



Multnomah County Charter Review Community Engagement Subcommittee

April 7, 2022, 2:00 – 3:00 pm

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 6

Purpose: Provide progress updates on community engagement partnership

Attendees

Committee Members:

- Maja Harris (she/her)
- Theresa Mai (she/her)
- Ana González Muñoz (she/ella)
- Donovan Scribes (he/him)
- J'reyesha Brannon (she/her)

Absent:

- Jude Perez (they/them)

Staff:

- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator
- Dani Bernstein (they/them), Director of the Office of Community Involvement

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. No one observed this meeting.

Welcome

Kali went over Zoom logistics and summarized the agenda.

Discussion about community engagement partnership

Dani shared that since the subcommittee had last met, their office had reached out to eight organizations, including some suggested by the subcommittee members at their last meeting. Those organizations were: Coalition for Communities of Color (CCC), JLA Public Involvement, EnvirolIssues, SeeChange, Nextup, Multicultural Collaborative, Community Engagement Liaison Services, and Espousal Strategies. Dani said they heard back from a number of organizations that they did not have capacity for this project or were not taking on new projects. They said they had spoken with three of these organizations, and two (Espousal Strategies and EnvirolIssues) were interested and working on submitting proposals to the Office of Community Involvement (OCI).

Kali said Espousal Strategies and EnvirolIssues seemed like they would bring different strengths to the process. She said she and Dani did have a sense of which organization might align better with the

subcommittee's goals, but they wanted to touch base with the subcommittee since the kind of input and strategies the subcommittee wanted out of a community engagement partner could determine which organization they selected after viewing the organizations' proposals.

Kali said that they hoped to start working with the community engagement partner by May, which meant their work would be concentrated in May and June. She said it was important to think intentionally about where the committee would be in its process during that time so they could integrate community engagement strategies that would be most effective at that stage of the process. She noted that subcommittees were aiming to wrap up their work in May and that currently most of the subcommittees had identified which topics they were focused on researching. She suggested that community engagement might be most helpful to subcommittees in refining specific proposals, and thought they could work with the subcommittees to develop key questions related to their topics that would benefit from community feedback. She asked what kinds of engagement strategies the subcommittee would like to prioritize in soliciting this type of feedback.

Kali said that if the subcommittee was most interested in prioritizing survey development and the processing of data, EnviroIssues was a larger organization with quite a bit of internal capacity for that type of work. She said if there were a lot of survey responses, she thought it would be a strength of theirs to analyze that data. She said she thought they also had more resources to focus on communications like social media. She said if the subcommittee thought it was more important to prioritize community listening sessions or focus groups that would likely be a strength for Espousal Strategies. She said it seemed like they also had close ties to community organizations, which the subcommittee had valued in earlier conversations. She said EnviroIssues also had connections, but her understanding was they contracted with someone to facilitate that work, which added some layers. She said both organizations were aware that the MCCRC wanted any focus groups or listening sessions to be accessible in other languages besides English. She asked the subcommittee what they were interested in prioritizing.

Maja said that ideally they would have been able to hit the ground running and educate the community about Charter review. She said that now they would need to educate at the same time as soliciting feedback. She said that one thing the CCC had done effectively for the Portland Charter Commission was engage organizations to share the word on social media. She said she thought it would be helpful if organizations could pick up and distribute content about the county's Charter review process. Maja said she thought it was a good idea to have some press releases that they could send out to neighborhood groups and community organizations. She said she would love to develop a toolkit similar to what the CCC had created for the Portland Charter Commission.

Jay agreed with Maja.

Theresa noted that given the amount of topics subcommittees were looking into, a survey might be overwhelming, which made her lean toward prioritizing listening sessions. Theresa said that Espousal sounded like it aligned with the values the subcommittee members had identified.

Maja agreed with Theresa that it would not be productive to do any long complicated surveys that asked people to weigh in on all of the topics. She said there were some very straightforward and compelling questions that had the potential to engage the public. For example, removing the residency requirement to serve on the Charter Review Committee. She thought that would be a good conversation to have with community.

Donovan agreed with Maja. He said that as a member of the Safety and Justice Subcommittee he would be interested in hearing community members' thoughts about where in the county the evictions process should live if that was removed from the Sheriff's Office. Donovan also asked if Kali could share any information about the diversity of the staff for Espousal Strategies or Envirolssues.

Kali said she could look into it, but did not have numbers to share at that moment.

Ana said that based on her experience with groups she had worked with and facilitated, it did not always work to bring in a facilitator with whom they were not familiar. She said she had been envisioning that she would facilitate some focus groups herself. She said that it was important to her that a facilitator be fluent in Spanish since a lot of energy was lost if they were not. She said if the facilitator was bilingual, it was important to her that they were also part of the culture. She noted those were very specific asks.

Kali said that she thought their community engagement partner might run some focus groups, but she thought they would probably do more of the organizational and strategy work, including identifying organizations to run focus groups in their own communities. She said that if Ana was interested in running a focus group, there would be opportunities for her to talk about that with the community engagement partner.

Kali also said that OCI was expecting proposals from the two organizations within the next couple of days and they planned to choose one quickly. They had wanted to consult with the subcommittee more before making a decision, and there were a few budget and contracting pieces that would need to be worked out, but Kali hoped to see that move forward relatively quickly.

Maja asked if in the meantime the county could send out a press release about what topics the subcommittees were focusing on, since that at least would offer some community contact.

Kali said that she had spoken to County Communications and they had put out a release on the website, although she had not heard any responses to it. She said County Communications had also shared some social media posts about Charter review and she would speak to them about additional tools. She said she could reach out to the county commissioners' offices about sharing information in their newsletters.

Donovan said that he had been prepared to volunteer to make a go at a press release and asked if that was something the community engagement partner would work on.

Kali said that was not something they had discussed.

Dani said that Communications had sent out a press release ahead of the full committee's last meeting and they thought Communications would continue to do that ahead of future meetings. They said that included some of the topic areas the subcommittees were researching. Kali linked that in the chat (Appendix A).

Donovan asked if the Community Engagement Subcommittee could review drafts of press releases before they were sent out.

Kali said she did not know if that would be possible on a reasonable timeline, but said that if there were points the subcommittee wanted to include in a press release, they could share that. She said she thought providing guidance upfront rather would allow for a smoother process.

Donovan said he would like to do that. He said he did not think the press release communicated what the subcommittee was aiming for, which was to inform people about what the Charter was and why it was a big deal that citizens were reviewing it.

Kali said if anyone on the subcommittee wanted to put together key points, she was happy to share those with Communications, and expected they would be open to incorporating them.

Donovan asked if there were still plans to film short videos about Charter review.

Kali said there had been some scheduling challenges with that and she was not sure what would happen.

Donovan asked who had volunteered to be in the videos.

Kali said Marc, Theresa, and Danica. She added that Nina had volunteered, but hadn't been available for filming dates. She noted they did not currently have a member of the Equitable Representation Subcommittee represented in that group.

Donovan asked what the format for the videos would be.

Kali said it was up to them to work out the script. The prompts Communications had suggested were why people chose to serve on the Charter Review Committee and why they thought the work was important. She said the idea was that each committee member would talk for about 30 seconds. She said that for videos about the subcommittees, they would have a script describing what each subcommittee was focused on. She said there would be one longer video about what Charter review was and why people were involved and then a shorter video about each of the subcommittees.

Maja suggested that the subcommittees could share questions related to their work to help engage people. Those could be included in the videos or press releases, and she hoped would bring some people into the conversation.

Jay said they had not gotten very many public comments, but being able to respond to those by saying whether the committee was considering any of them. She said that it was late for the committee to be considering new ideas, so it would be helpful to ask questions to get feedback on what they were already discussing.

Donovan said that if the MCCRC supported it, they could send out a release inviting press to their next subcommittee meeting and answer questions about Multnomah County Charter review.

Wrap-up and next steps

Kali said that she and Dani would move ahead with finalizing the community engagement partner. She acknowledged how challenging it was to schedule a meeting time for the group of people in this subcommittee. She said she would try to arrange a time for them to have a meeting with the community engagement partner once they were on board. If that was not possible, then subcommittee members might meet with the partner individually or in small groups to provide feedback on their strategy.

Kali said she had heard a lot of other ideas floated and asked subcommittee members to share which they wanted to prioritize.

Theresa said that once the subcommittees submitted their recommendations she would love to have a Q&A opportunity with the greater community, like Jay and Donovan had been talking about. She hoped that would spread to media outlets, too.

Kali said that she thought most of the subcommittees had narrowed their foci enough that she thought it would be easier to communicate about their work, even if not all of the researched topics resulted in recommended changes to the Charter.

Theresa wrote in the chat that the videos were also a priority.

Donovan said he would like to see a forum happen. He said that if it was for community and not just media, he would like to see that happen later in a day. He said that after the Safety & Justice Subcommittee met on Monday they could work on getting information to Communications to share with media.

Kali asked if the subcommittee agreed these were the priorities. Members indicated agreement.

Donovan said that later in the process, like in August, he would love for the committee to write an op-ed about its priorities for the ballot initiatives.

Kali said it was never too early to start planning for that.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

00:12:33 Maja Harris: Can we put the agenda in the chat please? :-)

00:36:39 Donovan Scribes: I know you asked this some time ago Maja but here's the agenda:
<https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Community%20Engagement%20Subcommittee%20Meeting%20Agenda%204.7.22.pdf>

00:42:03 Kali Odell: <https://www.multco.us/multnomah-county/news/multnomah-county-charter-review-committee-meets-march-16-report-progress>

00:47:13 Theresa Mai (she/her): I can wear a colorful fanny pack

00:52:45 Theresa Mai (she/her): SNOW SUITS

00:53:53 Maja Harris: I have to hop off, thanks everyone!

00:58:24 Theresa Mai (she/her): Another priority is getting the videos done.

01:00:57 Ana Gonzalez Munoz: I agree with Donovan