



Multnomah County Charter Review

Equitable Representation Subcommittee

February 21, 2022, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 2

Purpose: To discuss the subcommittee's approach to its work.

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

- Samantha Gladu (she/they)
- Annie Kallen (she/her)
- Jude Perez (they/them)
- Maja Harris (she/her)
- Timur Ender (he/him)

Absent:

- Meikelo Cabbage (he/him)

Staff:

- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. There were no observers at this meeting.

Welcome

Samantha opened the meeting and summarized the agenda.

Subcommittee values

The subcommittee did a fist of five to assess whether they wanted to spend more time discussing values or if they thought the values conversation from the MCCRC's February 16th meeting served that purpose. All of the members present held up three fingers, indicating no strong preference either way.

Timur mentioned that there were a couple of values he might want to add to the full committee's discussion. He brought up that there might be some tension between what the subcommittee would ideally want to recommend and what is most likely to be supported by the electorate.

Annie said that without some kind of polling, it might be hard to know what might or might not pass at the ballot box. She said that as a citizen committee, they would need to do their best to represent the perspective of the County community.

Timur agreed and said that while polls are informative, he would not want to make recommendations based on them.

Samantha concurred that they should make decisions based on values.

Equity questions

Annie presented a revised list of equity questions based on the Equity and Empowerment Lens training the MCCRC had on December 1st. She summarized the categories for consideration: people, place, process, and power. Then she shared questions or key words for each category that she thought would help frame the subcommittee's conversations. She asked the subcommittee members to respond with their thoughts on key equity questions to ask.

Maja mentioned the importance of "place" in some of their work, particularly related to county districts.

Jude contributed that it was important not just to highlight how people are impacted by where they live, but also where they receive County services.

Maja added that she thought it was important to ask about the distribution of resources because how elections are structured impacts who is elected, and that influences how and where resources flow.

Timur proposed in the chat (Appendix A): "How will this recommendation make it easier to repair historic underinvestment in specific areas" and Samantha suggested that might be able to stand in for the question posed about the flow of resources.

Annie made adjustments to the questions in real time and then suggested that as homework subcommittee members consider whether there is anything they want to add or change to the list of equity questions. That draft list is included in Appendix B.

Calendar and list of speakers

Samantha shared a draft of meeting dates and potential topics and speakers for the subcommittee to focus on each date (Appendix C). She pointed out that county staff had suggested having recommendations together by May.

Kali clarified that the recommendations do not have to go to the Board of Commissioners in May, but that she had suggested May as a target because the full MCCRC would need time to deliberate on subcommittees' recommendations to decide whether or not they would be referred to the voters. She also pointed out Katherine would need time to draft ballot titles based on recommendations the full MCCRC approved and that the drafting process might include receiving and incorporating feedback from the MCCRC, which would also take time.

Timur suggested adding a conversation with the Portland Charter Commission to the schedule to learn about what they are planning to recommend for Portland elections. He also brought up the idea of extending subcommittee meetings to an hour and a half.

Maja asked whether it made more sense to talk with the Portland Charter Commission before they settled on their recommendations or after, which was supposed to come sometime in March. She suggested Sightline Institute and Phil Kiesling as potential speakers. Phil Kiesling is a former Oregon Secretary of State and had told MCCRC member Marc Gonzales that he would be willing to speak with the MCCRC. Maja said they could ask him about how different voting methods work, for example.

Kali said that she would send out a survey to explore rescheduling later meeting dates that fell on holidays in May, June, and July.

Annie asked what they wanted their next meeting to focus on. Ranked Choice Voting? Something else?

Kali raised that subcommittee members can talk to people outside of meetings, as well, or solicit written responses. That might allow the subcommittee to speak with more people.

The group discussed developing questions to send out to community groups. They also discussed how many people to hear from at their upcoming meetings.

Discussion about More Equitable Democracy's presentation to Portland Charter Commission

Subcommittee members had committed to watching a recording of More Equitable Democracy's (MED) presentation to the Portland Charter Commission. Samantha invited subcommittee members to share their thoughts.

Timur said he was blown away by the information that cities like Amsterdam have 60 or 70 commissioners and he wondered how the public would feel about an expansion like that. He was intrigued by multi-member districts, and also with the idea of doing away with a May primary and electing all county officials at the same November general election using some form of choice voting. He reflected on his experience working on a political campaign that had to deal with the low turnout common in May elections.

Samantha noted some of the potential cost savings for only having one election. Annie concurred; savings for both the county and for candidates.

Annie talked about the important intersection of voting methods and districts for changing representation.

Maja noted that in the Portland presentation MED made the case that the population distribution in the city made it impossible to draw a district that is more than 30% BIPOC and wondered if there would be differences for the County.

Timur brought up how many people each County Commissioner represents. He believes this is a lot of power concentrated in very few individuals and sees this as a legacy of white supremacy.

Wrap-up

The subcommittee outlined next steps focused on reaching out to speakers, drafting questions to send to community groups, and rescheduling meetings that fall on holidays.

APPENDIX A: ZOOM CHAT

- 00:29:54 Samantha Gladu (she/they): <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/developing-key-performance-indicators>
- 00:33:42 Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you, Kali
- 00:35:45 Timur Ender (he/they): Great opening Samantha; appreciated the moment of silence...
- 00:40:48 Samantha Gladu (she/they): ❤️
- 00:40:53 Jude (they/them): Thank you!
- 00:44:29 Samantha Gladu (she/they): Yes!!
- 00:45:24 Jude (they/them): I like this one: How does or will the Charter Chapter or specific Chapter Subsection change the way specific communities experience the places they live? What about the places they receive County services?
- 00:45:41 Samantha Gladu (she/they): How and why are certain resources flowing to specific places in the county, and does it meet the needs of our most vulnerable communities and populations?
- 00:46:30 Maja Harris (pronounced Maya) she/her: I like both of those questions!
- 00:48:04 Jude (they/them): Good point, Maja!
- 00:48:23 Timur Ender (he/they): how will this recommendation make it easier to repair historic underinvestment in specific areas?
- 00:49:24 Samantha Gladu (she/they): ^^ that's good; maybe can replace the question/piece about resources flowing
- 00:50:20 Timur Ender (he/they): how does this recommendation change the foundation for how public resources are distributed?
^Just brainstorming
- 00:52:32 Jude (they/them): Off camera while eating. I'm still here!
- 00:55:20 Samantha Gladu (she/they): Here's a doc version incase you'd like to interact with it more than you can via screenshare
- 01:04:39 Samantha Gladu (she/they): Did he share more specifics? Practicalities of what?
- 01:04:49 Maja Harris (pronounced Maya) she/her: Phil Kiesling, former secretary of state
- 01:13:17 Maja Harris (pronounced Maya) she/her: I like that!
- 01:13:44 Maja Harris (pronounced Maya) she/her: It also gives us a broader basis for decision-making that goes into the public record
- 01:16:46 Maja Harris (pronounced Maya) she/her: I can reach out to Colin Cole from MED

01:18:25 Maja Harris (pronouced Maya) she/her: Multi-member districts :-)

01:19:02 Samantha Gladu (she/they): I am curious about the environmental impact of eliminating a May primary!

01:19:06 Samantha Gladu (she/they): May election*

01:19:27 Jude (they/them): Can you say more Samantha?

01:19:30 Annie Kallen she/her: I think it's significant cost and paper savings.

01:20:04 Maja Harris (pronouced Maya) she/her: Yes, please say more Samantha!

01:22:42 Timur Ender (he/they): Currently City of Portland Council: 1 elected "represents" 130,000 ppl. The ratio is 1 per more ppl for County since it has more population than the city and same number of 5 commissioners.

01:29:21 Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you, all!

01:29:27 Maja Harris (pronouced Maya) she/her: Thank you!

APPENDIX B: DRAFT EQUITY QUESTIONS

- People: Who is impacted by this recommendation and how?
- Place: How does the recommendation change the way specific communities experience the places they live? What about the places they receive County services?
- Place: How does the recommendation change how resources flow to historically underinvested places in the county, and does it meet the needs of our most vulnerable communities and populations?
- Process: How does the recommendation meaningfully empower communities of color and other underserved populations to engage and have voice in decision making processes?
- Power: How will the community at-large, specific populations and the county workforce overburdened or underburdened by the recommendation?
- Power: How clearly does the recommendation outline accountability and for whom?

APPENDIX C: MEETING SCHEDULE

Meeting Date	Topic	Possible Speakers	Notes
2/21/22	Values Racial Equity Qs Set Calendar Next Steps: research RCV and STAR voting; holiday scheduling survey	None	This is President's Day; all said we're good to still meet Kali send draft calendar for comments/edits
3/7/22	Voting Methods: RCV Next Steps:	RCV Oregon Benton County Clerk More Equitable Democracy - Public Comment -	
3/21/22	Voting Methods: STAR, Approval Next Steps:	Equal Vote Coalition Center for Election Science Independent Party of Oregon Public Comment	
4/4/22	Number of Commissioners/ Proportional Representation Next Steps:	More Equitable Democracy Public Comment	
4/18/22	Multnomah County Elections Next Steps:	Tim Scott	
5/2/22	Who Can Vote (exact topics pending legal guidance) Next Steps:	City of New York (?) Causa Next Up	
5/16/22	Campaign Finance Next Steps:	Honest Elections RepresentUs	
5/30/22 - reschedule?	Next Steps:		Memorial Day
6/6/22	Next Steps:		
6/20/22 - reschedule?	Next Steps:		Juneteenth Observed
7/4/22 - reschedule?	Next Steps:		Independence Day
7/18/22			