**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

October 21, 2019

6pm-8pm

Seattle City Hall, Room 370

**Commissioners present:** Alison Turner, Ben Mitchell, Carol Redfield, Chris Maykut, Julie Pham, Sharif Mahfouz, Thais Marbles  
 **Commissioners not present:** Emily Kim, Felix Chang, Karyn Kubo Fleming, Natalie Curtis

**Staff present** Hilary Nichols

**Opening**

Agenda for the meeting is approved. After some review, CIC members found it necessary edit the September minutes to more accurately reflect what they heard from Beacon Hill community members at the September CIC meeting. It was proposed that the September minutes be corrected with member edits and approved at the next meeting in November, and that an additional reflection document should be made to share with the Beacon Hill community members who attended the meeting.

**Public Comment**

Community member Donna Hartmann-Miller gave public comment. Donna expressed concern over the public outreach practices of SDOT as it related to advertising public meetings. Donna mentioned that she received a notice for 2 public meeting on the Rapid Ride J Line, however the mailer was received just one day before the meeting occurred. Donna expressed that this was simply not enough time to prepare to attend the meeting and urged the City to consider people who must arrange childcare. Donna mentioned that in the past the Neighborhood Councils would typically receive notice of public meetings, then inform the community, and Donna expressed that this seemed like a better use of time and moved things along more quickly so that the neighborhood could feel heard.

**Commission Business**

CIC reviewed commission business, including Co-Chair elections in November. There are 2 open Co-Chair positions, and CIC members can self-nominate or nominate others. Nominations will be sent to CIC Staff Liaison Hilary Nichols.

CIC Staff Liaison reported that the re-appointments of Alison Turner and Ben Mitchell are still waiting to be signed by the Mayor, as well as the appointment of new member Marcus White.

The CIC welcomed its new Get Engaged member, Sharif Mahfouz. Sharif has lived in Seattle for about 4 years, works at Vizio, and is eager to contribute to the CIC and help make sure that under-represented communities have a voice in city government.

**Reflections on Beacon Hill CIC meeting**

CIC member Chris Maykut said that the feedback they heard at the Beacon Hill CIC meeting around funds for City grants being primarily reimbursements was right in line with the CIC’s work and aligned with the CIC’s conversations on equity. He said that he heard community feels like this system of reimbursement is unfair to the individuals and organizations that get the grants. One individual at the September meeting mentioned that she paid for parts of a grant on her credit card, and then had to wait a significant amount of time to get reimbursed. Chris didn’t know if reimbursement is the standard model for City grants due to restrictions on City dollars but felt it worthwhile for the CIC to explore other models and suggest these to the City.

CIC member Ben Mitchell said that advising the City to move towards paying grantees upfront could be low hanging fruit in terms of suggestions to improve grant processes. He mentioned that reimbursements require receipts for every dollar, and that this can drain capacity on the grantee. He said he is very sympathetic to the difficulty of a reimbursement system but acknowledges that the City grant programs may have their hands tied on how money can be awarded and doesn’t know how much flexibility there is in that realm. Ben mentioned that in the private sector, it’s a best practice to give the grant money upfront.

Several CIC members discussed how Beacon Hill community members expressed frustration with Your Voice, Your Choice and their feeling that it pits the community against each other for infrastructure improvements the City should be doing anyway (e.g. curb ramps). There is a tension in community involvement where there is an authentic desire from the City to hand over decision making power to the community to influence City resource spending, but that involvement in those participatory processes is still a lot of work and many communities don’t have the capacity to participate.

Several CIC members expressed their deep appreciation for the Beacon Hill community attending their CIC meeting. They felt that the exchange was authentic, and they were humbled by others wanting to speak with them. They felt that going out into the community and taking the meeting to other communities’ “turf” was a good practice because it makes the CIC more accessible.

The CIC expressed ideas for how to follow up with the Beacon Hill community members who attended the September meeting. CIC member Alison Turner suggested that the CIC can ensure that the minutes are accurate and complete, post those to the CIC website, and continue communicating with the folks who engaged the CIC. If any of the issues mentioned at the September meeting become an action item, the CIC will follow up with the Beacon Hill community members.

**Review process for future CIC meetings outside of City Hall**

November’s meeting is confirmed to be at the Washington State Labor Council. The CIC brainstormed a list of community groups and organizations that should be invited to the meeting. CIC Staff Liaison Hilary Nichols said she will ask DON colleagues for organization contacts in the area.

CIC member Julie Pham inquired about Wa Na Wari as a potential meeting space and reported that it’s about $300 to rent. This was tabled as a potential location for the future, possibly next year.

**Reflection on DON Community Engagement Meetup**

CIC members who piloted the Best Practices roundtable discussion on community engagement on September 23rd reported the highlights of the meeting. Before the pilot, these members interviewed 4 different departments on outreach and engagement best practices and organized their responses into an executive summary. Highlights of the meeting include that DON Staff participants felt that the information provided from the interviews was not surprising, but it was validating to hear. Several topics for the next session were suggested, including a conversation about the tension in outreach between the depth of a community relationship vs the quality of a community relationship, resources for outreach and engagement that already exist and could be shared more widely, and an overview of the overall landscape of City outreach practices. It was suggested that the next Best Practices roundtable discussion include staff who don’t work in outreach (i.e. work on more technical aspects of City projects) so that there can be collaboration across all different types of work.

The Grantmaking workgroup briefly described their plans for doing a similar pilot with some City grant programs (e.g. Neighborhood Matching Fund, Technology Matching Fund, etc.) in late November or December.

The CIC then discussed the Annual Report Event and reporting on the two roundtable discussion pilots at the Event. CIC Staff Liaison Hilary Nichols said that she would check on availability of the Bertha Knight Landes room for the Annual Report Event in January.

**Workgroup Work Time**

The CIC split into the three workgroups (Grantmaking, Census 2020, and Best Practices) and shared updates, edited work plans, and discussed next steps and big ideas.

**Workgroup Share-out**

**Grantmaking Workgroup**:

The Grantmaking Workgroup is looking at mid-December for their pilot of a roundtable discussion with City grant programs. They will create a survey to send to City staff who work with grants to inquire about the best time to meet, and to use as an RSVP.

**Best Practices Workgroup**:

The Best Practices Workgroup finished all their interviews with City staff. They will now think about how to compile information gathered for the Annual Report Event.

**Census 2020**:

The Census 2020 Workgroup will now include CIC member Sharif Mahfouz and (yet to be officially appointed) CIC member Marcus White. Sharif and Marcus will work with CIC Staff Liaison Hilary Nichols to establish a relationship with Elsa Batres-Boni (DON Census staff) to re-establish a plan for 2020.

CIC members reviewed items they’d like to have included in the Annual Report Event, including the Best Practices interviews and workshop/roundtable discussion, the CIC meetings held outside of City Hall, an update on Census outreach, the Grantmaking roundtable discussion, and the revised public comment processes.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Adjourn**