

**City of Portland - Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI)
Bureau/Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Summary Notes**

September 12, 2016

In Attendance:

Sylvia Bogert (SWNI), April Burris (Community member), Jan Campbell (?), Adriana Govea (EPAP), Emily Larraga (EPAP), Don MacGillivray (League of Women Voters), Zack Mohamed (Unite Oregon – formerly CIO), Octaviano Merecias (Latino Network, EPAP), Doretta Schrock (NPNS/NWNW), Mark Sieber (NWNW), Don MacGillivray, Claire Carder, Katy Asher, Barbara Bernstein, Felicia Williams (NWNW), Adam Lyons, Carlos Windham (Resolutions NW), Alison Stoll, Jerry Powell (Goose Hollow, NWNW), Jill Erickson (Wilkes Community Group)

ONI Staff:

Amalia Alarcon de Morris (Director), Amy Archer (Livability/Operations), Richard Bixby (EPNO), Nicholas Carroll (Noise/Livability), Brian Hoop (CNIC), Victor Salinas (Livability), Teresa Solano (I&R)

Welcome and Introductions

General introductions, welcome

Handout on Seattle

Coalition Directors/Chairs raised the issue and provided interest in discussing further. Over the summer the Mayor of Seattle announced an executive decision which called for re-envisioning their engagement process to be more inclusive and accessible. One thing that caught attention was the decision to dissolve official relationship with thirteen neighborhood district councils. Their Department of Neighborhoods directed to come up with a different plan, including a digital engagement plan. There are rumors about elected officials looking at what is happening in Seattle and some may be thinking about how it relates to Portland's system, since Portland is also getting a new Mayor soon. Ten years ago we had this discussion under Mayor Potter and decided not to dismantle, but rather build upon the existing system and expand to be more inclusive through DCL, youth, disability, etc.

Consideration that their system is a representative system. Portland has always focused on a participatory system, whoever gets involved has a voice.

- There was rumor that not all of the order was implemented and the Mayor may have backed up a bit. Not clear yet whether that is the case.
- Is there a plan to talk with incoming Mayor? How do you bring that up? To be shared with Commissioner Fritz.

- Current Council doesn't seem to be up to speed with what we are doing even though we have been talking to them. It seems some have developed their idea of what the system was 15 years or more ago and no new information seems to impact that perspective.
- Want to know more about the difference between representative versus participatory. Portland's system does not represent everybody.
 - Portland's system is participatory, not representative. Representative is more about voting and weighing in on issues. Participatory is more about being actively involved in the community. A variation can be seen, even within different neighborhoods in Portland – some more focused on participatory.
 - Personal experience in a neighborhood was that it is a more representative system.
 - Neighborhoods are allowed to do what they want. People who want to take initiative can impact the system.
 - We talk participatory since the beginning but people coming into neighborhood associations still see it as representative so there is a lot of push and pull.
- Seattle model is city-staffed. Neighborhood offices act more like service centers. The district councils are volunteer run.
- Two years ago, Seattle went to a commissioner representative system, so there was some redundancy in having a neighborhood representative in council.
- Seattle has a very different political and social climate than Portland. The form of local government has been suggested in Portland repeatedly and rejected. The result is that their city is more of a staff run city.
- How quickly can you change ONI's name to Office of Community Involvement to get ahead of it?
 - When raised in the past people have not been receptive, but the response may be very different now.
 - If the concept of neighborhoods is negative, then it would be good to highlight how much broader our system has become. Branding matters.
 - It would require strong education in community and strategy.
- Emails have been received from various parties in the City forwarding the link and asking what Amalia thinks of it. It would be great to have partners take opportunity to meet with the Mayor and message about the importance of the system.

- Has there been a thought to reducing the number of neighborhoods and combining some?
 - We are self-determined, coalitions are recognized and receive funding to support their independent organizations.
 - The neighborhoods don't impact the budget; the Coalitions do impact as do the DCL partners.

- Mayor Potter was vested in community governance and invested in it. Commissioner Fritz is also dedicated to that because she came up within that system. There are few others that have been as committed. For the rest there is a constant re-education about why it is important and explaining the services.

- Anybody want to take the lead to have a group meet with incoming Mayor – not ONI staff? Goal would be to educate about Portland's system and what we are trying to accomplish, and how. Coalition Director's discussed and Anne will reach out to Wheeler's folks to see if interested, and then Mark will reach out to DCL. Alison and Sylvia are also willing to help. Will put together a small group of a few people to have the conversation.

- There is an issue with PBOT's BAC losing a representation of neighborhoods. Bureaus that can hand pick their participants is not impactful. How do we encourage other bureaus to be more open like ONI's BAC?

- Challenge in our form of government because we cannot force bureaus.

- PIAC did develop guidelines for BAC's and encouraged representation both geographic and diverse. We need to make sure it is clear that geographics should not be thrown out in order to add diverse representatives but rather expand.

- Using "representation" means many things. All parts of the community are mirrored, versus representation, meaning "I speak for this group." Need to be mindful of how we intend to use the word representation.

- PBOT recently changed, was better but is now reverting back to what others do. Parks has been hand-picking too. We currently have no access to housing.

- Does Council understand PIAC?
 - Answer would change in a few months anyway. We have been telling Council about things but it isn't necessarily area of interest so not retained.

- BACs years ago were for specific projects and participants were hand-picked by the Commissioner. The neighborhoods put forth a requirement that if you want a neighborhood representative, that the neighborhood would select that person. For a while that improved things but that seems to have degraded over time. It is time for the PIAC to go around and remind everybody again.
- Bureaucrats understand, but community doesn't, that those budget meetings are so important to be a part of until it's too late. If priorities were set in the budget then you needed to be in the room for that prioritization.
- There is a negative feedback loop. They are afraid the community will disagree with them so they hide it, and then it blows up because the community is upset and wasn't involved. If community involved in the beginning, then maybe it wouldn't result in all the negative feedback.
- Use this as an organizing opportunity. If neighborhoods are not invited to have multiple seats, then we may need to have people monitor and track what is going on so that coalitions and neighbors are still getting information.
- It isn't just neighborhoods that aren't well represented. We have grown the community involvement system but these committees have not adapted. Instead of growing the committee they are shrinking it.
- PBOT now has thirteen people, but if someone is not on the list then they don't know when the meetings take place. The Council required through the guidelines that people can get on a mailing list.
- Can also talk to the people who have been appointed on the committee to make that feedback loop available.

Housing emergency

Handout with latest draft proposal. Last winter BAC identified lack of engagement around housing emergency and ONI should be more involved. Funds were approved by Council but a plan needed to be approved by Council before funds would be released. There have been a number of meetings with existing partners and other community groups to develop a proposal. Focus was initially on information sharing but has shifted to also focus on funding through grants for houseless, tenant rights, culturally specific leadership development, and capacity building to impact policy development. Also include a small grant component for some pilot projects to engage with creative solutions around this issue.

- Next steps – meet with Fritz to discuss results of talks with Council and share concerns from other Commissioners. Within the next several weeks we will schedule a time

certain. Hope to have Marc Jolin there and other representatives that have been involved.

- Is there a website with info about meetings that have taken place? No – there were internal meetings with Council staff with representative from Commissioner’s office and Brian. There should be some information available online for the public. The summary document captures most of it and it is probably ready to be distributed.
- Process for deciding grantees – request for letters of interest and then those parties come together and identify plan to distribute funds. There needs to be some minimal competitive process.
- Marc is clear that this should not be about service delivery, that exists already as part of the plan and process. This is focused on community engagement and involving people in those things

Audit of ONI’s civic engagement program

It has been about 7-8 years since last ONI audit. They typically research and talk to staff and community folks, then compile and develop a report.

- We meet Thursday to discuss their draft report. The focus is on CNIC programs. We cannot discuss the content yet, but we, and the Commissioner, are concerned. The first audit resulted in changing our mission statement – it identified some gaps and was constructive, in which we were able to address. This report also points out some areas that we need to work on, but some do not like the tone of the report.
- A few broad themes – a number of core recommendations out of the five-year plan are incomplete and outdated incomplete in regards to community engagement framework (update to ONI standards, future of DCL, etc), and not holding grantees accountable. We know that our performance measurement system needs work and that raises issues.

Racial equity plan

OEHR developed a template that involves bureaus assessing where we are in areas related to equity, and developing a plan for areas where we rate low. Mostly internal – hire, retention, collect data, contracting, etc. ONI’s centers have developed suggestions for how to tackle the areas where we rank lower. Will compile and meet with a core team to identify priorities and timeline to address issues identified. Would like to open it up to other participants, mostly internal but if anybody is interested in participating in core team please let Brian know. Admin staff will coordinate logistics of core team meeting and compiling information. Eventually we will also bring it back to the BAC.

- Carlos may be interested but need several weeks advance notice.

Announcements

- Thank you to ONI for participating in the training provided through ONI by RNW.
- Add package for houselessness proposal – thanks to Coalitions for getting it started. It is vital information that was missing. Thanks to Adriana and Emily for sharing information that helped spark it at the BAC, and then people gathered around it.
- Attended open house at Asian Family Center at IRCO, was great to see one of the partners hosting a great event.
- RNW will be hosting open house on the 29th, just relocated to 25th and Broadway. There will be a Fundraiser and silent auction.
- New hires – Joanne Johnson will be new Disability Coordinator, coming from Michigan. Linda Castillo in New Portlanders Program. Marco Mejia will be taking care of Neighborhood directory and Spirit of Portland. New Crime Prevention staffer Sofia. Marijuana Inspectors are Nate Werner, Laurel Shepard, and Floyd Brown. Management analyst and admin assistant hires in process.
- Emily – going off to Western Oregon University, will be back in December.