutes of the September 21, 2021 meeting.

Anita Cotter, City Clerk noted members have an updated set of minutes at their place.

Bob Roberts moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Christa Moss and approved by the following vote. Ayes: Moss, Powers, Pratt, Roberts, Robeson, Schrag, Duran, and Neff. Nays: None. Absent: Block, Clark, Lewis, Oke-Thomas, Skahan, Taylor, and Thomas-Tate. Abstain: None

Clerk's Note: Due to a lack of quorum at the time for the approval of minutes, the minutes will require approval at the next meeting.



Opening Remarks

Co-Chair Duran welcomed Initiative members. She expressed the previous meeting was productive. She recognized Janeth Hernandez, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Intern, for her work in preparing various documents for today's meeting.

Co-Chair Neff noted Initiative members received an email Friday containing feedback from the previous meeting. He suggested taking a few minutes to reflect on that data. In discussing the data, Co-Chair Neff noted a feedback commonality among the sectors was a lack of diversity in leadership within organizations. He expressed his opinion another commonality was training education language appeared woven throughout the sectors. He noted there was plenty of conversation regarding collaboration as well as best practices.

Co-Chair Duran echoed Co-Chair Neff's comments and added a few additional observations she had regarding the data. She expressed seeing discussion regarding accountability, visibility, and transparency throughout the data. She asked for Initiative members to express their observations from the previous exercise.

Review of Previous Exercise Results

Christa Moss echoed the Co-Chairs' remarks, adding each category lacked the knowledge of how to recruit and retain. Co-Chair Neff noted he feels like that subject ties together with the lack of diversity in leadership roles. She expressed her opinion there is tough competition not just in Springfield, but in the region, for recruitment of underrepresented groups. Co-Chair Duran agreed, expressing that it is not enough to hire a person from a diverse background, make them a poster child for the organization, and then believe you have solved your problems.

Bob Roberts noted he broke down his analysis into three parts; understand, educate, and action. He asked himself, "what did I already understand" and "what do I need to understand". He also asked himself "where do we need to educate our community". Lastly, he asked "what items do we need to take action on".

Robin Robeson discussed her analysis, which was from the perspective of education. She expressed the difficulty the school district can have when they have elected representatives who take action counter to what the district is trying to achieve. She highlighted the concept of collaboration is vital.

Jeff Schrag asked how "arts, culture, and leisure" is not covered under other categories. Additionally, he asked how "public health" is not covered under other categories. Co-Chair Duran noted the five categories are the primary focus, and they derived from the assessment completed by members. She noted the goal is to excavate the common themes from the five categories. Mr. Schrag expressed the five categories feel like a poor framework that will complicate things.

Francine Pratt noted she did not have anything new to add.

Mike Powers expressed his feelings he is trying to catch up with the group, having missed the previous meeting. Co-Chair Neff took a moment to explain the prior exercise and the intent behind it.

Workgroups

Co-Chair Neff asked for members to walk around the room, spending time adding their observations to the new set of five prompts affixed to the wall.



Reconvene and Read Outs

After approximately sixteen minutes, the group reconvened to discuss their results (*See Exhibit A*).

Closing Remarks

Co-Chair Neff noted Janeth Hernandez will synthesize the data and it will be provided to members at the next meeting. He further noted Cora Scott will send out a draft statement the group can work on. He asked the group to come prepared with, if forced to provide recommendations today, what a few of those recommendations would be. He asked members to look at the data and begin to notice any common threads between group member observations.

Jeff Schrag requested an email be sent to group members with directions so that everyone has time to complete the assignment before the next meeting. The Co-Chairs noted the request and expressed they would get all members clear directions and plenty of time.

Adjourn

With no further business coming before the Mayor's Initiative on Equity and Equality, Robin Robeson moved to Adjourn. Christa Moss seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote. Ayes: Baron, Moss, Powers, Pratt**, Roberts, Robeson, Schrag, Duran, and Neff. Nays: None. Absent: Block, Clark, Lewis, Oke-Thomas, Skahan, Taylor, Thomas-Tate. Abstain: None.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Completed by Johnathan Saunders
Approved on November 5, 2021