CITY OF BELLEVUE

BELLEVUE DIVERSITY ADVISORY NETWORK

MEETING MINUTES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| October 23, 2017 | Bellevue City Hall |
| 6:00 p.m. | Room 1E-112 |

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Whitehead, Anthony Austin, Paulo Perez, Edilberto Flores, Mareth Flores, Jennifer Karls, Justin Daigneault, Tom Brewer, Haruka Kojima, Alaric Bien, Jingdong Yu, Chinar Bopshetty

MEMBERS ABSENT: Beabe Akpojovwo, Eloisa Tran, Andrew Kelly, Aleksandra Poseukova, Margie Ye, Aisha Kabani, Rita Badh, Maria Batayola, Mohamed Bakr

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Manuel, Manoj Simha

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m. by Chair Austin who presided.

A. Roll Call of Members

B. Adoption of the Agenda

C. Adoption of the Minutes

All members were present with the exception of Linda Whitehead, who arrived at 6:22 p.m., Justin Daigneault, who arrived at 6:25 p.m., and Beabe Akpojovwo, Eloisa Tran, Andrew Kelly, Aleksandra Poseukova, Margie Ye, Aisha Kabani, Rita Badh, Maria Batayola and Mohamed Bakr.

Mark Manuel, Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator, took a moment to introduce intern Manoj Simha.

There was agreement to move agenda item 2 to follow item 6.

A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Mr. Yu. The motion was seconded by Ms. Karls and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the September 26, 2017, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Bien. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brewer and the motion carried unanimously.

3. BDAN Subcommittees

A. Definitions and Characteristics

B. Solidify Outreach Teams

Mr. Manuel noted that on September 26 the Committee talked about the BDAN driving factors, the Council vision, the BDAN mission statement and guiding principles, the advantage plan, and the personal purpose statements. Information was also discussed regarding the Outreach and Communication, Engagement, and Culturally Responsive Government subcommittees.

Mr. Manuel said his review of the personal purpose statements helped him identify some themes, including working for a better and more encompassing community, advocating for those in the community, and to represent the various communities. The statements also made it clear that each Committee member wants to be active and engaged members of the community, to be part of something that ultimately will effect change, to be involved in civil activities, to be knowledgeable about what is happening in the city, and to work toward building strong communities. It is clear that each Committee member comes to the table with a lot of skill, talent, energy and influence to contribute.

Two projects have been identified, and the Outreach and Communication and Culturally Responsive Government subcommittees will be working together. The process will help define the shared purpose and empower the Committee to do its work. The first project is finding a shared purpose with the city. An internal city team with members from various departments has been put together, each of whom has committed to working with a BDAN team.

The second project is the community mapping exercise. The project is aimed at determining the makeup of the city. He said whenever he visits Crossroads Park he sees a group of Asian elders dancing. All around the city there are small pockets of people doing amazing things. In the community room at Crossroads Shopping Center there are people who are teaching Indian classical dance and others who are teaching languages.

Mr. Manuel said the charge for the Culturally Responsive Government subcommittee is to build relationships with city staff in various departments. He said that will keep him out of having to play an intermediary role. The subcommittee should learn about city processes around gathering information and engaging with the community, and seek to further culturally diverse representation in those city processes. The subcommittee members will work with the city’s internal team in reviewing and refining concepts and ideas. The members will need an interest in learning about city functions; be strategy and process oriented; be patient; and be flexible in being able to meet during the day with city staff. They will also need to enjoy problem solving and have the ability to relay and articulate community needs.

Mr. Bien said he understood the need to meet with city staff during business hours, but suggested that if the government is truly trying to be culturally responsive staff should also be willing to make some accommodations relative to meeting times. Mr. Manuel said requests can always be made to meet outside of regular business hours.

Ms. Bopshetty pointed out that having to meet during business hours could serve as a constraint on BDAN members wanting to serve on the subcommittee. Mr. Yu said a compromise on the part of city staff might be to schedule meetings at 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Manuel said the Outreach and Communication subcommittee is charged with developing an outreach process, find ways to capture data, map the groups, and gather information to provide to the Engagement subcommittee for follow-up. The members will need to enjoy connecting with new people; not be afraid to make cold calls or connect with persons they do not know; and be able to articulate the “why” of the work being done.

Ms. Flores asked if the city will be providing resources for capturing data and storing documents. Mr. Manuel said all documents officially produced by the Committee is subject to public records requests. Where collected data and information is used to produce a report, the report itself becomes the item subject to a public records request rather than all of the supplemental material. The data and documents will need to be housed internally, possibly on an Sharepoint site. The BDAN is not a full board or commission and it is as such not obligated by the more stringent rules.

With regard to the Engagement subcommittee, Mr. Manuel said the concept is that after the Outreach and Communication subcommittee gathers information, it will be the Engagement subcommittee that will make the connections and organize and make site visits. The subcommittee members will need to feel comfortable meeting folks; be very deliberate; and tend to relationships in one fashion or another.

Mr. Manuel asked the members to circle their chairs by subcommittee. He directed the members of each subcommittee to share why they chose to join their subcommittee and why it is important to them. He pointed out that in moving forward it will be important for the members of each subcommittee to understand where each is coming from and to ultimately be on the same page.

Mr. Manuel then asked the three subcommittees to think about the questions that will need to be answered in order to carry out their projects. He said the questions will help to inform the work of the consultant. Additionally, the subcommittee members were asked what will need to be taken into consideration in developing the process. The subcommittees were directed to group similar questions and to order them chronologically based on what needs to be known first.

\*\*BREAK\*\*

Mr. Manuel asked the groups to share their findings.

Mr. Daigneault said the questions developed by the Outreach and Communication subcommittee were: Will we have the opportunity to connect with experts or consultants regarding examples of the process in action already? What type of communication currently works? Do you have current research on best practices in connecting? How do we find groups or people in the community and/or engage when we are not part of that community? Are there any particular targeted groups to be identified? What data or information do we already have at the city level about who is in the city? What groups are already known to be in the city? What database or software will be used to store the information? What is in it for the groups? What will the information be used for long-term? How do we define success? What if groups do not want to be included in the database?

Ms. Bopshetty suggested adding a question around how capturing the data can be an ongoing process. Mr. Manuel said that comes back to the question of how the data will be managed. Ms. Flores added that it is easy to create a database, but stressed the need to make sure the data that gets input is good data.

Mr. Brewer reported that some of the questions developed by the Engagement subcommittee mirrored those mentioned by the Outreach and Communication subcommittee. He said the questions were: What existing databases or directories are available? Is there any central data collection? Who do we need to engage, who are they and where are they? How do we communicate across language barriers? What do we think people want? What topics do the citizens of Bellevue want to engage in? Why would the different cultural groups want to engage with the BDAN? What types of metrics will be used? How do we define success? What will be different for the city when people are engaged? Do we know enough about people to be sensitive in approaching them? Are there potential third rail topics, issues or questions that should be avoided when reaching out to people? How do we create sustainable relationships? What can we learn from other communities or past efforts? Who is going to do the actual engagement work? How can we avoid overwhelming the same few groups of people?

Mr. Manuel suggested the Culturally Responsive Government subcommittee may want to weigh in regarding usage of the list. It certainly is not a free for all and it deserves a systemic look at how the list should be utilized given that it will be a hot commodity.

Ms. Bopshetty suggested some consideration should be given to some form of an opt-in and list five things the group could engage around. Ms. Flores agreed. She said if the city decides as a whole that Mr. Manuel’s office will manage the list, there will need to be policies created about how the list is to be used.

Ms. Kojima stressed the need to avoid simply using the various groups to further a city agenda. People do not want to feel used.

Ms. Whitehead said how decisions will be made regarding the data is a critical question. There should be a clear understanding of what will be done with the information once it is collected, and how the various groups will be impacted. People will want to feel they are involved in a city process, not just being used.

Mr. Bien said he has been on the other side and knows what it is like for people to constantly be asking him for feedback, only to never hear from them again. He said the county’s Immigrant and Refugee task force one time in the past conducted community focus groups. At the same time, a juvenile justice group wanted to reach out to the same groups, so the two groups combined their efforts. He suggested consolidating all of the city’s surveys and questionnaires.

Mr. Yu said the Culturally Responsive Government subcommittee came up with a list of questions: What are the current ways in which the city collects data? What kinds of information are collected? Is there any kind of information the government does not disclose to the public? What are the measures of success? What is the City Manager-decided outcome from the BDAN? Who is empowered to seek community input that will be shared department to department? What is the authority and autonomy of each city department that will be involved and how do they work together? What are the things the city can help (inaudible)? What are the different ways to reference (inaudible) about certain issues? How does the city reach out to community members for input currently, and how can we ensure that people are part of the decision-making process? What does the city consider in making policy decisions? How do issues come before the City Council, and what kinds of issues are brought forward? What is the process (inaudible), how are policy decisions made, and what is the current decision-making process? What are the parameters for use of the BDAN information list?

Mr. Manuel allowed that currently there are no parameters and said one step going forward will be to build parameters. The BDAN will need to think about what safeguards should be put in place in order for the list to be effective.

Mr. Bien suggested consideration should be given to the degree to which the staff are representative of the community in terms of diversity. He said he has noted that often when city presentations are made, the presenters are usually white. Ms. Kojima said she has observed the same thing in participating in Bellevue Essentials. Mr. Bien said he was not implying that white people cannot be culturally responsive, rather that if the composition of the staff better reflected the community as a whole, people would potentially have more of an affinity with the city.

Ms. Bopshetty agreed that at some point in time, the makeup of the city staff will need to change in order to see different decisions made. Mr. Manuel said equalized representation is a big deal for him relative to power sharing.

Mr. Bien pointed out that at least in the city of Redmond, when one goes to city hall seeking a building permit, all of the permit techs are white men. An immigrant, even if they speak English, may not because of their background feel comfortable interacting with them. That is something that may fall under culturally responsible government.

2. TEMPERATURE CHECK

Chair Austin reported that Beabe Akpojovwo had taken a leave of absence from the BDAN, and that Rita Badh recently took a new job in Sammamish and no longer works or lives in Bellevue, thus she has asked to be removed as a member BDAN.

Chair Austin noted that the BDAN has accomplished much of the visioning work and is compiling the by-laws and procedures. He invited the members to offer comments in regard to how things are going and if things could be done better and what if anything should be done differently.

Mr. Bien said he would prefer not to spend half an hour of meeting time on gracious space. The group has come along far enough that the exercise is no longer needed.

Mr. Manuel said he has purposely chosen to attach several items to each email rather than sending out an email every time there is something of note for the members. He asked if he should continue.

Ms. Bopshetty said the BDAN needs to figure out some sort of communication technology. Email is okay, but it can get lost or overlooked. There should be a set way for the members to communicate with each other and to store everything that is created. Chair Austin noted that in September Ms. Kabani started a BDAN Facebook page that can serve as a private group. That would mean, of course, having all members using Facebook. Setting up a Sharepoint would accomplish the same thing. Mr. Manuel said the rules still need to be explored. He allowed that the conversation should be continued and said regular feedback will only make things better.

6. RECAP OF NEXT STEPS

Mr. Manuel shared with the members information about parking at City Hall given the construction disruptions.

Mr. Manuel commented that one of the first things he put on after coming to work for the city was the Diversity Advantage breakfast. The event provided the opportunity to share information about what was planned and what was going on at the time. Now things are at a point where the BDAN could report on what it has accomplished and what it is currently working on. The event could also be used by the BDAN members to gather good information for the community mapping exercise. The next event will be a dinner and is slated for December 14 at 6:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Flores. The motion was seconded by Ms. Karls and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Austin adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.