



Approved Minutes Met Council Task Force

Thursday, March 3, 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, Jim Solem, Steve Dornfeld, Sharon Sayles-Belton, Peter Bell (via phone), Dan McElroy, and Acooa Ellis.

Members not present: Elizabeth Kautz, Carol Flynn, Ravi Norman, 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, Kate Weyenberg, Tenzin Gakyi, Caroline da Silva Barbosa, Pat Born, Cyndi Leshner, Eric Schubert, Mike Luke, 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 Susan Arntz called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

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

Introductions

Co-chair Arntz started the meeting welcoming Citizens League members and Board members Cyndi Leshner, Eric Schubert and Patrick Born. She also acknowledged the four Citizens League interns. 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 February 18th meeting. Scott Neal moved to approve the minutes. Jim Erkel seconded the motion. A unanimous verbal vote passed the motion to approve the minutes.

Debrief of Previous Meeting

Members did not have any comments about the previous meeting.

Review Project Status

Co-chair Arntz informed the group that two meetings were recently added but depending on the discussion tonight, there may or may not be a need for one or both meeting dates.

2. Group Discussion

The Task Force began the discussion by taking up the first two draft recommendations on Met Council member selection. Since two small teams authored each option, Co-chair Arntz asked each team to present their respective draft recommendations. It was agreed that a vote would be taken after both teams have presented their

Member Selection, Option 1

Background: At the last meeting, the Task Force discussed and voted on the following draft recommendation (all but two members were in favor) with the understanding that additional details including member qualifications would be developed and brought forward for another discussion.

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.

The first team walked members through the first draft recommendation. They proposed increasing the nominations committee membership from the current 7 to 13 as a way to increase the number of voices on the nomination committee. Seven would represent citizens and six would represent local government: 3 counties and 3 cities. They also proposed additional public announcements to include: A) Detailed position description with required skills, time commitment, and connection to district to be clearly articulated and posted in advance of the nominations process. B) Require the nominations committee should recommend three finalists for each council seat, and their names and qualifications should be made public at least 14 days prior to final selection by the governor. They also proposed adding qualifications: A) Experience in local government and/or experience in key subject matter such as transportation, housing, and environment. B) Diversity representative of district/region. C) Specify time commitment required to attend Council and community meetings. By increasing the nominations committee membership, this would increase local voices and contribute to more buy-in. Additional notification would increase transparency and elevate Council credibility. Additional and specified qualifications would strengthen Council membership and elevate Council credibility.

Member Selection, Option 2

The second team walked members through the second member selection recommendation. The recommendation supported an agreed-up finding from a previous Task Force meeting that for all intents and purposes the Met Council is governed and managed as a state agency with decisions, policies and actions flowing downward from the Governor's office to the Council membership.

They proposed decentralizing the governance structure to allow for Council members to be appointed by counties and cities within the region and developing a system for proportional voting with checks and balances to achieve geographical balance. They also proposed that the Chair of the Met Council be elected from among the Council Membership and not appointed by the governor. The team explained that these changes would allow for greater independence of Council actions and make the Council more representative of the region's interests. They added that this would also significantly enhance the acceptance of local governments and citizens and make the Chair and staff more accountable to the Council rather than the Governor.

Hybrid recommendation proposed.

After the committee discussed the merits of both, it was asked whether members would be open to blending of the two recommendations. It was suggested that in a hybrid scenario, the Governor would appoint some members and elected officials would appoint some members. A member rose to support a hybrid if this meant elected officials would sit on the Met Council, thereby meeting the requirements to act as the MPO and eliminating the need for TAB. It suggested that non-elected or elected officials serving on the Met Council be discussed further.

After some discussion, a member suggested a hybrid that would allow local elected officials to appoint 7 members while the Governor appoints 9 members plus the Chair. Because this member did not want this to turn into a COG, he suggested that the members appointed by elected officials be non-elected officials.

It was suggested that the Met Council membership be increased from 16 to 23, with the additional 7 to be appointed by elected officials (counties and cities). Another member suggested at-large members.

Co-chair Arntz commented that given the feedback on a possible new hybrid recommendation for member selection, she suggested that more work be done to craft this new recommendation for discussion. A member agreed, but suggested that the committee come to some consensus on the components that have been discussed to help craft the new hybrid version.

Co-chair suggested that the committee formally vote on either one of the two draft recommendations or vote on a new hybrid to be developed, which could be informed by the two.

A motion was moved by Michele Foster and seconded by Sharon Sayles Belton to draft a new hybrid recommendation for discussion at the next meeting. All members but one voted in support of the motion.

To further aid in the draft of the hybrid recommendation, a series of votes were taken up on various components:

- Of the Met Council members to be selected, a motion was made and seconded that the Governor-appointed members should be more than members appointed by local elected officials.

During the discussion, a member added a new suggestion that would allow the Gov and elected officials to appoint the same number of members. It was noted that this would solve the district problem. It was clarified that the Gov would appoint 8 members and the Chair (so 9), but the Chair would only vote in the event of a tie. Ties would be rare.

- VOTE: 10 voted in favor. 5 opposed.
- A motion was made and seconded that the Governor should continue to appoint the Chair.
 - VOTE: 11 voted in favor. 4 opposed.
- A motion was made and seconded that Met Council members to be appointed by local units of government be non-elected officials.
 - VOTE: 13 voted in favor. 2 opposed.
- The last question on the table was whether to retain the existing number of 16 members or expand the membership to a number like 23 to include local government representatives.
 - VOTE: 10 voted to stay with the existing 16 seats. 4 voted for an increase. 1 member abstained.

Inequity/Poverty in the Region

The committee discussed the draft concerning inequity/poverty recommendation. After a good discussion, it was suggested that the draft be re-worked, incorporating the feedback from the discussion. The group agreed to discuss a new draft at the next meeting.

Recommendation for Water Study

After a discussion on the draft recommendation, a vote was taken to include water as a recommendation for further study, but it was suggested that the narrative be scaled back since the committee did not hear from water experts and did not have enough time to discuss the topic.

VOTE: 14 voted I favor of a recommendation to study water. One member opposed.

3. Next Steps & Evaluation

Co-chair Arntz closed the meeting by informing the Task Force that the committee would meet on both March 10 and March 17.

The members evaluated the meeting as follows: 4.5, 3, 4, 4.5, 4, 5, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5, and 5 for an average 4.4.

4. Adjourn Co-Chair Arntz adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.