



Approved Minutes Met Council Task Force

Thursday, January 7th, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Auditorium A – 1st Floor
451 Lexington Parkway North - Saint Paul, MN 55104

Members present: Susan Arntz (**Co-chair**), John Knapp (**Co-chair**), Peter Bell (by phone), Steve Dornfeld, Jim Erkel, Carol Flynn, Michele Foster, Sharon Sayles-Belton, Scott Neal, Chris Gerlach, Bill Hargis, Shannon Watson, Adeel Lari, Ravi Norman, Elizabeth Kautz, Acooa Ellis, and Jim Solem.

Members not present: John Adams and Dan McElroy

Staff & staff support present: Pahoua Yang Hoffman, Sean Kershaw, and Ellen Watters

Citizens League members and special guests present: Gabriel Flaa, Tenzin Gakyi, Ray Schoch, Kevin Terrell, Patricia Nauman, Michael Langley, and Kim Crockett.

Proposed outcomes for this meeting

- Approve minutes from previous meeting.
- Debrief last meeting.
- Listen to Chair's Report.
- Hear testimony from and conduct Q&A with panel members.
- Discuss project and next steps.
- Agree on next steps.
- Evaluate meeting.

Minutes

Co-Chair Susan Arntz called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Minutes, Debrief of Previous Meeting

Introductions

Co-chair Susan Arntz started the meeting by introducing Ms. Tenzin Gakyi, Citizens League's newest intern from Mankato State. Arntz went over the proposed meeting outcomes.

Approval of Minutes

Co-chair Arntz asked if there were any questions or feedback on the minutes from the December 17th meeting. Member Acooa Ellis moved to approve the minutes. Jim Erkel seconded the motion. A unanimous verbal 18-0 aye vote passed the motion to approve the minutes.

Debrief of Previous Meeting

There were no comments from the members about the previous meeting.

2. Chair's Report

Co-chair Arntz informed the group that she wanted to review the project status and where it is headed next. She explained that she and Co-chair John Knapp know one of the things they need to be working towards is focusing the conversation and starting to decide where the group should head

down. She added that in the last several conversations, it was intentional not to narrow right away, wanting the group to collect as much information as possible. However, the group is now getting to a point where it needs to start focusing its discussion towards possible recommendations. To that end, Arntz explained that Citizens League staff member, Pahoua Hoffman, shared a tool (decision matrix chart) with the group at the last meeting with an assignment over the holiday break. She reported that about half the group completed the assignment and later, we would be discussing it. For those who did not have a chance to complete the assignment, Arntz explained that there would be an opportunity to add feedback.

Before she asked Hoffman to provide an administrative overview of the decision matrix chart tool, she asked the group if there was any other perspective—in writing or in person—that we have not heard from since today's meeting is scheduled to be the last day with outside guest presenters. A member asked about elected officials, specifically Representatives and Senators. She recalled that there used to be a Metropolitan Governance Committee but was unsure whether this committee still existed. Someone added that there is a Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council Accountability and Transparency. Another member added that there is no shortage of other perspectives, but is looking forward to digging deeper into the ones the group has already heard from.

Arntz asked Hoffman to explain the assignment that was first presented at the December 17 meeting. Hoffman referred members to the document in their meeting packet, which now has the verbatim responses from those who completed the assignment. She explained that the goal of the assignment was to begin to put in one place the items the group has discussed so far. She added that document attempted to capture the problem statements as well as the criteria or principles so that members could begin filling in possible recommendations or "solutions" into the boxes to see how they lined up. Hoffman explained that when she first distributed the assignment, she pre-populated it with a couple of examples to get members started. As members were completing the assignment, she heard that it became more difficult. In the feedback staff received, there were no additions to the criteria/principles. There were, however, two new additions in the problem statement column on the far left. Of the possible recommendations/solutions that members added to the main section of the assignment, some responses complimented each other while at times, the responses contradicted one another. Regardless, Hoffman explained that it was an important exercise for members to see how their possible recommendations stood against the agreed-upon criteria that were stated in the project charge.

Arntz went on to explain that after the panel presentation, she will be excusing the panel members so that the group can go into an in-depth discussion about the assignment and next steps for the project. The goal of the discussion is to have a good understanding of what we plan to do in the January 21 meeting. Arntz asked Co-chair Knapp if he had anything else to add. Knapp encouraged members to add anything they think might be missing from the list. Sean Kershaw added that the Citizens League's process is as follows: first findings, conclusions, and then recommendations, citing that people often want to go right into the recommendations without having the findings and conclusion to support them. If there are symptoms, what are the conclusions that can be drawn from that, which could inform the recommendations? Kershaw explained that ideally, it would be great to have near consensus on findings and conclusions. However, there does not need to be consensus on the recommendations. That is, the process does not require 100% agreement on the recommendations in order for them to be adopted by the committee. It is also possible that the committee may simply recommend that certain issues need further study. Not all findings and conclusion will lead to recommendations, but even in this case, Kershaw noted that it is important for the committee to frame the issue or the question that needs further examination.

Lastly, Kershaw mentioned the desire by some committee members to continue discussing between meetings. Realizing that email may not be the best format for such discussions, he explained that staff will be inviting members to join a private group via LinkedIn so that members can continue to discuss in a designated online space.

3. Regional Development Panel and Q&A

Co-chair Arntz welcomed and introduced the three speakers. Ms. Patricia Nauman was asked to start first in responding to the questions that were sent ahead to the panel.

Patricia Nauman, Executive Director, Metro Cities

Nauman informed the group that her organization represents cities in the 7-county metropolitan region at the legislature and the Metropolitan Council. To the question on what should be the purpose and mission of the Metropolitan Council, Nauman responded that Metro Cities recognizes and supports a regional government entity with its current statutorily provided responsibilities. Her organization believes that the purpose of a regional entity is to set a broad regional framework, provide services, functions, and planning that can be most equitably and efficiently provided at a regional level. Nauman added that this would include short-term as well as long-term as in the case of planning.

Metro Cities' policies also recognize the inherent tensions in having a regional government that has the statutory powers that impact local governments. Nauman added that Metro Cities exists within that realm of tension to help cities navigate, work with, partner with, respond to the Metropolitan Council. They believe the Metropolitan Council must be diligent and consistent in being responsive to local governments in all of their policy-making, planning, and other activities because cities, a key constituency of the Met Council, are the ones tasked to implement what comes out of the Council. Therefore, Nauman added, it is very important that the Metropolitan Council work in partnership with local governments across all spectrums of their activities. For the most part, they believe the Metropolitan Council does very well in this regard and when they don't, Metro Cities urges them to do so in the form of a working group or a task force. Most recently, Metro Cities was able to get into law a technical advisory committee of city officials to advise the Council on water supply. Nauman noted that the level of partnership does ebb and flow with different Metropolitan Councils. With the work the Metro Cities does with the Council, either formally or informally, cities may not always be happy with the resulting outcomes, but having the ability to provide input does ensure that the positions and policies that come out of the Council have the best shot at being workable for local governments.

To the question of how the Council should balance immediate needs with future needs of the region, Nauman responded that the Council could do better working more closely with not only with cities and counties, but also with the region as a whole – with its citizens and the business community to keep the importance of regional issues front and center. This could include educating people about these issues by really using their convening role to have ongoing dialogue. The perception is that the Metropolitan Council operates in a vacuum, which Nauman said she does not believe to be true but that perception is out there. Many people in the region simply do not know what they do.

On the question of market forces and existing subsidies and how the Council works in that environment, Nauman responded that this is an ongoing challenge. It is something the Council gets pushed on with some consistency, especially with respect to housing policy where they do have some authority but not necessarily strong regulatory authority. This gets pushed onto cities to figure out how to meet the policies coming out of the Council and this is an instance where market forces are very much at work and there is only so much a city can do. Because of this, there is some tension, according to Nauman, between the Council and local governments. In the area of what the Council can do better, she thought they could do a better job advocating for resources.

To the question of whether there is a role for the Met Council in economic development, Metro Cities believes there are many entities already focused on economic development but that the Council does have a role in its existing statutory powers, especially through the Livable Communities Act. Metro Cities believes the Council should continue to focus on the roles that they have, the powers that they have, and the constraints that they have and try to do those the best they can rather than trying to insert themselves into areas that would be the responsibility of other entities or local government.

Generally speaking, Nauman said this is consistent with Metro Cities' position that the Council should stay within its statutory lines of authority and not try to stray beyond.

On comprehensive planning, Nauman responded that this is an area in the statute that is defined broadly and vaguely. Metro Cities has urged the Metropolitan Council to streamline their requirements around comprehensive plans to avoid confusion and try to provide resources. She added that they have pushed back strongly on the current Metropolitan Council to make sure they do not stray beyond their lines of authority. She noted that there have been conversations that would have taken the Council outside these lines by requiring things they do not think the Council has the authority to require and that so far, Metro Cities has been able to stave this off. Nauman thought the new local planning handbook the Council has put out is quite good. Over 50 city officials vetted it and Nauman saw this as progress in terms of the Council and cities working together.

Michael Langley, founding CEO, GreaterMSP

Mr. Langley noted the two board members of GreaterMSP who are also on the Task Force: Elizabeth Kautz and Ravi Norman. He also disclosed that Met Council Chair Adam Duinick also serves on his board. Langley went on to say that the Met Council is a contributing partner of GreaterMSP. He explained that GreaterMSP is the region's 16-county MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas), a public/private partnership for economic growth and development. The mission is to increase capital investment in job creation in the region with the goal and vision of prosperity for businesses as well as all residents throughout the metro region. Langley explained that he just came from a meeting of their regional competitiveness working group, which includes a wide array of business and government leaders. The goal of this group is to ensure that the region is measuring its progress on a very broad spectrum, not just on traditional business climate issues. It includes looking at issues of equity, disparities, sustainability, environmental, and social. They are proud to be partnering with the Met Council on all these issues.

As a 501c3 and a non-partisan organization, Langley said that the goal of GreaterMSP is to be fact-based. With these facts, they make decisions such as which industry sectors and areas of growth they perceive will occur in the region and from that, determine the needs of those industries against those that the Met Council is charged with in terms transportation, transit, housing, and other infrastructure. Langley added they believe the Met Council provides great efficiency for infrastructure planning and other essential services from an economic development perspective. Before Langley moved to the region six years ago, he held a similar position in Pittsburgh. During this time around 2004, he brought over 100 CEOs and government leaders from Pittsburgh to the region with the purpose to do a comparison on regional planning and infrastructure development since the two regions were similar in population and size. One of the discoveries was that over a 20 or 25-year period, the cost that was incurred by the Minneapolis-St. Paul region versus the Pittsburgh region in terms of water and sewer infrastructure responsibilities was significantly more efficient. During this same period, it was about \$2 billion less in the metro region here than in Pittsburgh. He attributed this to the efficiency of working on a regional level versus working at a fragmented municipality level.

To the question of how the Council should balance between immediate and future needs of the region, Langley responded that he did not see it as a balance, but rather as "both and." He thought it was important to focus on the current needs and not let future or long term planning get in the way of action on the immediate issues where we are experiencing market failures. He added that this should be done while still planning for the long term.

Langley went on to say that through Council's leadership and staff at all levels, GreaterMSP has benefited by the research and analysis to support their economic development strategies. He underscored the fact-based focus of GreaterMSP. To the question about subsidies, Langley said it would depend on how subsidies is defined, but that the economic development tools that the Met Council has at its disposal have been very helpful to GreaterMSP in their economic development projects and execution.

He noted the grants for infrastructure developments alongside the transit corridors have been extremely valuable. He encouraged the Council to have more appropriate tools such as these that will spur more companies and investors to continue to make investments in the areas where need those dollars. He also asked the Council for further cooperation on the transfer and utilization of SAC and WAC credits (sewer availability charge and water access charge) to help companies engage in improving their infrastructure and get projects done more cost effectively. He would encourage more of these types of tools.

Kim Crockett, EVP and General Counsel, Center of the American Experiment

Ms. Kim Crockett noted that like GreaterMSP, the Center of the American Experiment is also a 501c3. She started by framing up the two other speakers. She saw Metro Cities as the end user customer base for the services of the Met Council and appreciated Patricia Nauman's comments about helping to keep the Council in its lane. She saw GreaterMSP as a business group interested in helping to develop the region but also interested in profit and making money.

She went on to say that what she hears from cities (and she noted she was a former city official) is that they are afraid of the Metropolitan Council. They worry about retaliation if they push back too hard. They also find the comprehensive planning process to be frustrating. Prefacing that she did not mean any disrespect nor see it as a reflection of Langley, but Crockett said that what worries her is that organizations like GreaterMSP and other business groups that have been involved in the Thrive 2040 plan are "the trough" to some extent because of there are lots of subsidies coming down for transit, housing, and other development.

She explained that the Center of the American Experiment has had a very big and very public philosophical disagreement with the legislature's approach to creating and overseeing the Met Council and the Center has had an even greater divide on the Met Council's interpretation of what the legislature has asked it to do. For example, the Met Council - best she can tell - has not been tasked to run housing in the region. There are smaller tasks that it has been tasked to do as well as implement the Livable Communities program - a voluntary program - but it has not been asked to run housing and plan for housing for the region. However, she thought that it was using its powers to direct its vision of what that ought to look like.

The Center believes that the region's residents and their elected officials (city, county, state levels) should be driving the conversation about the growth of the region and working with market forces that are, hopefully, are not deeply subsidized. The Center sees the Council as a regional body totally unaccountable to the region's citizens, thumbing its nose at elected officials, and is arrogant with its "we-know-what's-best-for-you" and "what's-best-for-the-region." The Center's objections, according to Crockett, goes back many years but have only intensified since MSPThrive2040. They have called for the legislature to carefully and thoughtful unwind the Met Council, keeping the valuable services and operations like planning, wastewater treatment, transit operations, and perhaps even spinning them off as state agencies or new regional entities. Gubernatorial candidates have echoed their position, but Crockett noted that when they get to the Governor's mansion, they discover they like the power and they forget what they talked about on the campaign trail. Other elected officials have also supported the Center's view over the years.

The problem with the Met Council is perennial and Crockett said she was thankful for the Citizens League in convening this group together to examine the issues because they are so complicated. If the Met Council was a business, the Center would say it is in big trouble with their customers and she sees the customers as the cities and the citizens of the region. She hopes the arrogance of the MSPThrive2040 will come to some good, but she fears it will be too late in many instances to stop the damage it is going to do to the economic development in the region. Related to this point, she mentioned the laying down of permanent tracks for light rail, which is very expensive to build and very expensive to maintain. She went on to talk about the statutory purpose of the Met Council, explaining that the statute does not state the

accommodate that growth. The big goal was to get all the cities in the region to draft a comprehensive plan, working with cities and counties to assure that we had adequate sewer - growth to meet the region's market growth, while planning for and setting aside sufficient space for airports and green space. She thought this all made good sense but felt that goal has been largely accomplished though she understood planning was necessary since we're not done growing. The thing to keep in mind is who is in charge of how we grow and where we grow. Is it the residents and elected officials or the Met Council? The region has grown up since 1967 but it has not even hit 1 million people in St. Paul and in the Twin Cities, citing that we're only at 2.5 or 2.9 million in the region – not big enough according to Crockett to support all these big plans and big trains. She mentioned the Legislative Auditor's report on transit and noted its recommendation to get elected officials back involved. She added that she hopes the committee will recommend staggered terms to the legislature as a way to create continuity. She also wanted the group to consider undoing what was done in 1994/1995 when a very good regional agency was put in charge of both planning for transit and wastewater and operating both things. She thought there was an inherent conflict there.

Q&A with Panel Members

Co-chair Arntz opened up the meeting to the Task Force to ask questions of the panel.

A member commented that he had not heard nor seen examples where cities were afraid of the Met Council or feared retaliation and thought that if this was true, it would have come out in Patricia Nauman's presentation. He was surprised by Crockett's use of those terms. Kim Crockett responded that as a former city official, this was exactly how they felt and that she hears it constantly from mayors. She added that she has tried to get them to come down to the legislature to testify but they are terrified. She finally had a mayor from Plymouth who was on her way to the legislature but got hung up in traffic and was not able to testify. She assured the member that this is part of the conversation.

Another member asked Patricia Nauman a question related to her comment that they Met Council ought to use its convener role to bring issues to the fore. He wanted to know whether she had an example where they did that well and whether she thought there was a reluctance on the part of the Met Council to exercise this function because of the criticism they have received over the years. Nauman responded that when the Council was putting together its ThriveMSP2040 framework, it did go out and meet in many places in the region. While she could argue that there could have been more details at those discussions, she did feel the Met Council did a very good and detailed job convening around the development of the housing plan – an area where cities did have major concerns about – to try to get consensus around some issues. Nauman did think the Council can become reticent to be too out front because they are seen as a lightning rod for being criticized. With a full-time chair now at the Council, she was hopeful that changes will be made. With the hire of a new community relations director now, she hopes they will engage more directly with city officials and others in the region. While they do this well, Nauman thought they could do better.

Another member challenged Kim Crockett on the Council's role as simply to accommodate growth. In Statute 473.145, the member read that it directs the Council to prepare a metropolitan development guide for the orderly and economical development, public and private, of the region. He thought this provided a strong mandate than the one Crockett described. Crockett confirmed that this is the language in the statute. She added that what the legislature is asking the Council to do is a very big job, so she did not understand why the Council would be talking about the achievement gap, income inequality, and global warming. She asked whether they have gone a little off the rails. She thought elected people were the ones to deal with those large issues. She asked whether those things are really in their mandate.

Another member asked a question centered around cities and their dissatisfaction with the Met Council. Having submitted several plans to the Met Council herself and having the Met Council disagree with some elements of her plan, she always thought, however, that there was a way her city and the Met Council could find ways to work through it. She asked Patricia Nauman whether she

thought the mechanisms in place to help cities and the Council work through difference was adequate. Nauman responded that by and large, there are very good mechanisms in place but they don't often get seen. Because of this, what most people hear about are the tensions and the issues, not the good work that happens behind the scenes. She added that Metro Cities' policies are very explicit in supporting processes that allow for the maximum ability to do this. In the case of Lake Elmo, this was an instance when it went to the courts but in all her years, she's only seen this example. That said, she wanted to be clear that there are tensions and there are difficulties. Kim Crockett added that sometimes it is a resource issue for some cities to be able to comply.

Another member wanted to build on a comment previously made a fellow member because he believed this gets to a fundamental issue that the committee has to address but has not done so yet. He continued that the statute provides the Council the authority to adopt and implement "policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps prescribing guides for the orderly and economical development, public and private, of the metropolitan area." The issues the Council may address with any of those kinds of plans can include "physical, social, or economic needs of the metropolitan area and including but not limited to such matters as land use, parks and open space land needs, the necessity for and location of airports, highways, transit facilities, public hospitals, libraries, schools, and other public buildings." He underscored the "including but no limited to" language in the statute is very broad. According to member, it isn't that the Council only has narrow statutory authority over transportation, wastewater treatment and parks and open space since the Council has statutorily-designed authority just for those. He stressed that the charter is much broader than that, allowing them to take up other issues that implicate the orderly and economical development of the region by coming up with a policy statement. If they come up with a policy statement, the question becomes how to integrate that with all their other authorities, which is what they are supposed to do. If one is interested in efficiency, this is what they ought to be doing. It's not that their authority is limited to these named tracks, but whether they are getting at their full potential provided in the charter in dealing with the total orderly and economical development of the region.

Michael Langley responded that he was not the right person to get in the middle of something statutory or political, but stressed that the region will have a million more people than it has today over the next 25 years. Over the next 10 years, there will be the potential need for 100,000 more skilled workers to fill the jobs that will be created around the region. We also know that the demographics of the next million people will be significantly different than what we have seen in the last 50 years. There are tremendous issues in dealing with this switch and regional governance is absolutely critical. Langley added that when GreaterMSP was created, there were 13 MSAs (metropolitan statistical area) and that today there are 16 MSAs because three counties have over 25% of their residents commuting into the metro every day. We are becoming a broader and larger region, so the need for efficiency and a strong regional governance has only increased. Langley added that there is no shortage of responsibilities to go around for everyone - whether those are to fall on the Met Council, local government, county government, state government, nonprofits, or the business community, but we all have our part to play. He thought we should be linking hands and helping each other get better and becoming stronger together as a region so that we can continue to have the prosperity we have enjoyed for decades and not lose the eggs that we have today.

Patricia Nauman responded to the member's comment about how one might interpret the powers of the Met Council. She reiterated that Metro Cities generally takes the stance that we should not be too liberal in the interpretation of their powers and that they should stay within their lane. They look at the Council's powers from this perspective. That said, they also support a study of the Met Council and would argue that the study should occur before any governance changes are recommended. They study should look at what the Met Council should be doing and not doing to position the region for the next 40 years. During this, she imagines the questions about the Council statutory interpretations would come into play.

Kim Crockett added that according to the members read and interpretation of the Met Council's authority, it sounds like it is unlimited.

She thought there has to be some limit to it. She did not think the state's constitution anticipated a regional system. She thought there was plenty for the Met Council to do and again, did not understand the impulse to branch out. She added that the word "social" in the statute could mean anything so she thought the statute might need to be revised. She did not think it was an invitation to crush the desires and preferences of local communities. Lawyers can interpret the words in the statute any way they want, but she asked if this is really what was intended. What did "social" mean back then?

A member asked Michael to talk about the value of addressing things like income inequality or the achievement gap and how do these affect the orderly and economical development of the region. Langley responded that the opportunity for the region will be maximized in terms of prosperity and economic growth if we do not allow anyone to fall through the cracks – both economically and socially. He defined social as quality of life and quality of place to include the social vibrancy like arts and culture. He restated that we cannot allow anyone to fall through the cracks because we could potentially have a 100,000 jobs – a conservative estimate - that will need to be filled. A very diverse business community that is ever increasing will be creating these jobs. Where the region leads globally are in areas of food, water, and health. These are and will be the most critical issues the world will face in the next 100 years and we just happen to be very good at these things in this region. Because of this, we are very relevant on a national and global economic scale. Since we can't afford to lose anyone through the cracks, we need to address issues that will bring everyone along. Some of those issues involve inequities and disparities within our communities. Some of these inequities can be solved by ensuring that we have access to workplace, access to transit, and infrastructure throughout our region, which sometimes means we need help from government due to market failure. Langley said that although he is a pro-market and free market thinker, he also understands that market failures occur and this is where regional government can assist – not solve all the problems, but assist.

Noting a number of elected officials in the room, Kim Crockett asked when we lost confidence in elected officials. She also asked when did we lose confidence in our churches, communities, our neighborhoods. Noting how big and vital the issues are, she wanted to know why we would want to put these issues into the hands of governor appointees.

A Task Force member commented that she was glad we were having this conversation because one of the things the group is trying to do is to have a shared meaning around the roles and responsibilities of the Met Council. She addressed the member who made the comment on the statute's "including but not limited to" language. She agreed this could be interpreted broadly and where she and others at the municipal level would push back is around land use. In law, that is the authority of elected officials at the municipal level. One of the things they continue to work on and is going well under the leadership of Chair Duinick is that there needs to be a conversation with cities. Data is good but data does not illustrate the lived experience of what is happening in a city. When it comes to the quality of housing stock, the availability of affordable housing, the acknowledgement of aged housing that is now affordable are all things only those at the municipal level know and understand. She explained that her city is completely built out so they are in re-development, which is a completely different conversation. She went on to the subject of water and talked about the number of water management organizations. To drill a well, they have to go to three agencies to accomplish this. What is the Met Council role? These are some of the things she would like to see clarified. There is not an elected official who does not want their community to be economically viable. As far as economic development, she mentioned that there is also DEED. She did not necessarily think the Met Council needed more funds allocated to it since DEED was another place cities go for grants. She would like the legislature to provide more tools to cities besides TIP and abatement.

A member rose to thank Kim Crockett for taking off the gloves because he believed this is exactly the conversation we need to be having. He added to an earlier point about the Council's statutory powers and explained that in plain reading of ⁸ the statute, the Council can adopt policy statements,

programs, etc. for any of those kinds of issues including social and economic needs of the region. If the Council decides that something is important and it does adopt a policy plan, then the statute says that they have certain ways they can make that work. They can give out dollars, through investments, or through their other plans. Metropolitan systems plans must substantially conform to all the other plans and policies that the Council has adopted, so there is a way for all of this to integrate. The Council has this authority and it has been there for a long time. The reason it is there, the member explained, is because cities were building for their own self-interest. The reason the legislature decided against a council of government structure was because they realized local governments would end up pushing the council around. The member thought the legislature has been micromanaging the Council since 1976 on every issue when they felt the Council has pushed a little too hard. Because of this, there have been amendments to the statutes.

Another member recalled that in the first meetings of the Task Force, the committee learned how the Met Council was conceived. The viewpoint at the time was to allow local metropolitan community leaders to pull together, figure out solutions, and take that to the legislature for implementation. Today, it seems to be the complete opposite is true where an agenda comes from the governor's office and is then implemented through the Met Council. He asked the panel if this was a good development or has hurt us as a region.

Langley responded that as someone who has done similar work elsewhere in Pennsylvania and Florida, he has noted that regions that do not have a regional governance executed in a manner that provides efficiency has looked to the Met Council as a model because it has the ability to bond, tax and get things done. He stated that he did not want to engage in the politics of the Met Council since it would not serve its members, but hopes that the Task Force will be able to set aside many of these political arguments that have been ongoing so that we can all get more done.

Patricia Nauman added that she thought the members comment would support staggered terms since what the Council focuses on would depend on the make-up of its members.

Kim Crockett mentioned the 2011 Legislative Auditors report. The report found that the transit governance in the region is completely dysfunctional. She agreed there should be regional planning and regional management of wastewater, but she felt something has gone wrong. What the auditor said was that the Met Council's structure created a lack of credibility among stakeholders and that there were no agreed-upon set of priorities for transit in the region. She believed in regionalism, but regionalism with accountability. She disagreed with Langley that this was political. She saw this more as philosophical and a governance issue. She added that when there are 25 organizations involved in transit, something was wrong.

4. Group Discussion

Co-chair Arntz referred to the Decision Matrix Chart as a tool to help frame tonight's conversation. She and co-chair Knapp both agreed that they needed to help the group start narrowing and focusing the discussions. Based on Arntz' observations, she noted a lot of conversation around governance and a lot of conversation around transportation. She did not notice as much on other issues such as housing or other elements that were on part of earlier questions in the process. Referring to the Decision Matrix Chart, she asked the group if anything was missing that should be added.

Due to the spirited presentation by the panel members, there was interest from the group to discuss what the committee heard tonight. A member commented that for him, the concepts that have been expressed by Kim Crockett and the Center of the American Experiment have limitations because for one, there is a small homogenous group represented, secondly the data may be limited, and three, he did not know anyone who could predict the future like Nostradamus. He thought this was something the group needed to also consider: the forecasting of what might occur. As a board member of GreaterMSP, he is a supporter of regionalism and appreciates the work it is doing based on data. He thought Michael Langley should have shared the Regional Indicators Dashboard.

If one believes in markets and free market concepts, then one needs data like this to show what is and isn't working and here is market failure. To the question of whether the Met Council should be reaching into areas like the achievement gap and income inequality, the indicators of our current market show that there are big, glaring issues that impact the competitiveness of our region as highlighted by the data. If the market is showing that this is a problem and if areas that the Met Council has the authority to coordinate like the planning for housing and transportation/transit, which can positively impact the achievement gap and income inequality by providing stable homes and better and more reliable transportation to job opportunities in the marketplace, but the need isn't being met, then something is not working.

Given the dollar figures that Michael Langley threw out as savings due to the efficiency of the Council and the comments raised by Kim Crockett about the rights of local communities, the member wanted to know what is the value of the local government.

Another member commented that she wanted to re-enforce the idea of the Met Council as a convener in the context of its statutory authority. She explained that in the Met Council's history, there have been times when local communities have not been able to move forward together in a positive way with the Met Council to the benefit of the region and that this happens all the time around different topics and issues. She pointed out housing and the time when there were fights around housing between urban cities and suburbs. The Met Council at that time convened conversations not because they had the statutory ability, although they did, but because they knew it was what was needed. Someone needed to step in to do this. Today, there are similar thorny issues that no one wants to take responsibilities for in our region. She hopes that as members of the Task Force, if we want the region to be strong, we will not be afraid to put forward recommendations even though they might rub some people the wrong way or put at risk someone's authority because it is in the best interest of the people in the region.

A member commented that there seemed to be a special status held for elected officials and she's not sure she shares that view. She did not think Metro Cities shared this view either. She recalled what happened in 1994, which was how do you hold anyone accountable if it is spread it over various units of governments. How do you make someone accountable if the governor is not the right one? Would it make sense to elect the Council chair region-wide and make that person in charge? She also noted that county commissioners ended up getting the money for transit because they were elected officials but how many county commissioners lose their jobs these days? They're basically in there for life. How many people know what their county government does? Given this, she thought the arguments made for elected officials were unfounded.

A member commented that so often in these conversations, the people impacted by all of these decisions are often absent and she did not know whether this was something we could mention in whatever is brought forward.

Another member commented that one of the things she thought the group should be focusing on is a shared meaning on the role of the Met Council and the role of cities. She added that cities do understand that a stronger region positively impacts them.

A member said that she would like to take the group back to something Sean Kershaw said earlier in that we should start with findings before we get to the recommendations. She thought the conversation today was illustrative on where we can start. She thought many findings were stated in the last ten minutes including the consensus on the importance of regionalism, the lack of understanding of the Met Council among individual citizens, and the fact that the market does not work sometimes in some areas. She thought there were other findings that have been mentioned and would like to see the group reach some consensus on those and by doing that, some recommendations might come forward.

A member commented that having served as an election judge for many years, many voters expressed not knowing any of the city or county officials who are running for office.

A member commented that despite what one of the speaker said, as a city official, he is not scared of the Met Council. In the circles he is a part of, he knows that other city officials are also not afraid of the Council or fearful of retribution but they are annoyed by the Council on a pretty regular basis and do have a sense that there are people at the Council who are dabbling in what may be considered regional issues. One of the assumptions he has gotten out of this process is that elected officials are seen as not having the ability to make the tough decisions for the long-term. He didn't agree with this but thought there was the perception that only people "above it all" can do this.

A member commented that having worked in four cities over the past 20 years, she has never been afraid of the Met Council, but has experienced retaliation when an action was not well received by the Council.

Another member noted that when he was an elected official, he too, was not afraid of the Met Council. He added that he thought people need to feel they have a chance and this starts with better representation in government. He added that the Met Council should approve comprehensive plans and infrastructure plans and deal with big strategic issues, but allow the boots-on-the-ground people have the ability to do what is best in their community without being micro-managed.

5. Next Steps & Evaluation

Co-chair Arntz closed the meeting by restating the Citizens League process of findings, conclusions, and recommendations; she wanted to start the conversation on the 21st with what are our findings and start creating conclusions. It was asked and members agreed it would be good to start some of that work before the meeting.

The members evaluated the meeting as follows: 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 4.5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, and 4 for an average 4.4.

6. Adjourn

Co-Chair Arntz adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.