

Minutes of the Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement
Regular Committee
Wednesday, March 7, 2007
Room 270

Members present: Kate Warren (Chair), Norm Andreen, Virginia Bruce, Chory Ferguson, Malek Hall, JC Kizak, Erin Miller, Gerritt Rosenthal, Skip White, Karen Wolfgang

Members excused: Hal Ballard, Mark Knudsen, Christine Roth, Scott Seibert

Also present: Segeni Mungai, Wade _____, Skip Ormsby

Call to order, review of agenda, approval of Feb. 7, 2007 meeting minutes, introductions

Chair Warren called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as presented.

Data Resource Center (DRC)

Dick Bolen, manager of the Data Resource Center, presented an overview of the department. DRC's services include mapping, geographic information systems (GIS), and demographic and economic forecasting and modeling. The Regional Land Information System (RLIS) program provides comprehensive data about the three counties and 25 cities in the metro region. This data is shared with regional partners for regional planning. The storefront operates as a service center and retail map store available to the general public and jurisdictions. They maintain a series of standard maps and also provide custom maps on request. A research group in the DRC models the interaction between regional transportation systems, economy and population trends. They also have employment data.

McList briefing

Karen Withrow, Office of Citizen Involvement, walked the committee through some of the features of the MetroCentral mailing and contact list, commonly known as McList. She showed how the powerful database can pull groups of individuals or groups of groups together that have a common interest to use as mailing lists for projects or issues that Metro is involved with.

Diversity

Erin Miller led a discussion about what kinds of diversity Metro could hope for in their committees. A big issue for the committee was how to know if a person belonged to a certain diverse group without asking, which is not "PC". They noted some elements of diversity that were not included in the list they were given to discuss, i.e. underserved people or locational.

The group concluded that if they were addressing diversity of committees, they wanted to recommend that the definition of diversity be shrunken down to what they can or cannot have a conversation about. It would be alright to reach out to a specific group, a religious group for instance, to ask for people to join a committee, but being identified as a member of that group could not be a prerequisite of diversity for a committee. Committees have to encourage diversity but they can't control it.

Virginia Bruce suggested that beneath the desire to increase diversity was simply a lack of awareness on the part of the majority of the population that they could and should participate. It just doesn't occur to them. She said breaking through that barrier seemed more important than the shades of the beads; they just need more beads. Work should be done to increase the public's awareness of available committees on which to participate and how to increase the attractiveness of participating.

Ms. Miller distributed some ideas and suggestions for encouraging diversity and asked the committee members to read it and send feedback to her or Chair Warren before the next meeting.

Motion:

Erin Miller moved, with a second by Virginia Bruce, that MCCI consider committee diversity outreach within a broader umbrella of how to increase public participation across the board for Metro policy and decision-making.

Vote:

The vote was 10 aye/0 nay/0 abstain, the motion passed unanimously.

Additional discussion included ways to increase public participation for Metro across the board, not just on its committees. One of the best ways to increase diversity is to model it and let people see you are working and making a difference. Malek Hall suggested using MCCI as a focus group to see what could be done about recruiting members as they currently had several vacant seats. Ms. Miller agreed it would be a good way to test the outreach plan.

Roundtable

None.

Adjourn

There being no further business before the committee, Chair Warren adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl grant
MCCI staff