



Community Involvement Committee



Advisory & Infrastructure Subcommittee Meeting
January 14, 2025 - 4pm-5:30pm
Virtual Meeting
Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

- **Present:** Brian O., Jen M. (co-chair), Renai B., P. Thang (co-chair), Lung Wah L.
- **Excused:** Brian R., Quay'Roene M.
- **Absent:**
- **Staff:** KellyAnn C
- **Guests:** Dani Bernstein

NOTES:

4:00-4:15 Introductions & Review Agenda

Jen welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves with their favorite season. Winter (1), Spring (2), Fall (3), Summer (1), Spring/Fall/transitional (2)

Everyone reviewed the [agenda](#).

4:15-5:00 GUESTS: former OCI Directors Dani Bernstein and JR Lilly ([invite](#))

KA shared that JR has had a family emergency and is unable to make it this evening.

Jen welcomed Dani and shared this this committee is looking at infrastructure since we're seeing that the County needs some infrastructure to implement recommendations by the CIC and other advisory bodies. In our process we reviewed the 2021 resolution and saw it calls out some very robust community engagement processes- like a community engagement plan for each department, and deeper engagement beyond the CBAC process. We're curious how that was set into motion and why those recommendations were made and how it met the moment. Just three or four years later it's as if we're back at square one, and where is the institutional knowledge and skillset.

Dani: thank you for the context and questions sent in advance!

Background: I was director of OCI from 2017-2022 - it's fun to see a few familiar faces! The resolution came about because one of the priorities from a CIC retreat was looking at the county's community engagement efforts more broadly. They started without a focus but more trying to get a handle on engagement across the county. In that they found a resolution from 1995 on community engagement - that seemed to be the last time the board made a broad statement or commitment around community engagement. So they decided their work would be to update the resolution for the modern age, especially centering on equity. They drafted the resolution and sought input from the larger CIC and commissioners, and brought it to the Board for adoption which they did. I think the CIC saw it as a step one - make a commitment to engagement grounded in shared values, and then move forward with next steps. The work intended to follow the resolution was how to put it into action.

Barriers to the work moving: the pandemic happened at the same time as the resolution which shifted

priorities. OCI also staffed the Charter Review Committee which took a lot of OCI's capacity. The work I was doing when I left was engaging each department to gain a basic understanding on how they do engagement, what metrics they use, etc and the hope was that maybe OCI could create a standard annual assessment to get a sense of how things are going, measure engagement, and create common metrics around engagement.

Jen: at the time it seems the commissioners and chair at the time were agreeable to the recommendations. It says the chair directs departments to make timely plans. We don't know the entire landscape, but last year we tried to make a survey to try to get the lay of the land from departments around engagement with the budget and nobody responded to them. Since then we have heard from offices about community engagement - but we're wondering if there's any way to follow up on the resolution and provide resources. We also realized that the CBACs weren't in the code or charter but do take a lot of resources. What are the barriers you saw the OCI having in supporting broad and inclusive engagement?

- Dani: the biggest issue was capacity - we were mostly a staff of two. Once we had the Charter Review position we were able to transition that into a policy and review role. Supporting advisory groups takes a huge amount of staff capacity so we chose to focus on the advisory groups to try to bring more county-wide support and resources. We worked on some standards for advisory groups, bringing staff support in - I think that was helpful but advisory groups are just one slice of the engagement pie. As with many things at the County - community engagement gets very siloed - lots of programs do a lot of events, outreach, feedback, engagement etc and others do very little, it varies widely. It doesn't feel like anyone at the County has a good picture of county-wide engagement.

Thang: In your experience as director, how was the relationship between the County commissioners and the OCI? Or the departments and OCI? Do people understand OCI's role and what it could do for them?

- Dani: in my time I felt the OCI was close to the Chair's office - Dani reported to the Chair and had a policy advisor from the Chair's office. I don't think commissioners had a great understanding or awareness of our role - they often come in with specific priorities and do their own engagement. In departments I also didn't think there was a lot of knowledge. When I started there wasn't a lot of internal clarity with the CIC and OCI about clarity of role for both the CIC and the OCI - once we did that we were able to build some relationships. We were able to make connections with folks who support advisory committees at the county to make connections and share resources. Due to limited capacity that was the main focus, that with the CBAC.

Jen: the CIC and OCI have been around since the 80s - decades of history and people still don't know what it is and what the roles are... do you have insight on why that is?

- Dani: I think the office and CIC have served different roles through time. There was a time when they were more outward facing and community facing - how it's been since 2018 or so is more an internal resource. Some of that is leadership and people just establishing different roles over time. There was an audit of the CIC and the office in the early 2000s that pinpointed the issue of lack of clarity on role. I don't think that was really followed up on. The charter language is what establishes the CIC and OCI and it doesn't have a clearly defined purpose so folks in leadership of OCI and on the CIC can shape the role a bit.

Thang: During your tenure as director did you use any metrics of engagement? How does the Chair determine the effectiveness of the office?

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- Dani: probably the only clearly defined and publicly reported metrics were in the budget - with program offers. We're required to have some performance metrics as part of that. We also had some internal data tracking - especially around making sure we were doing effective outreach and recruitment for openings, looking at number of applicants and the diversity of those applicants, and an annual survey of members and satisfaction of their volunteer experience. That was more internal and reported to the Chair.
 - Thang: internal to the chair or all the departments?
 - Dani: our office, the chair, maybe the CIC especially around their recruitment process.

Jen: what infrastructure would you recommend that we recommend for OCI to be able to live into the intentions of this resolution and grow itself as a resource? Especially with the coming and going of staff.

- Dani: this is just my opinion, but my perspective is that the Office won't be able to grow a lot in terms of staff capacity especially given the budget environment- at least the office could have the capacity to develop more resources for staff in terms of training, guides, concrete offerings for staff who do community engagement across the County that is some of what's happening. I don't think the office has to be the expert, a lot of staff at the County do engagement with very specific communities, it's more about OCI being a hub and support. Coordinating between programs and connecting across silos. I feel like the office could also be a place where county-wide direction and policies could be hashed out. One thing that has been in process for years is a county-wide stipend recommendation. The real challenge is capacity, OCI needs more people to do more. The intention of hiring for policy & training was to expand that capacity - but even with 3 it is challenging when you're directly staffing advisory groups as well.

Jen: I worry about the focus on advisory bodies since they are higher-barrier and can be staffed/filled with special interest, if they're the only or primary way to have your say that seems like a challenge.

- Dani: yes we need more opportunities to be involved, more opportunities for civic education, etc. At the end of the day advisory boards will be a small group of people - there are parts of the county where an advisory committee signing off on something is the beginning and end of community involvement.
- Dani: I think it would be very interesting to have departments put something to paper on their engagement efforts. We only had very initial conversations. Folks who are more internal always have struggled more with community engagement questions but getting what could each dept present us right now about their engagement work, or their awareness of it. What strategies do they use, do they have dedicated staff, where does the responsibility sit. Could be interesting to look at the [Workforce Equity Plan](#) for models of how metrics and equity could be reviewed on a county-wide level. That's in the HR area, and departments have their own HRs, so that is different but it is a sample of a county-wide initiative.

Renai: are you still with the County?

- Dani: yes I'm in the auditor's office now. So I can actually drop a few links to the audits in 2002: [2002 CIC Audit](#), [CIC Audit Follow Up](#)

Thang: I have been on the CIC for 4 years - why do you think there's so much turnover?

- Dani: I was with the office 5 years, the director prior to that was there 1 year, and the director before that was in the role 10-15 years. There has been some variety - there was another person in KA's role for a couple years and someone before them that I worked with. It can be a challenging role to be in a small office in a very large organization. I left for personal reasons and wanted to limit evening meetings (about to have a kid), career growth, personal dynamics on the committee which can be hard. The nice thing about a small office is an opportunity to
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come in and bring your own vision.

Gabriela: thank you for coming and sharing your experiences and perspectives! Understanding what we've walked into - you're validating a lot here. Going off of Thang's questions - does the County do exit interviews that document why people are leaving?

- Dani: good question - there's exit interviews for some positions but not a standard requirement. I did do an exit interview with the person in KA's role before but I don't know for other roles. I don't remember if I had one or not and I don't think it's standard practice.

Amara: thank you so much Dani for your reflections and backstory of the office. I feel a little sad because I see a pattern of starting over happening over and over again and see how it traps a small office in a big bureaucracy so it can't do much more than a small niche. I'm curious if there's anything you'd add - it seems like CBACs drain this office since there isn't a dedicated staff person to it. There's also high turnover of CBAC coordinators, so it seems like the CBACs are a huge responsibility for the OCI.

Renai: there's so many advisory boards, why does CBAC fall under OCI and not other advisory boards?

- Amara: I think because it is in code that we provide guidance and facilitate the central and non-D CBACs.
- Dani: I think in general there's a huge underestimation it takes to adequately support advisory groups so they are successful. OCI directly staffing 3-4 advisory bodies is a huge part of the capacity and goes back to the challenge of the office doing more. I don't know the history of the CBACs in OCI and in my time it was due for a revamping but we never had capacity to do that - so we couldn't address the issues that were festering and JR could talk more about because it came to a head in his time. CBAC staff support is also very varied - some have multiple staff and others have one part time staff.
- Thang: where is that OCI supports CBACs in code?
 - Gabriela: [CBAC Code](#) 3.300

Dani: on a positive note the CIC is in a MUCH better place - the CIC was kind of stuck and not functioning. Seeing you all keep doing your work and put out recommendation letters is a big change from when I first started - that has been the biggest change. The Charter Review Committee also had a lot of diversity of membership which was a big change. The math around capacity stays challenging.

Jen: I also am concerned about the narrow swath of community consulted - but I'm also worried if we get rid of advisory committees then we lose one stop-gap where the county is forced to hear community voices. Thank you for saying what you did about the CIC but we're not sure if what we're doing is helpful - it takes a long time to work things out and then we put recommendations into a black hole. I wonder if that's how it feels to be on every advisory board in the County.

- Dani: there are departments and programs that go way beyond their advisory bodies: surveys, listening sessions, working with community partners, etc. It's hard to know what is happening. A challenge with advisory groups, if they're advisory, people may not follow the advise. We did have a lot of conversations with the chairs office to have a feedback loop on how recommendations are responded to and followed up on. That didn't get fully figured out. I personally feel like advisory bodies are effective as a piece of the community engagement infrastructure. All the programs need to have a lot of tactics and the staffing/capacity to do them all. The budget for example has surveys, town halls/listening sessions, and the CBACs.

Jen: if you had a magic wand what would you have OCI do?

- Dani: a robust catalogue of trainings, a bunch of opportunities for staff to connect and share
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best practices, have centralized policies on engagement especially stipends- having OCI be fully staffed and have abundant resources for people to want to know about and want to take advantage of.

Jen asked for any last questions and thanked Dani.

Dani shared that staff know how to find me and I definitely recommend you reach out to JR to chat with him for his experience.

5:00-5:25 Debrief guests & Homework:

Debrief Guests:

Jen: I thought folks had good questions - thank you!

Do we have recommendations that may have come out from what we heard?

- Thang: I felt that there is not really a clear definition of what OCI is supposed to be - they talked closely with the Chair but the other commissioners don't know what OCI is. It seems that other departments don't know what OCI is as well. Maybe a recommendation is to **have a clear, well stated purpose and role of OCI as a department.**
- Lung Wah: Now there is a new group of Commissioners it is a very good time to let the new commissioners know that OCI exists, recommendations of the CIC, and what the CIC and OCI do.
 - Jen: maybe there should be onboarding info about what is OCI, what resources are available, etc. Then OCI needs those resources.
- Amara: we've spent a lot of time asking what does OCI want to be and it makes sense it needs to be reflected by leadership- right now is a good time to clarify strategic vision. We've begun that internally and at some point will need to present to the Chair and institutionalize it once we get agreement on the vision. Then we need to build capacity to grow that plan. I think OCI and the CIC should be leading what we do as OCI, not have the County tell us what we're doing.

5:25-5:30 Next steps:

Debrief Homework

We agreed to review these 3 documents and come back with a response to "If we were to make a recommendation around that, what would the recommendation be?"

- [OCI's Code Section](#)
- [Resolution](#)
- [CIC Letter on the Resolution](#)

Comments on the homework

- [Thang's Reflections](#)

Who could we hear from to keep this moving forward?

Next CIC meeting

- Renai: we're also planning for the main CIC meeting an elevator pitch activity. This could be helpful for this group as well.
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Questions

- Thang: want to better understand the relationship between OCI, the Chair, and the Commissioners and the role of Commissioners. It seemed like Amara wanted us/OCI to come up with our definitions over the Commissioners doing that.
 - Jen: the fact that OCI only reports to the chair and the chair has sole discretion over hiring and firing and all things OCI, it makes it so if there's a chair who doesn't care about involvement that could have a big impact on the office.

Next meeting:

- Invite JR
- Debrief all the notes and start looking at what recommendations we have that could support the infrastructure.
- Look at the charter and resolution homework.

Meeting Logistics

- Confirm next meeting time/date - Tuesday, February 11 on zoom.
- What went well? What can be improved for next time?
- Any CIC appreciations or accomplishments to share?

Zoom chat record:

to Everyone

Intros: name, pronouns and anything else about you that you want to share, and your favorite season



You to Everyone 4:12 PM

our totals: Winter (1), Spring (2), Fall (3), Summer (1), Spring/Fall/transitional (2)

You to Everyone 4:13 PM

Agenda for reference:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R-dUo2Lmluc4DmzGPSXxwpEt3-1l23yh6HfQZtWZfqo/edit?usp=drive_link

Renai Bell to Everyone 4:15 PM

I need to walk around so I'll turn video off but I'm listening!

You to Everyone 4:30 PM

I believe it was the year after the CIC

Dani Bernstein (they/them) to Everyone 4:50 PM

2002 CIC audit:

https://multco.us/file/citizen_involvement_committee%3A_roles_need_clarification/download

You to Everyone 4:50 PM

Thang you froze!

Dani Bernstein (they/them) to Everyone 4:51 PM

And the follow up to the audit: https://multco.us/file/follow_up_on_the_cic_audit/download

Lung Wah to Everyone 4:51 PM

I am good for now. Thank you Jen. Good to See you again Dani. I came in the year Dani was about to leave from OCI

You to Everyone 4:57 PM

WESP (also linked in notes):

<https://multco.us/programs/safety-trust-and-belonging-workforce-equity-initiative>

Brian O. He/Him to Everyone 4:59 PM

I need to step away for a moment

Pau Thang to Everyone 5:03 PM

i do not see the need for supporting CBAC in the code. Can you guide me where it stated?

Gabriela Trinidad (OCI) to Everyone 5:04 PM

https://multco.us/file/chapter_3%3A_board_of_commissioners/download

Chapter 3.300-

You to Everyone 5:25 PM

Thang's thoughts, which will be in the Research folder

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_da_5wVf6jflps1mge9g1S-FAAViLj4P/edit?usp=drive_web&oid=103435619739402596170&rtpof=true

(and linked in the notes)

(with the items re-linked!)
