



METRO COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2016

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

Councilors Present: Council President Tom Hughes, and Councilors Sam Chase, Carlotta Collette, Craig Dirksen, Kathryn Harrington, and Bob Stacey

Councilors Excused: Councilor Shirley Craddick

Council President Tom Hughes called the regular council meeting to order at 2:02pm.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

There was none.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION: IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (IRCO) AFRICA HOUSE

Council President Hughes called on Mr. Gerry Uba, Metro staff, to provide a presentation and also introduced additional guest presenters, Mr. Djimet Dogo of Africa House, Dr. Ann Curry-Stevens of Portland State University, and Ms. Julia Meier of Coalition of Communities of Color.

Mr. Uba discussed the current situation for many refugees from Africa who come to the United States, noting that previously many refugees came for education, while now most are coming to escape tragedy and that some of the refugees are coming to a very different life compared to their recent experiences in refugee camps. He explained that the report being presented was sponsored by the Coalition of Communities of Color, and introduced his co-presenters to provide a presentation on the report.

Mr. Dogo provided a brief background, discussing the connection between IRCO Africa House and Metro and that Africa House leaders are looking forward to collaborating with Metro to advance racial equity in the region.

Ms. Meier and Dr. Curry-Stevens discussed the summary of findings in the report, highlighting a few key findings, including that Africans are often grouped together with the African-Americans, African immigrants and refugees have pronounced disparities, severe economic struggles, are highly educated but underemployed, and that this is a rapidly growing community. They added that this report was based on data for Multnomah County, but that there would also be a study soon based on Washington County data. Dr. Curry-Stevens provided an overview on the types of challenges that the African community is facing in the region, focusing on the most significant disparities such as a child poverty rate of 66.6% in Multnomah County in 2011 (compared to 15.6% for the white community), average full-time year-round earnings of less than \$29,000 (between 2006-2010) compared to around \$45,000 for the white community, community invisibility (lumped together

with other communities, so their data isn't as well-known), and other economic barriers (international credentials not recognized by the US).

Mr. Dogo presented recommendations based on the findings, which included recognition of foreign credentials, employment training programs, increasing supply of low-income housing, enforcement of non-discrimination policies, providing culturally-specific mediation services to reduce evictions, providing culturally-specific health services, improve access & cultural responsiveness in mainstream health services, ensuring funding goes to culturally-specific organizations like Africa House, increase visibility of African community in data/institutions/departments in the region, distinguish "African" from "African-American", improve English language support for students & parents, provide immediate assistance with Gang Services, and teach educators & administrators about African experiences (and trauma involved in refugee experiences).

Council Questions

Councilors thanked all of the presenters for their presentation, noting that we, as the region, have a long way to go to make this better for the African community. In response to councilor inquiry, Mr. Uba and Mr. Dogo noted that the guests in the audience from Africa House represented 36 different African countries. Councilors agreed that the data presented was daunting, especially the level of child poverty, but discussed the opportunity areas that could be worked on most immediately such as the issue of credentialing as well as data collection/analysis, employment training, and continuing to collaborate with Africa House. In response to councilor inquiry, Mr. Dogo clarified that the bulk of the African community as of 2000 are refugees from rural areas, not immigrants. He added that most of the African immigrants coming to the US are highly educated compared to the refugees.

3. COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM AUDIT PRESENTATION

Council President Hughes introduced Metro Auditor Brian Evans to provide a presentation. Auditor Evans provided a brief presentation on the Community Planning and Development Grants (CPDG) Program, which started in 2006 and has since awarded about \$19 million in grants to local governments for land use planning that's required to make land ready for development. He explained that there are four rounds of funding for the grants, each has different criteria to make the selection, and that the funding for the grants comes from a construction excise tax that Metro levies on each building permit that is issued in the region. Auditor Evans noted that the audit had three objectives: determine if the program was aligned with regional planning priorities, determine if operations could better meet local planning needs, and determine if the program was administered to make sure that the grants were delivering the results that were expected when they were awarded. He highlighted several findings from the audit, including changes to the program reduced clarity about what was intended to be achieved and that the program's flexibility had benefits as well as challenges, including no process in place to evaluate outcomes, changing timelines & grant criteria hindered participation by jurisdictions, lack of clarity in types of projects that Metro was soliciting for or that would be eligible for funding, a variability in the level of technical assistance for some local governments, and no feedback loop at the end of each grant cycle. Auditor Evans explained that based on all of the findings, they were making eleven recommendations, grouped into three categories: improving the performance measurement system, being responsive to local planning needs, and strengthening controls to manage financial and administrative risks. He also thanked Mr. John Williams and the Planning Department for their help during the audit.

Council Questions

Councilors noted that some of the specific problems identified in the report were workable and appreciated recommendations that would help make the program better, but added that in some respects the audit report seemed to criticize the overall policy.

Council President Hughes introduced Mr. John Williams and Mr. Ted Leybold, from the Planning and Development Department, to provide the management response to the audit. Mr. Williams provided a short overview of the program, noting that the grants hit a number of areas in the region in almost every jurisdiction, the grants have been much more focused on the inside of the existing communities, and that some of the changes that have been put in place by Council as the program developed based on input from local governments. Mr. Leybold discussed how the program has worked and how they see it moving forward. He explained how in some places in the region, there have been some immediate successes such as in downtown Tigard and the Forest Grove urban renewal district, while in other areas, change has been much slower (such as in the North Bethany area). Mr. Leybold stated that the CPDG program has evolved over time with support from local jurisdictions, other stakeholders, and from advice of MPAC to meet the needs as established by the Metro Council. He noted his appreciation for the recommendations and that they will use them to assist in continuing program improvement, but also noted that this is a grant program that may not always see a payoff for a decade or more.

Council Discussion

Councilors commented that Metro's 2040 Plan is a better template for trying to discern what the grant program should be accomplishing as opposed to the language of various provisions of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan, which is one document that the audit was based on. Council President Hughes noted that supporting the development of employment lands is an important component of the grant program. Councilors noted that there seemed to be a bit of a disconnect about what questions were being asked in the audit, what questions were being studied, what approaches, and what goals, adding that there seemed like there might not be clear enough communication about how this program transitioned over the years. Councilors thanked the auditor for pointing out ways to improve transparency and clarity, the timing of the administration of the grants, and being clearer about objectives for what is trying to be accomplished.

4. FREQUENT FLYER FOLLOW-UP AUDIT PRESENTATION

Council President Hughes invited Metro Auditor Brian Evans back up to provide a follow up presentation to the Frequent Flyer audit. Auditor Evans provided background of the original audit from 2011, noting that of the six recommendations made, two had been implemented, one was no longer relevant, and three recommendations were still yet to be implemented. He explained that because half of the original recommendations had not been implemented, some of the risk identified in the original audit still remains. He noted that the outstanding recommendations are to update the Metro travel policy, training travelers, and limiting options for employees to use their personal credit cards to pay for travel. Auditor Evans thanked Mr. Tim Collier and his staff for his help during the audit.

Council President Hughes introduced Mr. Tim Collier, Director of Finance and Regulatory Services, to provide the management response. Mr. Collier thanked Auditor Evans for going back through the audit, but pointed out that there is a consolidated policy document which went to MERC yesterday and will come to Council in April. He explained that at that time, employees will be required to read and sign off that they've read the policy and that the policy will strengthen current procedures.

Council Discussion

Councilors asked clarifying questions about using personal cards and purchase cards, noting that issues come up during travel when a purchase card doesn't work and a traveler needs to pay with their personal card. The Auditor responded that Metro should have a policy that states what to do in these types of situations.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion:	Councilor Craig Dirksen moved to adopt items on the consent agenda.
Second:	Councilor Carlotta Collette seconded the motion.

Vote:	Council President Hughes, and Councilors Chase, Collette, Dirksen, Harrington, and Stacey voted in support of the motion. The vote was 6 ayes, the motion <u>passed</u> .
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6. RESOLUTIONS

6.1 Resolution No. 15-4624, For the Purpose of Amending the Development & Finance Agreement for the Convention Center Hotel Project

Motion:	Councilor Sam Chase moved to approve Resolution 15-4624.
Second:	Councilor Kathryn Harrington seconded the motion.

Council President Hughes called on Mr. Scott Cruickshank, Oregon Convention Center Executive Director, for a brief presentation. Mr. Cruickshank explained the purpose of the resolution was to authorize the COO to execute an amendment to the 2014 development and finance agreement with Mortenson Development related to the hotel project. He added that the Oregon Convention Center is a major driver of tourism in the Portland Region which created more than \$440 million in direct and indirect economic impact and supported more than 5200 jobs, but that convention organizers repeatedly cite the lack of a hotel adjacent to the OCC as the main reason that their groups don't book conventions at the OCC. He provided background on the resolution, noting that the Metro Council approved a development and finance agreement in June of 2014, but since a few things have changed including finalized terms between Mortenson, the Portland Development Commission, and Hyatt on the adjacent parking structure which will support the hotel, all pending lawsuits have now been dismissed, and Metro has reached settlement terms on outstanding lawsuits. He also added that Mortenson and Hyatt have agreed to absorb increased project costs, which are mostly a result of cost escalation and market financing conditions. Mr. Cruickshank provided information on the third amendment (attached as exhibit A to the resolution) and updated the Council on the project schedule and budget.

Council Discussion

Councilors thanked Mr. Cruickshank and Metro staff for their years of hard work on the project and successes to date.

7. **CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATION**

Ms. Martha Bennett provided an update on the following events or items: announcement that the Tualatin Hills Natural Area Plan is now online, the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is now out for formal public comment and can be found on the Metro website, and an update on the Oregon Legislative Session.

8. **COUNCILOR COMMUNICATION**

There was none.

9. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Council President Hughes adjourned the regular meeting at 4:36 p.m. The Metro Council will convene the next regular council meeting on Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 2 p.m. at the Metro Regional Center in the council chamber.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexandra Eldridge".

Alexandra Eldridge, Regional Engagement & Legislative Coordinator

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF MAR. 3, 2016

Item	Topic	Doc. Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
2.0	PowerPoint	3/3/2016	African Immigrants & Refugees in Multnomah County PowerPoint	030316c-01
3.0	PowerPoint	3/3/2016	Community Planning & Development Grants Audit Management Response PowerPoint	030316c-02
4.0	Handout	2/26/2016	Frequent Flyer Benefits Audit Follow-Up Report	030316c-03
5.1	Minutes	02/18/2016	Council Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2016	030316c-04