

## CapitolRiver Council Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2020, 5:15-6:45 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

Location: 180 East 5th, Conference Room B

Board members present: Chris Beckstrom, Jauston-Charles Campbell, John Ganey, Bill Huepenbecker, Emily Larson, Channon Lemon, Paul Mandell, Linda McBrayer, Shevek McKee, Christopher Melendez, Crystal Meriwether, Jonathan Reisetter, Catherine Sweet.

Other attendees: Roger Fuller, Jon Fure, Lee Knutson, Lissa Jones-Lofgren, Councilmember Rebecca Noecker.

- I. Chair Shevek McKee called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves and answer the question, do you have a New Years' Resolution or a personal goal for 2020?
- II. Motion by John Ganey, seconded by Emily Larson, to adopt the agenda. Motion passed.
- III. Motion by John Ganey, seconded by Emily Larson, to approve the November 19, 2019 board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

### **Advancing Racial Equity – Lissa Jones-Lofgren**

- A Baseline for our Work, A Summary Report – Ms. Jones-Lofgren summarized themes that were brought up during her one-on-one conversations with each board member. Themes included how each person tends to get their primary information about race, racial disparities (education, housing, jobs / wages, etc.), definitions of white and black (from Merriam-Webster Dictionary), and 5 myths that keep racism in place: meritocracy (everyone is successful or unsuccessful based on their own knowledge and work ethic and not on any systems that create privileges or oppression based on race), manifest destiny (God gave white people the land that has become the United States), white racelessness (white is the standard for “normal” and everyone else is different), monoculture (there is only one culture, and everyone else has to hyphenate “fill-in-the-blank- American”), and white moral elevation (people with darker skin are inherently less moral / ethical than white people).
- Words Mean Things! Developing Common Definitions for our Work – A challenge related to equity and inclusion is a lack of clarity about what these words mean and / or what specific goals an organization is working toward. Ms. Jones-Lofgren suggested that CRC use the following definitions: “Equity” is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Racial equity is an outcome and a process. Racial equity is achieved when race no longer affects one’s socioeconomic outcomes. When everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live.
- Next steps – the board will discuss the topics addressed in this presentation at the February board meeting.

### **Information Items** (information for board members that does not necessarily require a motion)

- IV. Website updates: Chair Shevek McKee asked board members to review the content that has been added to the “Issues” page ([www.capitolrivercouncil.org/issues](http://www.capitolrivercouncil.org/issues)). The content was added based on submissions to the project forms discussed in previous meetings and frequent topics that generate discussion in our engagement activities. This will continue to be updated as more ideas are generated. Board members discussed the content, and a suggestion was made to name the page “Our Work” instead of “Issues,” which is more common language for websites. Board members are encouraged to submit ideas via the forms that are on the website, and to provide feedback to either Shevek or Jon Fure (suggested changes, etc.). The overall goal of the page is to create some documentation of the kinds of projects that we are working on, and each item will be updated over time as we identify barriers and / or develop specific

recommendations. The group also discussed CRC's history of strategic planning and goal-setting. Jon Fure said he would make that information available to board members.

- V. CRC Board Member Asset Survey, Chair Shevek McKee: An updated version of this has been created as a Google form (<https://forms.gle/ZrCz52wDDij68kRy8>). It asks each Board member to identify their interests and associations that might help CRC include everyone in discussions that are most pertinent to them.
- VI. Finance Committee Report – overview of the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities, Year-to-Date Profit and Loss by Class, and Budget-to-Actual. Board members received this by email, and printed copies were available. Anyone who has questions or feedback should contact Treasurer Will Travis or Jon Fure.

### **New Business**

- VII. Office Lease: Jon Fure said he received a proposed new lease from our current landlord that would increase our rent by about \$200 per month, after our current lease expires on May 31, 2020. We have received an offer to move to Osborn 370, which would reduce our monthly rent to \$627 for a smaller office (277 square feet, whereas our current office is 923 square feet). The main tradeoffs are that the Osborn 370 location has outstanding meeting rooms, including one large conference room that would be more than adequate for monthly board meetings and large committee meetings. The Saint Paul Area Chamber also offered to lease an office to CRC in their suite in 401 Securian Center for \$400 per month. While there would be a lot of benefits with that option, the board meetings would need to be in the plaza of 400 Securian Center, and that could be a difficult environment. Instead of meeting around tables in a large square, the board might need to meet in more of a classroom-style setting, which might not be ideal for group discussions. Two coworking options were also considered (Wellworth and Fueled Collective), but both lack a large conference room, which would mean we would have to schedule our board meetings in other locations. Jon Fure said he also briefly discussed the possibility of moving into the Saint Paul Athletic Club Building with the building owner, John Rupp, but the building is in the process of being sold, and it's unclear when CRC could realistically move in. Board members discussed the potential value of having board meetings in different location as a method of engaging people in different parts of downtown, and the importance of being located on the skyway level. Chris Beckstrom offered to help develop objective criteria for evaluating the pros and cons of each option, and to prepare a more thorough analysis for the board's consideration at the February board meeting. Jon Fure recommended notifying our current landlord that we do not wish to continue leasing our current space, so that they have time to seek other tenants.

Motion by Paul Mandell, seconded by Bill Huepenbecker, to notify CRC's current landlord of our decision to terminate our lease at 180 East 5th Street. Motion passed.

### **Committee Updates**

- VIII. Development Review Committee, Paul Mandell and John Ganey: The committee heard a presentation by John Rupp, owner of Commonwealth Properties, about a concept to sell the Saint Paul Athletic Club building to a nonprofit or group of nonprofits that would operate the building as a community center. Job-training would be provided, and people who are completing the training would work in the athletic club and hotel, and a restaurant could be added that would be similar to the one that is operated by students at Saint Paul College. Mr. Rupp said the pending sale could include the Capital City Plaza Parking Ramp, located at 50 4th Street East, and the indoor park in Town Square.

The committee passed two motions, one to recommend support for the concept to sell the Saint Paul

Athletic Club building to a nonprofit that would operate the building as a community center with office space for one or more nonprofit organizations, and another to recommend to the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority to support tax exempt financing associated with this project.

Board members discussed the potential impact of the board's motion of support, and questions were asked about the proposal. A concern was expressed about potential lost tax revenue if this downtown building is owned by a nonprofit. The board tabled the two committee motions until Mr. Rupp could present the concept to the board.

- IX. Skyway Committee, Jon Fure: Each year, the CRC officers appoint new members to the Skyway Governance Advisory Committee. Up to 12 committee members may be appointed. Current committee member Will Travis is seeking to be re-appointed, and two new members are seeking to be appointed. Each will serve a two-year term. Board Member Christopher Melendez said he is also interested in serving on the committee, and his particular interest is in engaging youth voices in the committee's work.

Motion by Emily Larson, seconded by Linda McBrayer, to appoint Will Travis, Linda Kohl, Nick Geng, and Christopher Melendez to the Skyway Governance Advisory Committee. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.