Citizens League
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Approved Minutes
Met Council Task Force
Thursday, February 18, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Auditorium A
451 Lexington Parkway North - Saint Paul, MN 55104

Members present: Susan Arntz (**Co-chair**), John Knapp (**Co-chair**), Jim Erkel, Michele Foster, Scott Neal, Chris Gerlach, Bill Hargis, Shannon Watson, Adeel Lari, John Adams, Jim Solem, Steve Dornfeld, Sharon Sayles-Belton, and Acooa Ellis.
Members not present: Elizabeth Kautz, Peter Bell, Carol Flynn, Ravi Norman, and Dan McElroy,
Staff & staff support present: Pahoua Yang Hoffman and Sean Kershaw
Citizens League members, Board members, and special guests present: Patricia Nauman, Gabriel Flaa, Kate Weyenberg, Ray Schoch, Juventino Meza, Pat Born, Kevin Terrell.

Proposed outcomes for this meeting
- Approve minutes from previous meeting.
- Debrief last meeting.
- Review project status.
- Discuss revised findings and conclusion.
- Review Implications Wheel results.
- Discuss Recommendations.
- Agree on next steps.
- Evaluate meeting.

<u>**Minutes**</u>

Co-Chair John Knapp called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

1. **Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Minutes, Debrief of Previous Meeting, Review Project Status**

   Introductions
   Co-chair John Knapp started the meeting by welcoming Citizens League members and Board members Juventino Meza and Patrick Born. Knapp went over the proposed meeting outcomes.

   Approval of Minutes
   Co-chair Knapp asked if there were any questions or feedback on the minutes from the February 4th meeting. Scott Neal moved to approve the minutes. Shannon Watson seconded the motion. A unanimous verbal vote passed the motion to approve the minutes.

   Debrief of Previous Meeting
   Co-chair John Knapp asked what members thought about the Implications Wheel exercise. A member thought the exercise was very useful and they liked the speed in which participants were encouraged to come up with possible implications – both negative and positive. Staff member Pahoua Hoffman added that the League has been interested in adding an exercise like the Wheel to

the Citizens League process and so she was glad to hear members thought it was useful. Hoffman added that if staff were trained in the Implication Wheel, she could imagine running the exercise several times throughout a project like this one. Co-chair Knapp asked Hoffman to walk members through the results from the Implications Wheel exercise that took place on February 4th.

Results from the Implications Wheel
Hoffman explained that she had a phone conversation with facilitator Jim Schreier after the results were loaded into the software so that he could instruct her on how to read the results. (All of the results, including interactive displays and multiple reports, were made available to members here: http://www.the-learning-depot.com/citizens-league/ using password: future2016.)

Hoffman explained that Schreier walked her through how to read the results from two points of views: risk standpoint and benefits standpoint. She reminded members that after the in-person Wheel mapping, the group had agreed to score all the implications identified from the perspective of the Governor. That is, how would the Governor view these implications? Scoring ranged from +5 to -5 for desirability to 9 to 1 for likelihood and captured like this (Desirability/Likelihood). A sample score of (-5/7) would denote a low desirability but a somehow high likelihood from the perspective of the Governor.

Risk standpoint
Hoffman explained that the identification of risks (*likely strong negative*), particularly at the second- or third-order, created the opportunity for earlier prevention or mitigation. Similarly, earlier identification of potential benefits (likely strong positive) would increase opportunities for leadership to take actions necessary to realize them.

Benefit Standpoint
She walked members through some examples from a benefits standpoint from the perspective of the Governor (*likely strong positive*). That is, what the Governor would want *and* is likely to happen if the above happens.

- *The Council has greater political freedom to advocate for the best interest of the region.* **(-4/7)**
- *Council has to improve communication with local governments* (+4/7)
- *The Governor uses their budget authority as a backdoor influence.* (+4/8)
- *Greater democratic participation because greater interest group participation.* (+4/7)

Hoffman noted that in this benefit standpoint scenario, the *likely strong positive* implications do not occur until after a barrier is removed or in this case, the Governor gets over this negative implication: *The Council has greater political freedom to advocate for the best interest of the region*. This illustrates that sometimes it may be worth it to get over a barrier knowing the benefits on the other side.

After reviewing the results, Hoffman received these questions below from members:
1.

   Since at least two groups worked on one question, does the software allow one to overlap the results to see how they compare? ANSWER: No. Although some teams may have started off with the same question, the first-round implications were different and therefore second- and third-implications were different. The software does not allow the mapping of same or like implications from different teams. However, the results can be downloaded in Excel format for easier comparison.

2. **Some implications are in red, blue, and white. What do these colors mean?** ANSWER: Colors are designated first by the desirability score. Implications with desirability score of positive 4 or higher are noted in blue. Blue with a yellow ring denotes that the likelihood is strong with a score of 7 or higher. Implications with desirability score of negative 4 or lower

are noted in red. Red with a yellow ring denotes that the likelihood is strong with a score of 7 or higher. Implications with a desirability score between +3 and -3 are noted in white.

3. **How will these results be used in final report?** ANSWER: Hoffman responded that depending on what the final recommendations are, some of these results could be noted in the final report.

Hoffman also explained that the two questions that were used in the Implications Wheel exercise were selected by the facilitator based on the results from the pre-work that members completed online before February 4. The facilitator picked the two that he thought would generate the most implications and discussion.
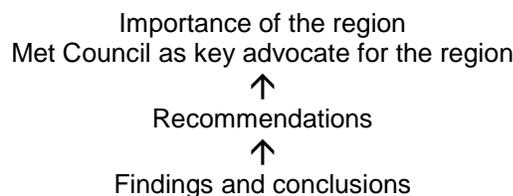
Review project status & share plans for upcoming meetings
Co-chair Knapp thanked members and staff for their efforts and commitment to the process. He noted that when the Task Force first met, it was a warm fall day and now spring is fast approaching. Knapp informed the group that he and co-chair Susan Arntz recently met with staff to go over the results of the recent Findings/Conclusion online assignment. Based on the findings and conclusions, what were some recommendations that the group could reasonably come up with.

He added that the recommendations needed to be supported by what the Task Force heard, read, or discussed. Since each Task Force member is a representative of the effort, he wanted members to feel comfortable with what the group ultimately recommends. By doing this, he hoped this would address concerns some members have had about rushing to some recommendations when we have not had enough discussion or enough information to support them. Knapp added that in addition to some concrete recommendations, it was likely that a set of recommendations would be the framing up of issues for further study since the group simply did not have enough time to fully explore everything. He reminded members that the six-month timeframe is a departure from the usual Citizens League timeline of 12-18 months. The Citizens League settled on the shorter timeline to see what could be accomplished and revealed by the beginning of the 2016 session.

2. **Group Discussion**
Based on the discussion the group has had, Knapp concluded that the Task Force strongly supports the concept of regionalism and the Met Council - understanding that it can and should be improved. The recommendations, based on the findings/conclusions should then support this.

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Importance of the region
Met Council as key advocate for the region
↑
Recommendations
↑
Findings and conclusions

</div>

Given this consensus and the prior discussions, Knapp laid three draft recommendations on the table for discussion:

- Terms of Met Council Members
The Citizens League Met Council Task Force recommends fixed four-year, staggered terms for Met Council members. Members' terms would not be coterminous with the governor, nor would members serve at the pleasure of the governor.

- An Improved Selection Process for Met Council Members
The Citizens League Met Council Task Force recommends a member selection process that includes input by local officials, strengthens the credibility of the Council, and encourages long-term regional planning.

- • <u>Possible Items for Further Study</u>
- o *Changing demographics*
- o *Poverty/Equity*
- o *Relationship with the Legislature*
- o *Water governance*
- o *Transportation funding & transportation governance*
- o *Housing/Land Development*

After staff distributed the handout with draft recommendations, Knapp encouraged members to offer feedback including suggestions to reword them. He also invited members to add additional recommendations for discussion. To set the context for the discussion, Knapp went over the key objectives of the Task Force (previously shared with the group before project began):

Key Objective of the Metropolitan Council Task Force
<u>Reviewing the history to better understand the current concerns around the Metropolitan Council</u>. This will include a thorough review of the Met Council's history and data to be used in assessing the current system, reviewing the use of available resources (expert testimony, reports, interviews, etc.) in order to fully examine the role of Metropolitan Council.

<u>Develop a shared vision for the Metropolitan Council</u>. What do we need from the Metropolitan Council in light of the rapidly changing economic and demographics challenges we face? How can the current model be improved to achieve the future vision for the Council's work?

<u>Recommend a set of actionable solutions that will address the concerns while representing the Metropolitan Council's regional view</u>. What are the priority issues and actions that need to be taken to ensure a highly effective and trustworthy Council?

Knapp also went over the previously agreed upon **Task Force Recommendations Criteria**:
- • Be politically plausible and implementable.
- • Honor the criticisms and addresses them.
- • Support the Metropolitan Council as a regional entity with a regional mindset.

A member responded that while he did not disagree with these recommendations, he did not feel the Task Force has fully acknowledged the situation that cities and counties face when they are saddled with the kinds of responsibilities they have to respond to local constituents and to finance their operations with financing systems that are artifacts on the 19th century. The reason for the Met Council was to plan long-range for infrastructure and let what happens at the city and county level hang on that infrastructure. The tension from the beginning has been between local interests and the here and now. He went on to add that programs like fiscal disparities have muted some of the pressure on local government but not all and these pressures are some of the reasons underlining city and county concerns. He did not think these were items for further study but that they provide the context for the Task Force's work.

Another member added that a valid finding is the inherent tension between regional and local government along with limited resources. She confirmed that while there is not a solution for this since it is and will be the ongoing reality, the group could comment on the implications of this since it does cause concern in various circles.

Another member commented that she hopes the group would dive a little deeper in the appointment process by outlining detailed criteria for Met Council member selection in a way that would address the concerns that have been raised. Related, she raised the issue of whether the make-up of Met Council members should reflect the changing demographics, currently an idea listed for further study. Another member agreed that the group should articulate detailed selection criteria if it is to put

forward improvements to the current selection process. The current draft recommendation, she thought, did not provide any guidance.

Co-chair Arntz referred members to the draft table of contents for the final report that was distributed in the meeting packet. She echoed the previous members' comments and underscored the importance of setting the context for the issues discussed and the recommendations the group will be making.

Another member commented that many of the concerns have been short-term and there needs to be more emphasis on long-term planning. Because of this view, he was intrigued with the Implications Wheel exercise because it encouraged alternate analyses and allowed for planners to see different possible routes: a plan A, plan B, and so forth.

Although the judicial selection process was suggested as a possible model for the Met Council to consider, not everyone was clear on that process and how it was the same or different than the current Met Council selection process. Because some Task Force members examined this during the Implications Wheel and had questions, a Task Force member did additional research and crafted a side-by-side comparison of the current Met Council member selection and the judicial selection process. He explained that he created this chart by reviewing the Met Council statutes and the Commission on Judicial Selection process. The chart was distributed in the meeting and the member briefly walked members through it. He noted that while there are qualifications for Met Council members, they are very broad.

A member commented that one of the problems is that the appointment process for the Met Council is part of a larger elaborate process in state government for all the boards and commissions that the Governor makes appointments to fill. There is an appointments office staffed by a few people and when there is a new Governor, the office is inundated with hundreds if not thousands of applications for all the boards and commissions. In his experience, the Met Council gets lost in all of this. This makes the Met Council no different than the Minnesota Board of Barber Examiners and other boards. Staggered terms could help to alleviate some of this but it would be better if the Council was seen as different and distinct from these other boards.

Another member added that regardless of improvements to the recruitment process, it breaks down at the actual appointment because the Governor will do what he wants to do.

It was added that the nominations committee is seen as an extension of the Governor's office because they conduct the interviews and privately forward the names to the Governor who makes the appointments. The member thought that if the names of finalists for each seat were made public, at the very least, people would know who the Governor was choosing from, adding some pressure if the Governor were to choose from outside these names.

A member suggested that in reviewing the draft recommendations, it is helpful to ask what the problem the recommendation is trying to solve is. For the staggered term recommendation, the problem is clear and the recommendation addresses it. For the appointment process recommendation, it was unclear what the problem the recommendation is trying to solve. Is it to get at the capabilities of Met Council members? Some members commented that it is a matter of trusting Met Council members as effective listeners and carry the messages from the districts into the work of the Met Council.

A different member commented that the problem isn't that the Governor selects the members but that there is a perception that the members selected are not credible and that an improved process could help to restore credibility.

It was also suggested that adding additional local government voices to the nomination process could make the Council more credible. After trust was mentioned again, a member asked for

clarification or an example of "what not trusting" means in the context of the Met Council. A member responded that to her, it is a matter of integrity. Is the Met Council member representing the district and making decisions with integrity? She told the story of an exchange she had with a Met Council member whom she did not believe listened to her concerns or knew enough about the issue to effectively bring it back to the Council for further action.

A member shared a story of an elected official she knew who was part of the Met Council nominations process. Although many names were forwarded to the Governor from the nominations committee, none of them were selected. Further, it was discovered later that the final candidate did not show up for the interview but was still selected. This contributes to the lack of trust for the nominations process. It was added that in more recent years, the Governor has selected from the pool of candidates that have come forward from the nominations committee.

Another member questioned whether it was really trust or integrity since no one is asserting that a Met Council member has been involved in nefarious activities. He instead offered that it might be more of a question of political legitimacy.

In addition to the staggered terms and an improved nominations committee, a member encouraged the group to come up with a recommendation about the importance of educating the public on the Met Council and its work. Not enough people know what it does and therefore many are suspicious about its activities. Even if it is not a formal recommendation, she also thought the group should encourage the Met Council with some urgency to take some responsibility in convening the region around issues related to the changing demographics. In her mind, this cannot wait to be studied at a future date since it is happening right now. Someone has to take responsibility to take a look at these issues at a regional level. Another member rose to support this. She added that issues related to changing demographics including growing poverty does not need to be studied further since we already know enough about the issue and we cannot continue to admire it.

A member suggested that time commitment and a commitment to regionalism should be criteria for member selection. He also wanted the group to debate and discuss whether elected officials should serve on the Council.

Pahoua Hoffman added that in typing up the notes from the meetings and reviewing them afterwards, issues of trust, credibility, and political legitimacy permeated every discussion the group has had. A reason staff and the co-chairs presented these draft recommendation for the group to discuss today was that until these issues were addressed, she did not believe the public would see the Council as trustworthy enough, credible enough, or politically legitimate to address many of the issues on the "to be studied further" list. To this point, she added that the vision for the items to be studied is that these would be fully articulated and framed up in such a way that they would be ready to be examined further by the Citizens League or another group. It would not be just a couple of sentences.

Co-chair Arntz suggested that the group focus on putting more details into the two draft recommendations at this time and use the meeting on March 3 to discuss the items for further study. She also thought it would be good to get some writing done and perhaps meeting one more time after March 3.

A member added that she did not think some of the items in the "to be studied" list actually needed further study. She did not think changing demographics, poverty, or housing needed further study. Instead, she would like to see a call to action for the Met Council that involves a subset of these issues. They should include workforce development. There should be additional word-smithing around these three before we come back together again.

A motion was moved by Shannon Watson to adopt the first recommendation as written on staggered terms. Member, Acooa Ellis, seconded it. After a brief discussion, the Task Force agreed to the following recommendation with no objections:

> *The Citizens League Met Council Task Force recommends fixed four-year, staggered terms for Met Council members. Members' terms would not be coterminous with the governor, nor would members serve at the pleasure of the governor.*

Co-chair Knapp read the second recommendation:
> *The Citizens League Met Council Task Force recommends a member selection process that includes input by local officials, strengthens the credibility of the Council, and encourages long-term regional planning.*

A member inquired whether it was possible to require that the Governor only appoint names provided by the nominations committee. Other Task Force members had asked House researcher Deb Dyson on this point and her response was that it was not constitutional to require this of the Governor. The legislature cannot constrain the Governor's powers to appoint.

Co-chair Arntz asked members to step back and ask whom they want to serve on the Council because this could illuminate what the process should be to get them there.

Jim Erkel moved the motion to accept the second recommendation with the addition of the word "citizens and" so that it now read:
> *The Citizens League Met Council Task Force recommends a member selection process that includes input by ==citizens and== local officials, strengthens the credibility of the Council, and encourages long-term regional planning.*

It was understood by the group that they were approving this as the heading for a more detailed recommendation with criteria/qualifications yet to be determined. The motion was seconded. A member rose to oppose and asked for clarification on the problem the recommendation was trying to solve. If the problem is trust, credibility, caliber of the candidates, and political legitimacy, he did not know how this recommendation addresses those concern if at the end of the day, the Governor can still make political decisions and political appointments on his own. The power still resides with the Governor. If this is the case, what do we achieve with this recommendation, even with well-intended adjustments? A member responded that an improved process would solve the issue of transparency. A member added that this recommendation should include the requirement that the final three candidates per seat be made public before the Governor makes his final selections.

The Task Force voted on the recommendation as amended above with the addition of criteria/qualifications to be determined and the public notice of final three candidates per seat to be made public. All but two members were in favor of the amended recommendation. They did not think it did enough to address the concerns. One of the members in opposition would like to see the Governor appoint some but not all the Met Council members. Any process that still leaves all the appointing authority to one person would not be doing enough. He recalled that several weeks ago, no one objected to the group's finding that the Met Council is governed as a state agency. What the Task Force has not done yet is ask whether this is good or bad. In his view, this is bad because it leaves local government out. Local government should be able to appoint his or her own, thereby dispersing the power and not have it concentrated in one person. There should be a broader base of participation. This is how democracy is supposed to work. With the current arrangement, the agenda comes from the top down and not from the bottom up when the Met Council was first conceived. Co-chair Knapp encouraged the member to draft a recommendation that reflects his perspective to be discussed at the next meeting.

3. **Next Steps & Evaluation**
   Co-chair Knapp closed the meeting by indicating that additional meeting dates may be added. The Task Force ran out of time and did not evaluate the meeting.

4. **Adjourn** Co-Chair Knapp adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.