

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Annual Report, 2019-2020

C/o Secretary Devin C. Lamb-Wise



The vision for the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission is a City and community engagement process that increases inclusiveness, empowerment and greater opportunities for participation by all community members of Minneapolis.

**MEMBERS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION 2019-2020**

Jeffrey Strand	District 1 Representative	Paul Junek	District 2 Representative
Candace Miller-Lopez	District 3 Representative	Marcus Mills	District 4 Representative
Lolita Davis-Carter	District 5 Representative	Michael Malone	District 6 Representative
Christy Caez-Claudio	District 7 Representative	Marcia Mariani	District 8 Representative
Mary Dedeaux-Swinton	Mayoral Appointee	Devin Wise	Mayoral Appointee
John Benda	City Council Appointee	Queen Kimmons	City Council Appointee
Henry Gowin	City Council Appointee	Laura Nudell-Lee	City Council Appointee
Vacant	City Council Appointee	Vacant	Park Board Appointee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) volunteered countless hours while working towards the commission’s vision of “a City and community engagement process that increases inclusiveness, empowerment and greater opportunities for participation by all community members of the city of Minneapolis.”

NCEC members engaged Minneapolis residents while supporting the Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department’s annual Community Connections Conference. The commission also played a major role in planning and conducting Neighborhoods 2020 meetings. In addition to this work, commissioners met with neighborhood organizations, community groups and City Council members about many issues to bridge the gap between the citizens, their elected officials and City staff members.

For most commissioners, this commitment of time to their city was in addition to other volunteer work with neighborhood and community organizations.

ESTABLISHMENT

On September 26, 2008, the City Council adopted Resolution 2008R-402 that established a Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) with responsibilities to advise the mayor, City Council, and City departments on community participation policies and processes to systematize community input into City processes. On December 16, 2011, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2011R-668 Amending and Restating Resolution 2008R-402 entitled Establishing a Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, passed September 26, 2008.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Neighborhoods 2020

In January 2019, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) released a draft Framework for Neighborhoods 2020, informed by the recommendations of three work groups convened early in 2018. The goals established to guide the program by the first workgroup were: increasing diversity among neighborhood board leadership; establishing financial and programmatic accountability; increasing the capacity of neighborhood organizations; creating inclusive, diverse and equitable neighborhood organizations; and clarifying the relationship between the residents and the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department.

Public comment for the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework closed on March 31, 2019. During that time, NCR received over 300 comments from the general public, community organizations and neighborhood organizations. Comments were submitted by letter, email and comment cards during public events.

NCR staff requested the assistance of a small body of volunteer community representatives, led by a third-party facilitator, to objectively analyze them, extract actionable feedback, suggestions and processes that NCR could use. In addition, NCR encouraged the Community Review Panel (CRP) to offer suggestions on how NCR could use this information to improve the framework.

Community Review Panel Participants: (Facilitator) Lisa Tabor, CultureBrokers LLC; Gary Arntsen, NCEC Representative; Cassandra Belyeu, NCEC Representative; Courtney Cushing Kiernat, Pohlad Foundation; Nicholas Campbell, City of Minneapolis – Division of Race & Equity; Stacy Sorenson, City of Minneapolis – NCR.

2019 CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

January 2019 – Commissioners gathered to discuss the plan for engagement during the 45-day review and comment period for the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework which covered the City’s proposed neighborhood organization system and community engagement practices in 2020. The key principles of the programs, funding and implementation to be established are as follows:

- Workgroup 1 worked diligently to consolidate the voice of the neighborhoods and address the main concerns for community members. At the top of the list of priorities for the committee members’ constituents were the following:
 1. Funding amount
 2. Allocation formulas
 3. Disbursement cycles
 4. Sources of funding
 5. Program guidelines
 6. Purposes, goals, and perspectives
 7. Requirements for funding
- Workgroup 2 operated under the same premises as workgroup 1. At the top of workgroup 2’s discussion docket were the following:
 8. Scope of the program
 9. Authority of decision rights and expectations between the City and residents
 10. Demographic composition guidelines
- The NCR Department informed the NCEC that there would be public meetings held to give residents a chance to review and comment during the 45-day comment period as requested by the commission. The Community Connections Conference would be an additional avenue for all residents to learn more about Neighborhoods 2020 and offer their input.

February 2019 – City staff reported that due to a City Council approved grievance policy for the Community Participation Program guidelines, there was a new requirement that the NCEC establish a standing grievance panel consisting of 5 members and 2 alternates. The standing committee was established under the parameters laid out by the grievance process for the NCR Department and NCEC.

March 2019 – During the March meeting, the NCEC convened to bring forth a statement to the City Council and NCR Department on behalf of the residents the commission members represent related to the current Neighborhoods 2020 Framework as presented by the City of Minneapolis’ elected officials and staffers. The core principles of the statement were as follows:

- Clear expectations between the NCR, NCEC, and the City as laid out by the IAP2 process
- Multiyear allocation cycles to ensure that community initiatives can be funded for maximum impact

- An increase in both the total funding of the program, as well as the base funding to a level that can sustain current neighborhood operations that meet program guidelines
- The NCEC does not support a concession of neighborhood organization funding to community based organizations, but instead proposes additional funding being 100% allocated to cultural based organizations who were under-represented in the initial policy making process
- The NCEC requests the Neighborhoods 2020 process is finished using an independent, fair, and impartial 3rd party such as the University of Minnesota CURA

April 2019 – NCR gave an overview of recommendations from the Neighborhoods 2020 public comment period. Information gathered throughout this process in alignment with the NCEC came from community meetings, workgroups, over 300 written comments, and community board meetings. Overall, more than 1,000 residents were reached over the 45-day comment period.

May 2019 – The Minneapolis City Council PECE committee passed resolution no. 2019R-153 approving the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework. The framework as adopted, did not reflect the NCEC or residents’ request for the base level funding necessary to maintain current neighborhood organization operations. Nor did it create a new funding source for cultural groups. Instead, the resolution reallocated funding from neighborhood organizations to cultural organizations. On the other hand, the resolution did address expectations and establish a multi-year funding cycle.

June 2019 – 2 staff directives were passed to go along with the Neighborhoods 2020 resolution. In one directive, City staff were instructed to evaluate current community engagement efforts and develop a plan and timeline for adopting a new engagement policy. In the other, staff were directed to work with a 3rd consultant to advise on program guidelines and performance metrics centered around racial equity.

July 2019 – No activity

August 2019 – Mayor Jacob Frey presented his recommended 2020 City budget, August 15 – a budget that invests in the mayor’s top priorities of economic inclusion, affordable housing, public safety and police-community relations. The budget proposal did not include the NCEC’s recommended additional funding to replace the tax increment financing district funding that enable a large amount of neighborhood organization programming.

Staff members of the Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department presented information with the commission related to important initiatives happening in the City that are of relevance to all community members to share with residents. Initiatives included: 2020 census “We Count” campaign, elections, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs’ Welcoming Week celebration and the Community Connections Conference.

September 2019 – The City selected CURA for final phase of Neighborhoods 2020 as requested by the NCEC back in January. CURA was tasked with developing program goals and outcomes, metrics to measure progress toward those goals, a racial equity analysis and a model for neighborhood programs. CURA was also responsible for convening stakeholders like the NCEC for input along the way. In addition to these tasks, CURA was asked to identify a budget neutral structure for the City to support neighborhood associations and to develop accountability measures for exclusionary practices.

The commission held subcommittee elections and appointments.

- Commissioner Davis Carter elected as chair.
- Commissioner Strand elected as vice chair.
- Commissioner Dedeaux-Swinton elected as second vice chair.
- Commissioner Wise elected as secretary.
- Commissioners Strand and Dedeaux-Swinton vacated the Community Connections Conference committee. Commissioners Junek and Caez joined in their places.
- Neighborhoods 2020 committee gained commissioners Benda, Junek, Gowin and Davis-Carter.

October 2019 – Neighborhood organization staff and volunteers, community partners, NCEC members, and City staff joined NCR's community engagement team for the Community Connections learning labs in 2019. The series began in September and ended on Nov. 12.

- A committee of the whole meeting was held on Wednesday, October 16, 2019. The purpose of this meeting was to share information with new members on the background and role that the commission played throughout the Neighborhoods 2020 process thus far.

November 2019 – No activity

December 2019 – The executive committee announced a final report for the 2019 and exit survey to be completed by the sunset of the committee to be presented to the City Council.

COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Neighborhoods 2020 Committee

This committee was tasked to explore future funding options for neighborhood organizations past the year 2020.

City Department Engagement Committee

The City Department Engagement Committee evaluated the public engagement practices of City departments and made recommendations and possible improvements.



One Minneapolis Fund Committee

The One Minneapolis Fund grants funding to community organizations for leadership development in historically underrepresented communities in the city. The City made recommendations to the NCEC on the funding guidelines and request for proposals, reviews applications, and made recommendations to the NCEC on projects to approve.

Community Connections Conference Committee

The Community Connections Conference Committee represented the NCEC on the planning team for the Community Connections Conference, an annual gathering of neighborhood and community leaders to discuss common issues and priorities.

Crime and Safety Committee

The Crime and Safety Committee examined research and advice concerning sources of crime in neighborhoods and reviewed best practices and strategies to prevent crime in Minneapolis neighborhoods. On an interim basis the committee worked with neighborhood and cultural organizations to facilitate ongoing successful crime and safety strategies and solutions where appropriate.

PRESENTATIONS

- Community Connections Conference table
- Welcoming Week table
- City Council Committee of the Whole (TBD)



CONCLUSION

Purpose of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission

In the 2011 resolution that restructured the NCEC, the City Council adopted the following purposes for the commission:

Partner: In collaboration with the NCR, study issues, courses of action, policies and programs that affect the quality of life for City residents and make recommendations for improvements to City departments and the City Council as they pertain to community participation policies and delivery of services while integrating the voice of residents into the City's decision-making processes;

Appeals, Grievances and Designation: Consider appeals from neighborhood organizations regarding funding decisions involving the City funded programs administered by the NCR, including the Community Participation Program (CPP) but excluding any NRP plans. The commission will hear grievances of actions taken by neighborhood organizations and recommend to the City any necessary corrective remedies. The commission will designate the recognized neighborhood organizations in the City; create policy. Establish community engagement policies for the City's neighborhood programs, excluding phases I and II of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which promote more representative neighborhood organizations;

Cultivate Relationships: Serve as liaisons between the City of Minneapolis and community and neighborhood organizations. In this role the commission shall make every effort to ensure that the concerns represented reflect the diverse viewpoints and interests of the residents of Minneapolis;

Increase Participation: Advise the City Council on policy matters to build the capacity of underrepresented groups in order to increase their participation in the civic governance of the City, expand the ability of neighborhood organizations to engage diverse neighbors, and assist in building partnerships with communities and groups that often do not participate in the formal neighborhood system, such as communities of color, new Americans and refugees as well as low income residents;

Broaden Representation: Develop a five-year community engagement policy plan to increase the number and diversity of people involved in their communities and seated to both City boards and commissions. This participation contributes to and strengthens the vitality of community capacity and increases the impact of the community on public decisions;

Give Voice: Promote broader engagement, increase inclusion, and identify/remove barriers of participation by fostering a sense of community and helping all residents address specific concerns via the NCR Department and the commission;

Review: The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department business plan.

In January and February 2015, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) identified the community engagement process to facilitate a citywide dialogue on redefining the roles and expectations of neighborhood organizations that are funded by the Community Participation Program and making neighborhood organizations more inclusive and effective, as one of its strategic planning priorities for action during 2015.