

CapitolRiver Council Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2020, 5:15-6:45 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

Board Members in attendance: Nick Cusick, Jess Grams, Bill Huepenbecker, Ann Idzik, Amy Lee, Channon Lemon, Paul Mandell, Shevek McKee, Crystal Meriwether, Catherine Sweet, Will Travis.

Other attendees: Jon Fure, Lee Knutson, Lissa Jones-Lofgren

- I. Chair Shevek McKee called the meeting to order.
- II. Motion by Amy Lee, seconded by Will Travis, to adopt the agenda. Motion passed.
- III. Motion by Will Travis, seconded by Will Travis, to approve the April 21, 2020 board meeting minutes.

Information Items

- IV. Financial Report: Jon Fure explained that the statements show the current amounts of money on hand are very low as of the first of the month, however, a deposit was made earlier today for \$14,641, and a deposit of \$623 was made last week, and the City seems to have worked through the issues that were causing the district council contracts and payments to be delayed.

New Business

- V. Annual Meeting Recommendation, Jon Fure: The statewide Stay Safe MN executive order now allows more businesses to open, and people are allowed to meet in groups of up to 10 people, but it seems unlikely that we will be able to safely have our Annual Meeting on June 30. The bylaws state that the meeting will take place in June, so if the board chooses to postpone it, the board will need to approve a motion to suspend the CRC bylaws. The bylaws also require CRC to provide a notice of 60 days before the annual meeting, so he recommended waiting to schedule the meeting until we are confident that it would be safe for a group of about 50 people to meet in person, and provide a 60-day notice at that time. Motion by Paul Mandell, seconded by Amy Lee, to suspend the bylaws and postpone the annual meeting. Motion passed.

The group also discussed how to address the terms that are expiring for some board members who would like to stay on the board. In previous meetings, the board discussed forming a Recruiting Committee, but so far no one had volunteered.

Motion by Amy Lee, seconded by Paul Mandell, to form a recruiting committee. Jess Grams volunteered to serve on the committee, and Chair Shevek McKee and other members also expressed interest. Motion passed.

- VI. Office move update, Jon Fure: District Councils were asked if they could use any of the furniture in our office that we no longer need. All items have been requested, except for one of the three desks. He recommended hiring [College Muscle Movers](#). The price will be in the \$450 range, depending on how much time it takes. A motion is needed to authorize this expense. Jess Grams said she hired a different company to move, and their rates were reasonable and they did good work. Jon Fure said he would seek an estimate from that company, and would hire the least costly option. Motion by Paul Mandell, seconded by Will Travis, to authorize the executive director to pay for moving expenses not to exceed \$600. Motion passed.

Advancing Racial Equity – Lissa Jones-Lofgren

The Myth of Race and the Reality of Racism. Capitol River Council, Transportation, and Racial Equity.

Ms. Jones-Lofgren described an audio clip of a story on NPR (the Takeaway, Feb. 17, 2020) about the discrimination in public transportation that led to boycotts in the 1950s. She asked Jon Fure to send the audio clip after the meeting. She also led a discussion about the ways that Asian Americans are being treated since COVID-19 was first identified in China. A board member said CRC is in a very powerful position to advocate for policies that close the gaps in ways that government policies and programs affect people with different racial / ethnic backgrounds. Our role in community engagement should involve helping people understand how these policies affect people differently.

A board member said City of Saint Paul elected officials and staff frequently say that they view City programs, policies and services through an equity lens, but it's unclear how that relates to the Comprehensive Plan. Decisions are made every day, so how are we going to address the gaps that we are discussing? As we think about how we are moving forward, how can we make equity and inclusion a part of everything we do?

Committee Updates

- VII. Public Realm Committee: Crystal Meriwether said the committee met and discussed a matrix of potential projects so that they could set priorities and work on specific projects. For example, community members were interested in finding out if residents could be encouraged to plant pollinator gardens in containers, or if there are resources for residents who want to do that. Community gardens also were discussed as a way to get kids interested in plants and pollinators. The committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at 5 p.m., and anyone who is interested in the committee's work is invited to attend.
- VIII. Skyway Committee – Jon Fure said the committee has been discussing the temporary change in skyway hours. The committee recommended, and the City approved, the temporary hours through June 3. The committee will meet this coming Friday to discuss ongoing issues and concerns.

Other Updates / Future Agenda Items

- Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (SPACC) updates and discussion: Channon Lemon said SPACC is focusing on helping small business with emphasis on those most adversely affected by COVID-19. Please see the [study results](#) from a consortium of service organizations focused on economic empowerment. Please also see info about the [Pay it Forward initiative](#). She encouraged board members to reach out to small businesses, let them know what resources are available, and talk with them about what decisions are being made by elected officials. The group agreed to continue discussing ways that we can support local small businesses.
- CRC – Downtown Alliance Wayfinding Project Update. Jon Fure said he and Downtown Alliance staff are seeking to work with University of Minnesota faculty and students through the [Resilient Communities Project](#), which is administered by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). This will make the overall project less costly, and it will provide student workers with career-related experience. The project has been awarded a Cultural STAR grant from the City.

Adjournment

CRC MISSION

CapitolRiver Council, an official advisory group to the City Council, represents and works in partnership with all District 17 stakeholders to act on urban planning and community building efforts as part of a shared vision to support sustainable, safe, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods.