

# Falcon Heights Community Conversation 4: May 1, 2017

## PRELIMINARY Analysis of Key Themes

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### Background

On May 1, 2017, 56 people attended the fourth in a series of five community conversations on inclusion and policing. This meeting centered on discussions of transformational change. Information gathered will inform the final inclusion recommendations that the Falcon Heights Task Force on Inclusion and Policing will make to the Falcon Heights City Council at the end of May.

These are frequently expressed statements, grouped by theme. They are not consensus statements.

### **First Circle: Participants shared what they think it would take, beyond policing, for truly transformational change to take place in Falcon Heights and to genuinely fulfill community values.**

- **Acknowledge Racism:** People expressed the need to acknowledge racism and understand white privilege. Comments ranged from addressing racism within systems to a personal level understanding of bias and privilege. Important for white people to understand their implicit bias and be aware of the experiences of others. People who have experienced pain and trauma need to be heard and supported.
- **Be Inclusive and Intentional:** This work needs to be inclusive and respectful of all. It is important to be intentional to make change, to be aware, and talk with people who are different from you. The values may change when you have conversations with people outside of your circle.
- **Events to Bring People Together:** A variety of events were suggested for building community and to better understand diversity.
  - **Some ideas included:** block parties; Night to Unite; events with food such as picnic in the park or a day of celebration highlighting ethnic foods; movie nights; book clubs; using the schools to engage youth and parents; documentaries of local citizens for cable TV; storytelling sessions.
- **Personal Commitment:** Many expressed a personal commitment to stay engaged, show up to events, and continue to have conversations at neighborhood or one to one level. Personal experiences telling personal stories can bring people together. A change in the community starts at the individual level.
- **Sustain the Work in the Future:** A desire to see this work continue beyond the Task Force and see it sustained and connections within the community strengthened. Many would like to continue having courageous community based conversations. There is a sense that this needs continue to feel urgent and community members need to stay engaged. It was also acknowledged that this work cannot be solved easily or immediately and must be in it for the long-haul.
- **Transparency and Accountability from the City:** There should be transparency from the city so people can hold institutions accountable. Comments shared to put pressure on the city council and mayor to make changes and address what has been discussed at the community meetings. People expressed a desire to see diverse perspectives in positions of power.

## **Falcon Heights Community Conversation 4: May 1, 2017**

### **PRELIMINARY Analysis of Key Themes**

**Second Circle: Participants shared ideas for what they think it will take to get more residents involved in the process of engaging in dialogue to explore values and how to improve the city.**

- **Engage with Youth:** Start engaging youth and focusing on events and conversations at schools. Starting with youth can provide a path to engage parents.
- **Personalize Invitations:** The method of how people are invited to events has an impact on whether or not they attend. People suggested personal invitations, knocking on people's doors, and having a phone tree to alert people of meetings and events as a way to increase the number of people who attend.
- **Opportunities to Learn and Hear Others' Perspectives:** In order to understand the need for participating, people need more opportunities to realize that there are a variety of experiences and perspectives in our community. Provide opportunities to hear different perspectives and to learn different cultures from community members. Continue to have conversations with neighbors about race and inequity. Ensure there is a range of housing options in the community to strengthen the diversity within neighborhoods.
- **Ownership of the Problem:** People raised questions about how to make everyone feel like they have a stake in this problem. It is important to get everyone to understand their stake in the situation. White people need to speak up and take action when they see injustices occurring and stand up for people of color.
- **Results Orientated:** To keep people engaged, there needs to be tangible and measurable results to show community members that progress is being made. This includes putting energy into actions that can happen in the short term to show visible progress. Changing the dynamic of interaction and engagement between the police and community is important to getting residents involved.
- **Variety and Accessibility of Events:** Different types of events (intimate conversations, social gatherings, speakers, etc.), with different focuses (dialogue, decision making, education), with different hosts (city, commission, community) will appeal to different people. Look at making the conversations and events easier to access by providing childcare and food, holding them at different times of day, going to people versus having them come to you.

**Third Circle: Participants shared specific steps or actions they plan to take to be a champion of the community values.**

- **Personal Actions and Conversations with Neighbors:** People expressed a personal commitment to talk with neighbors and strangers and seek out diverse perspectives.
- **Plan and Participate in Events:** People made commitments to host events including block parties, reconciliation and healing events, and to attend community sponsored events.
- **Uncover Racial Covenants in Falcon Heights:** People are looking into the racial covenant deeds and redlining practices that relate to properties in Falcon Heights.
- **Write:** People committed to write op-eds for local papers, letters to officials, and blog about events and activities.
- **Speak Up Against Racism:** People are committed to speaking up against hateful and racist comments and actions they witness.

## **Falcon Heights Community Conversation 4: May 1, 2017**

### **PRELIMINARY Analysis of Key Themes**

- **Advocate and Engage with City Council and Commissions:** People committed to being involved in local politics through showing up to council meetings and commission meetings and events. People also plan to support and encourage people to run for local office.
- **Engage with Youth and Schools:** People committed to engaging with schools and youth to be a part of the change process and build community.

#### **Specific Commitments**

##### **Personal Actions and Conversations with Neighbors**

- Have honest conversations even when they're hard. (Probably especially when they're hard.)
- Try to treat anyone I meet as if they might be family
- Always treat others as I want them to treat me
- Talk with a stranger
- Be intentional - seek diverse perspectives
- Seek out people with different perspectives from mine and listen
- Continue to inform myself and become more involved
- To share a value - step forward at opportunities to interact/participate with others who represent diverse characteristics - risk breaking the silence or differences, thereby expanding appreciation/acceptance on both sides.
- Continue to connect with others learn, engage, push for change
- Build my network with local activism groups focusing on equity and racial justice
- Invite people to my home to begin conversations
- Talk 1:1 with neighbors/friends about issues, instead of waiting for a "meeting" where people hold back their opinions.
- Continue to commit to equity and inclusion in daily life.
- Involve a friend
- Encourage others to learn about their neighbors' experience.
- Smile, sit by someone new, more out of comfort zone.
- Learn to confront more.
- Personal accountability
- Have more brave conversations when interacting with others that don't see their privilege or bias.
- Learn more about these issues so I can further these discussions in St. Cloud.
- Continue to take part in community conversations and forums that provide a venue for truth
- Continuing research on models for successful community change. I am more engaged and grateful for that. More information is needed.
- Listen carefully to people whose views make me uncomfortable and be willing to be transformed
- co-mingling with "others"
- Invite my neighbors to dinner
- I will discuss these values with 20 neighbors and ask how they will help promote them
- I plan new conversations with neighbors about these values - white and people of color
- To listen and actively participate in the conversation
- I will continue to work with "We Can Do Better" on a variety of activities
- Remain Engaged in the Community
- I value/believe in the usefulness of one to one conversations especially when difficult. I lie in wait for these opportunities.
- Tell my neighbors what is going on in this discussion group - spread the word

## **Falcon Heights Community Conversation 4: May 1, 2017**

### **PRELIMINARY Analysis of Key Themes**

- Try to list some feedback information that would help people move to more equity and justice - on of the community values
- Engage with individuals/groups about our own biases or experiences as object of bias
- Talk to my neighbors
- Connect with neighbors
- Talk in depth with ten neighbors
- Talk to my neighbors at least two people in the building where I live
- Talk to my employer and coworkers re: living wage/eliminating tipping. Theme: eliminating wage discrimination that is largely racialized with increasing?
- Invite Randy (neighbor) to neighborhood gathering
- I will host a neighborhood discussion on this topic
- Continuing research on models for successful community change. I am more engaged and grateful for that. More information is needed.
- I can't think of anything I could do that I'm not already doing! I need more time.
- I'm stumped. I've been working at these issues for decades.
- Unbusy myself so I can participate more in these activities
- Share a positive example of a good experience that is happening in Falcon Heights.
- Falcon Heights is an island community. People drive through.
- commit to social justice and equity work
- Engage with individuals and groups on our own bias
- "I'm already doing what I can to call people out. We need to try to get more people engaged."
- Hit a wall... Not sure how to show up in community. Listen to others whose views make me uncomfortable and be transformed by views.
- Talk to everyone that I see... Things won't change until people come to things and share.
- Society of storytellers and story listeners
- We need to learn to love one another, no matter the color, creed, etc.
- Long term... Not an instant switch, solution
- Invite neighbors into home for hard conversations, help end complacency
- Ask neighbors to help promote Community Values
- Invite City Council Members to dinner
- Talk 1:1 with neighbors/friends about issues, instead of waiting for a "meeting" where people hold back their opinions
- Talk to a stranger

#### **Plan and Participate in Events**

- To collaborate (work together) with others to plan the California Block Party (national night out) with the people at it so happen time (room relationships developed beforehand) -food- engaging with others
- Invite families at Larpenteur and Snelling to CA Avenue block party in August
- Front Yard Patio Party
- Since my neighborhood is pretty close - everyone knows each other- I think it would be important to encourage my neighbors to participate in activities that already exist in Falcon Heights
- Look for gathering places and plan events where people can come together. Events around food would be good.
- Find the movie "Do not resist" and share it
- Participate in city activities (volunteering)
- Participate in community engagement activities and community engagement commission

# **Falcon Heights Community Conversation 4: May 1, 2017**

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- Promote involvement of libraries
- Organize training or conversations at my church to encourage cultural competence and awareness of systematic racism
- Implement events for reconciliation and healing
- Continue to advocate for restorative justice
- Show up to local government events. Vulnerability... Not forget that I am white, have biases, be open, can help invite people into conversation, might be less afraid to engage.
- Offer by member in the group who is professionally trained to help in de-escalation training for police. Questions arose on cost, making these mandatory, and other barriers to training.
- Invite people from other backgrounds and cultures to local block parties

### **Uncover Racial Covenants in Falcon Heights**

- Participate in the history of racial covenants and redlining project
- Working to gather info on early history of Falcon Heights housing patterns, racial covenants, redlining
- Encourage city to make a map of the areas of diversity in the city - so we can be more welcoming and inclusive
- Learn more about the racial covenants and redlining

### **Write**

- Write about events, activities etc. blog, letters to officials, notices of meetings etc. re: value of justice
- Write op-eds for local papers to raise awareness and direct action
- Write and communicate about things done, things going on. Government task force law-enforcement and community engagement. Intend to keep writing.

### **Speak Up Against Racism**

- Speaking out against hateful speech
- Call out hateful speak when I hear it
- Continue to speak out against any form of racism
- Be more observant of interactions that suggest that people of color are treated less respectfully or safely than white folks
- Show up - with my body, mind, voice, heart, spirit. Stand on side of oppressed.
- Speak up when/if I observe someone not being treated fairly
- Communicate with others the progress I have seen in this area
- Use my voice and share my own personal expertise and opinion
- Actively praise people who have become more inclusive in their lives
- "I didn't create it or was a part of it. You step up. I've always been there. Allowing selves to be vulnerable.
- Continue conversations in organic settings and where people already are - churches and schools. Taking ownership and responsibilities as allies and leaders"
- Need for bias awareness
- Seek training on active bystander intervention/protection
- To never give up
- To never give up. We all have great resiliency, we forget that we have grit, need to be reminded. I will never give up.
- Stick up when someone is treated unfairly
- Call out my fellow white residents on their bias

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- Those who are deeply racist are cowards and bullies and will back-pedal quickly if they are challenged
- Continue to be observant, when you see a person of color being mistreated, step in and call it out
- Challenge self and neighbors on racism
- support and praise other people doing this work

#### **Advocate and Engage with City Council and Commissions**

- Go to Falcon Heights community meetings.
- Follow-up on task force recommendations
- I will check out the final taskforce recommendations and do what I can to see that the council adopts those recommendations
- Advocate for measurable actions/outcomes within the task force recommendations
- Continue to participate in Falcon Heights political structure
- Continued involvement with city-policing
- Continued involvement
- Continue participating with Falcon Heights We Can Do Better and following city council as it moves forward with new policing. Community interaction yields actions.
- Form and content exhibition immigrant status
- Bring idea of intra-city meal gatherings to council committee
- Understand Minneapolis Police Structure
- I will do the same with every city council candidate at election time
- Act at a Minneapolis (my city) level and state level to support policing reform, economic justice, focus on racial inequality. Tell the story of my experience in Falcon Heights as a positive example of community engagement
- Push City Council and Mayor to ensure that all police/public encounters and their outcomes (e.g. traffic ticket vs. warning) are recorded in a permanent public data base (computerized)
- Talk to a council member
- Visit SAPD
- Lobby city council for more transparent and inclusive process in recruiting/appointment commission members
- Elect some new leaders
- To city council meetings. Serve on Community Engagement Commission.
- Talk up at council meetings
- Invite progressive candidates to apply or run for political office, or serve on local government commissions
- Actively participate in city government
- Solicit minority input to the facts
- Go to meetings of my local governing bodies to voice concerns and demand changes
- Lobby for more inclusive, welcoming, fun council meetings
- Keep the pressure on political leadership
- Participate in civic activities more often
- Ask council about affordable housing.
- Advocate for housing equity
- Trust, transparency, accountability. Provide data. Look for improvement.
- Follow city council evolution—there has been some movement
- Support individuals to run for office

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- Keep pressure on our politically elected leadership. Racism wins if we lose attention on these issues and don't reform.
- Take a more active role in letting leaders know about problems we see and experience
- Maybe we should form another community Task Force to stay engaged with a new set of people who were not previously engaged.
- Continued involvement behind the scenes of police-community relations.
- Have been involved in many city commissions through the years and will continue to be involved
- Participate in community engagement events. Use the community engagement events for more than they are used for now...use it as a vehicle for community to address community concerns.
- Read Task Force recommendations and ensure that those changes are adopted. Especially civilian review board. Follow-up on Task Force recommendations, hold self and city accountable.
- Stay involved in City Council campaigns
- Task Force and residents should follow-up with Michelle Gross of Communities Untied Against Police Brutality. Ms. Gross has data on police brutality and information on insuring police.
- Elect some new leaders
- Push the city council to record not only police encounters but outcomes

#### **Engage with Youth and Schools**

- Call my son's school and ask them what efforts have they taken or plan to take to become change agents in keeping the community inclusively safe.
- Raise my daughter to be aware of systematic racism and of her privilege. Teach her to stand up for others
- Ask for more opportunities for parents from diverse backgrounds who attend the same school to develop more "community"
- Safety: Work with schools and young people to educate them on how to interact with law enforcement to stay alive.
- I would like to take St. Anthony High Schools "Dare to be real" conversation content and model to my community (i.e. State Fair)