



## Approved Minutes Met Council Task Force

Thursday, March 10, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Mount Zion Temple, 1300 Summit Ave, St Paul, MN 55105  
Meeting Room: Johnson Hall

**Members present:** John Knapp (**Co-chair**), Jim Erkel, Michele Foster, Scott Neal, Shannon Watson, Adeel Lari, Steve Dornfeld, Sharon Sayles-Belton, Dan McElroy, Elizabeth Kautz, Carol Flynn, and Acooa Ellis.

**Members not present:** Susan Arntz, Ravi Norman, Jim Solem, Peter Bell, Chris Gerlach, Bill Hargis, and John Adams

**Staff & staff support present:** Pahoua Yang Hoffman and Sean Kershaw

**Citizens League members, Board members, and special guests present:** Patricia Nauman, Gabriel Flaa, Tenzin Gakyi, Caroline da Silva Barbosa, Eric Schubert, Mike Luke, Bob Armstrong, and Kevin Terrell.

### Proposed outcomes for this meeting

- Approve minutes from previous meeting.
- Debrief last meeting.
- Review project status.
- Discuss draft recommendations.
- Agree on next steps.
- Evaluate meeting.

Co-Chair John Knapp called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

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

#### *Introductions*

Co-chair John Knapp welcomed Citizens League and Citizens League Board members and 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 March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. A member requested two corrections on page three:

- In the first paragraph, the word “including” should be replaced with “plus.”
- In the motion after the fourth paragraph, add “Belton” after “Sharon Sayles.”

Scott Neal moved to approve the minutes as amended. Shannon Watson seconded the motion. A unanimous verbal vote passed the motion to approve the minutes as amended.

#### *Debrief of Previous Meeting*

Members did not have any comments about the previous meeting.

#### *Review Project Status*

Co-chair John Knapp asked Sean Kershaw to provide a status on the project and the timeline for approval by the Citizens League Board. Kershaw stated that work is underway to draft various

sections of the final report and that the discussions on the final recommendations at today's meeting and next were critical so that staff could deliver a penultimate draft to the Task Force the week of the 21<sup>st</sup> for feedback via email. Staff will present key findings at the Citizens League Executive Committee meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> and the plan is to have a final draft by March 31 so that it can be approved by the Citizens League Board at its April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kershaw informed the committee that all are welcomed to attend the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting if they'd like to offer comments to the Board, but not required. Kershaw clarified that the board has agreed it would be approving the Citizens League process that led to the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The Board would not be editing or adding to the final report. A member asked what happens if the decisions on recommendations are not unanimous. Kershaw responded that the report should indicate this and stressed the importance of being as transparent as possible.

## 2. Group Discussion

### Draft hybrid recommendation on Met Council Member Selection

The Task Force began by discussing the draft hybrid recommendation. At the meeting on March 3, although it was not unanimous, the majority of Task Force members voted to see if it was possible to blend the two very different Met Council member selection recommendations into a hybrid version for discussion. Also voted on at the last meeting were four different components that the Task Force wanted to see in the hybrid recommendation. They included:

- Governor-appointed members should be more than members appointed by local elected officials.
- Governor should continue to appoint the Chair.
- Member appointed by elected officials must be non-elected officials.
- Retain the number of 16 member seats/districts.

After Co-chair Knapp explained that a small group convened to come up with the hybrid draft which was included in the meeting packet, Knapp and Sean Kershaw walked members through the hybrid recommendation, also known as the 8-8-1 model. The recommendation assumes the adoption of staggered, fixed terms, which the group unanimously approved in a previous meeting. The recommendation outlined four main components:

- The Governor would appoint eight (8) Met Council members using the Dornfeld-Solem recommendation that was discussed at the last meeting. A change was made to the original Dornfeld-Solem recommendation. Instead of 3 counties and 3 cities in the expanded six local government roles in the nominations committee, they would all be represented by cities due to the county representation note below.
- The Governor would appoint the Chair, whose term would be coterminous with Governor.
- County Boards would appoint eight (8) members through a yet-to-be-defined process.
- To maintain the existing 16 member districts, after the initial appointments as specified above, future district appointments would alternate between Governor-appointed and County Board-appointed.

Knapp read through the list of possible benefits of the hybrid recommendation. They included:

- This recommendation emphasizes and strengthens a regional approach.
- Increasing nominations membership would increase local voices and contribute to more buy-in.
- Additional notification would increase transparency and elevate Council credibility.
- Additional and specified qualifications will strengthen Council membership and elevate Council credibility.
- The ability of County Boards to directly appoint non-elected members would allow for greater independence of Council actions and make the Council more representative of the region's interests.
- The ability of County Boards to directly appoint non-elected members may also significantly increase legitimacy and create deeper connections to local officials.

- The rotation of appointments between Governor-appointed and County-appointed would encourage relationship building with the appointing bodies and the Governor – especially with staggered, fixed terms.

Co-chair Knapp also mentioned that the draft hybrid recommendation was shared with Patricia Nauman, the executive director of Metro Cities, who provided feedback, which was distributed via email. Hard copies were also provided at the meeting. Co-chair Knapp called on Ms. Patricia Nauman, who was in attendance, to see if she had further comments. She informed the group that Metro Cities, a regional organization representing cities, was created in response to the creation of the Met Council. Recently, Metro Cities did conduct its own review of Met Council governance and the views shared in her written responses reflected this effort.

Several Task Force members, especially those representing cities, vocalized they and/or their City Council would not be in favor of the hybrid recommendation. Some did not understand why County Boards would be the appointing body. Some members questioned whom these members would be accountable to – the county? It was noted that that question has been raised with the current model because it is not clear now.

A member recalled that at the last meeting, there was also the idea of the Governor appointing nine (9) and local government officials appointing seven (7) so she wanted to know why that was not being proposed. Co-chair Knapp and Sean Kershaw explained that they did not propose it today simply due to a “math issue” of not being able to make the numbers work while trying to maintain a balance.

Task Force members also indicated that they were unsure what problem this was fixing. Co-chair Knapp responded that the intent behind this hybrid recommendation was to provide counties more of a direct connection to the Met Council and vice versa and by doing so, this would increase political legitimacy.

A member did not think this would be a proposal that the Governor would likely approve and questioned whether this met the Task Force’s criteria for recommendations since it was agreed that recommendations should be “politically plausible.” A member also commented that it was noteworthy that Metro Cities and its members do not support this recommendation.

Co-chair Knapp asked if the proposal would be more acceptable if instead of the County Board appointing the eight Met Council members, they were appointed jointly by city and county governments. Members responded that this would not make it more acceptable. A member commented that at the last meeting, there was an interest to see if a blended version of the two recommendations previously discussed was possible. Now having done so, perhaps it is not possible. It was suggested that the Task Force go back to review the previous options.

*A motion was moved by John Knapp and seconded by Shannon Watson to adopt the hybrid recommendation as written.*

- **VOTE: 0 voted in favor. 11 opposed. 1 member abstained.** The motion did not prevail.

Since the hybrid recommendation did not prevail, Task Force members went back to review the two previous recommendations on Met Council member selections, Option 1 and Option 2. Option 1 (the Dornfeld-Solem recommendation) was discussed again.

*A motion was made by Sharon Sayles Belton and seconded by Adeel Lari to adopt Option 1, the Dornfeld-Solem recommendation. During discussion of the motion, a language amendment was suggested so that item 3A in the recommendation be re-worded to now state:*

*“Experience in local government and/or experience in such areas including, but not limited to transportation, housing, environment, and regional development.*

- **VOTE: 10 voted in favor. 1 abstained.** (1 member left the meeting early and did not vote.) The motion to adopt Option 1, the Dornfeld-Solem recommendation, as amended, prevailed.

#### Revised Recommendation for Further Study on Water

At the last meeting, the Task Force had a discussion on the draft recommendation to further study water since the committee did not hear from water experts and did not have enough time to discuss the topic. Since it had been recommended that the previous draft recommendation be pared down since the length and amount of detail may suggest that the committee spent more time on it than it did. The revised draft recommendation to further study water was included in the meeting packet. It was debated whether the recommendation for further study should be included in the final report. A member recalled comments by Michael Langley of GreaterMSP citing water as a regional asset that provides Minnesota a competitive advantage. Since water does affect the orderly and economic development of the region, he thought the Task Force should offer a recommendation.

*A motion was made by Shannon Watson and seconded by Jim Erkel to adopt the recommendation to study water further as written.*

- **VOTE: 6 voted in favor. 4 opposed. 1 member abstained.** (1 member left the meeting early and did not vote.) The motion to adopt the recommendation to further study water, as written, prevailed.

#### Revised Recommendation on Social Equity

At the last meeting, it was suggested that the draft be re-worked, incorporating the feedback from the discussion and brought back to the group for further discussion. Sean Kershaw presented the draft recommendation, informing the committee that the chief author, Acooa Ellis, had to leave the meeting unexpectedly.

A motion was made by Sharon Sayles Belton and seconded by Jim Erkel to adopt the recommendation.

After the motion was moved and seconded, co-chair Knapp invited discussion. A member commented that he wondered if it was a good idea to include this recommendation since on one hand it may not go far enough for people who want to see the Met Council do more around equity and on the other hand, it may make some nervous that we are making recommendations in an area not all see as within the purview of the Met Council. A different member commented that Minnesota is not ahead on this, but lagging behind because other MPOs have equity as a lens through which to make transportation decision. He believed there ought to be a recommendation in the area of equity. A member commented that while there has been work on equity in the past and being done currently, none of them have a long-term perspective and a regional approach. She added that the legislature has taken these issues up but she did not think the legislature in the short 10 weeks that they meet can properly address these challenges.

A member added that she had suggested the “opt-out” language be removed from the previous version of this recommendation at the last meeting and she suggested it be removed again.

*A motion to amend the recommendation was moved by Scott Neal to remove the last sentence related to the Minnesota Legislature conducting an independent review to explore the impact of opt-out transit systems on regional equity.*

- **VOTE: 10 voted in favor. 0 opposed. 1 member abstained.** (1 member left the meeting early and did not vote.) The motion to adopt the amendment prevailed.

*A motion to amend the recommendation was moved by John Knapp to remove the first two bullet points under "Full utilization of Met Council authority includes" leaving just the last bullet point.*

A member questioned why aging was included in the third bullet when this recommendation is on equity. Sean Kershaw reminded members about the state demographer's presentation and that linked issues of equity with the changing demographics, which includes an aging workforce/population.

- **VOTE: 7 voted in favor. 3 opposed. 1 member abstained.** (1 member left the meeting early and did not vote.) The motion to adopt the amendment prevailed.

*A motion was made by Sharon Sayles Belton and seconded by Jim Erkel to adopt the recommendation as amended.*

- **VOTE: 9 voted in favor. 2 opposed.** (1 member left the meeting early and did not vote.) The motion to adopt the recommendation as amended prevailed.

### **3. Next Steps & Evaluation**

Co-chair Knapp closed the meeting by informing the Task Force that the committee would meet on March 17 to discuss the transit study recommendation and confirm next steps.

The members evaluated the meeting as follows: 3, 5, 4, 4, 5, 4, 4, 5, 2, 4, and 4 for an average 4.

### **4. Adjourn** Co-Chair Knapp adjourned the meeting at 6:03 p.m.