

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
 Falcon Heights Inclusion and Policing Task Force
 City Hall
 2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
 May 2, 2017 at 7:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

ANDREWS	X		JOHNSON-POWERS	X
BALLENTINE	X		LEEHY-CO CHAIR	X
COLOND	X		THOMPSON	X
DEMERATH	X		WADE	
JOHNSON	X			

STAFF PRESENT:

MAYOR LINDSTROM	X
CO-CHAIR/COUNCIL MEMBER GUSTAFSON	X
CO-FACILITATOR QUICK	X
CO-FACILITATOR MORRIS	X
ADMINISTRATOR THONGVANH	X

I. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 7:23pm.

II. Review Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

III. Review of April 11, 2017 and April 18, 2017 meeting minutes

One comment was that they were well done and would be useful for the community to know what the task force is doing. There were no other comments or corrections.

IV. Drafting recommendations on inclusion

A. Debrief highlights of Community Conversation #4 (May 1)

Members who were able to attend shared their feedback from the meeting which was mostly positive. Many suggestions were brought forward to help encourage an inclusive community like developing groups around common interests and events that would involve all generations. Many wonder why people don't attend community events. Time and capacity are often the reasons. There seems to be an ongoing challenge between motivating the nonparticipants or providing more tools for those who are involved. Personal accountability

was a theme and being willing to call others out for inappropriate comments. One suggestion for highlighting the history of racism was educating the community on racial covenants that were present on many homes in Falcon Heights which prevented the sale of the home to a nonwhite person.

B. Debrief of discussion from April 18 about recognizing racism and building inclusion and equity.

The discussion on white privilege and the experiences of people of color felt like a necessary reset for the task force's charge. Everyday life for residents can be so different and narratives of some community members can be absent from forums like this. People of color are fatigued with this treatment during daily activities while white people walk around with an invisible cloak of assets they didn't earn.

A person of color wants to be seen as a person first. There is appreciation for white people understanding the work involved while there are others who don't get it. If every person of color avoids that person who doesn't get it then they'll never learn. African Americans want equality and don't need rescuing. Society needs to realize we are equals and not to be pitied.

C. Review and brainstorming around community-wide work on inclusion and equity
There is a realization that this is everyone's role and there is a ripple effect that the task force has with others. Many ideas were mentioned like the MN Night to Unite, book clubs, block gatherings, Human Rights Day and movie nights.

Residents need to take the initiative and invite people. The city's 60 active Neighborhood Liaisons could help as well. Data analysis with visualization could be a tool create conversations.

Having a series of books for the community to read and discuss was another suggestion. [A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota](#) was recommended. Other topics and themes could be also incorporated.

Hosting a story or play about Philando Castile might help engage a younger crowd.

The Kellogg Foundation has a program on racial reconciliation which could be investigated. They have an affiliate in St. Paul.

The city could establish a committee around racial reconciliation. This would be unique for a city and sends a message.

An ongoing memorial for Philando could become part of the city culture so we don't ignore that day.

A volunteer or a staff person is needed to coordinate and sustain. Many are too busy or not interested but there are those who want to engage in this. A game plan is needed so momentum doesn't fade when the police department is decided.

Authenticity of relationships is needed. We need to come together under different circumstances. We can leverage what we are doing with the Community Engagement Commission. Marnita's Table was also suggested which provides opportunities for intentional social interaction.

The 2012 election around the proposed marriage amendment was given as an example where conversations helped diminish an us vs. them mentality.

A citywide survey would help get the pulse of city regarding engagement.

We need to create a culture of caring and recognizing our interdependence with each other.

Events around July 6 can be a way of honoring Philando's life and bring the community together.

D. Draft team for community policies and programs to advance inclusion

Jay, Amy, Kate and Melanie will join Kathy to draft recommendations for implementing inclusion community wide.

V. Recommendations to City Council on Policing

A. Reactions to revised recommendations

Members were asked to give one or two recommendations that were most important to them with the understanding that the task force doesn't have the authority to be prescriptive. Areas mentioned included police community relationships, training (cultural, implicit bias, de-escalation), police advisory/oversight committee, data gathering on police interactions, and hiring.

The advisory/oversight committee would be a work in process. An officer or representative should be at every meeting. Data regarding police interactions and transparency are needed to determine problems and how to address them. Keep in mind that if data collection becomes too burdensome, officers might avoid a situation they should address. We don't want excessive meddling but the committee needs to have some ability to hold police accountable. Police internal affairs have the ability to investigate. Most complaints people bring up aren't at the level of internal affairs but we still want them addressed. There were different opinions on the committee's scope and function but the task force was able to reach consensus about having a civilian group available to hear complaints from the community.

The recommendations could become a guidance tool for looking for a police department. The document should be workable with any department.

There was discussion about giving out "consequences" like community service rather than ticketing. This is called "diversion" and would need to be issued by a judge. The police only hands out the citation whether it is a warning or a ticket.

Some members would like to see more educating of the community on their rights. This would include what to expect when encountering the police and what to do if you feel your rights

have been violated. A bar association or other groups could talk about this.

Implicit bias training was discussed which could be led by consultants and community members. Community led training could build trust and would be helpful for officers to understand the community and inform their behaviors.

Kathy agreed to continue refinement of the recommendations. There was nothing in the document that anyone was fundamentally opposed to.

B. Plans for the May 3 city council meeting

Synthesis of the recommendations will be carried out before the meeting and Melanie will present these to the council.

VI. Schedule for remaining task force work

May 3 - city council working session on policing recommendations

May 9 - working session for the recommendations on inclusion.

May 23 - Task Force Meeting: finalize recommendations on inclusion, accept final report of Task Force, and lay down the Task Force

June 19 - Community Conversation #5; Celebration and next steps

VII. Announcements and Updates

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34pm.