

Trans Equity Summit: Listening Session Notes

City Training and Education Breakout Group

Discussion facilitated by Transgender Equity Council member Ray Lockman; Notes taken by Transgender Equity Council member Charlie Ito

- **Trans equity council members in this breakout group:**

Van Donaldson - appointed community member;

Ray Lockman - appointed Hennepin County representative;

Charlie Ito - appointed City of Minneapolis representative.

- **Ground rules preamble**

- Lean into creating a brave space.
- Listen deeply and with compassion.
- The Transgender Equity Council (TEC) is here to learn from you.

Q: How do your community members see the TEC's work? How do we hold the City/TEC accountable for this and other conversations?

TEC: Let's talk about that. First let's go over who we are what what we do so we can be on the same page.

Topic Discussion: City Training & Education

Q: What is the Transgender Equity Council (TEC)?

TEC: The TEC consists of community members, as well as appointed members from Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis Park Board, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis. This subcommittee topic of training and education was created because City staff, particularly public-facing employees, do not have information/education to guarantee positive experiences with trans/gender-non-conforming/gender-expansive residents and guests and we want to make recommendations on how to bridge that gap in the workplace.

Q: When you say ‘workplace’ does that just mean at the City, or other places, too?

TEC: We do have connections to Parks, Hennepin County, Public Schools but this advisory board was created by the City. We make recommendations to City Council but we hope to recommend and set a model that can be used by other institutions or organizations.

Q: How did you get on the TEC?

TEC: I was going through the app NextDoor and saw an ad for a City board. I felt it was my obligation to get and stay involved. I’m a father who is learning a lot from his sons, and I appreciate understanding more. I’m sometimes frustrated with the LGBTQ community for barriers we put up, too. So I’m trying to role model for my kids.

Q: School materials especially in lower grades are very gendered. Would we talk about that with you? For example it might be regarding teaching ‘opposites’: “on/off,” or “boy/girl,” and images which relate underlying messages about strength or femininity, etc. Or sorting by ‘boys and girls’ to get into groups for activities. I brought it up to the school and they seemed surprised and unaware of the issues this caused, but responsive to the concerns.

PARTICIPANT2: Can I jump in? Is it a public school?

Q: It’s a Minneapolis immersion school.

PARTICIPANT2: Out4Good is Minneapolis Public School area that deals with LGBT issues. Jason Bucklin is the head of that.

PARTICIPANT3: Coding of images is unrealistic and also potentially damaging.

TEC: The scope of this trans equity council is the City of Minneapolis, but as we mentioned we do have connections with Minneapolis Public Schools so you can bring concerns to us in whatever way is easiest for you, or with the schools directly... or both.

Thursday, September 26, 2019

Also, we want to remind people to be aware of the space you are taking up; we want to make sure that trans and gender-expansive people get a chance to participate in the conversation, too.

PARTICIPANT4. Higher ups seem to be more exposed to these issues compared to more subordinate employees, such as CEOs who maybe get more exposure to diversity training and awareness about respect.

Q: Do you track complaints and discrimination, like what if there is an issue you can't resolve?

TEC: It depends on where the issue occurs; if the issue happens at the City of Minneapolis to a City employee, a City staff person would report that to HR but if it happens more broadly, the City of Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights has a team of investigators who handle complaints of discrimination based on protected classes, which includes gender identity. They also have the ability to carry a complaint forward if there is merit to it, and the complainant is worried about retaliation or moving forward with the complaint. You can contact their office for more information about how their process works if you are curious!

Q: Does this tie into health?

TEC: Health as a department, or health as in service providers?

Q: I get a lot of misgendering with like healthcare providers when I go to the doctor or hospital, or in dealing with insurance, things like that.

PARTICIPANT5: How do you deal with people who just want to exclude you? Like on a chart, even if there's a note, they can ignore it like it's not valid, and it happens over and over. There's very inconsistent training, education and awareness everywhere.

TEC: Once there's awareness, what's the accountability piece you'd like to see?

SUGGESTIONS FROM GROUP:

- Make it easier to file a complaint
- Complaints should be tracked and weighted, handled by employer the way any complaint is handled - with consequences

Thursday, September 26, 2019

- People on the phone should stop saying 'sir' and ma'am - they do it because they think it's the way to be polite but really, it's more polite to use gender-neutral language
- Train on scenarios; if they are discriminatory after they have the awareness and training then they are making a choice instead of a mistake and that should be dealt with
- Actually stand up for peers - so training, for allies, and helpful actions
- I don't know how to make everyone happy

Q: What do you do if certain cultures aren't open to inclusivity? What is the government's role?

TEC: We do not want to categorize people by their culture and background—what matters is their awareness and behavior, and that's true of all of us.

Q: Why don't we have gender neutral bathrooms everywhere [in Minneapolis]?

TEC: The City of Minneapolis doesn't own all the bathrooms; currently there's a resolution which states that bathrooms don't *have* to be gendered, but that language isn't very strong and it isn't an incentivized program for businesses to choose gender-neutral bathrooms over gendered ones. Also, some people do need or prefer gendered bathrooms! So it's tricky. But the City has done work to assess, of the bathrooms the local government the City owns, which can be converted to gender-neutral bathrooms and what is the cost? Is it a sign change, busting down a wall, or a whole re-plumbing effort or part of a new building? And we've made headway there but we could be more transparent and pro-active about sharing that news.

Q: How are disability accessible bathrooms regulated? Can we regulate that way?

PARTICIPANT7: Those are regulated by the federal government.

Q: Have we talked about Minneapolis Police Department training?

Thursday, September 26, 2019

TEC: Great question! We have not, yet, in this breakout but we are able to share this news with you. The trans equity work at the City did work with now-Police Chief Medaria Arradondo to draft and publish an addition to the police department's Policy & Procedure Manual regarding INTERACTIONS WITH TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING people, which you can view on the City's website right now. Chief Medaria Arradondo brought an idea to the internal trans equity work group at the City and proposed this policy in the format they use, and we gave feedback and asked questions. Then it was instated as a new policy for all of the police department and it was provided to all of them.

The Chief has also met with Hennepin County and community to talk about the booking process - so when jurisdiction changes hands as someone being detained is moved from the Minneapolis Police to Hennepin County, how does that work and what policies do they want to share regarding gender and safety. In fact, one of the previous Trans Equity Summits was entirely about public safety - 2015's summit focus was the criminal justice system in the context of the trans/gender-non-conforming community. The highlight of the summit was an hour-long panel discussion comprising CeCe McDonald, Reverend Dr. Barbara Holmes, Roxanne Anderson, and then-Minneapolis Police Chief Janeé Harteau.

Currently the Minneapolis Police Department also has LGBT community liaisons to help them be reflective of the communities they serve. They are here at this event, somewhere, if you'd like to ask them more specific questions about their department.

Q: Have you had any issues with Robert Kroll from the Minneapolis Police Union?

TEC: We don't have any interactions with him to speak of, as we connect directly with the police department staff at the City but you could ask that question to someone from the Police Department.

Q: What about judges? I know people have been harassed, dismissed, they get to decide who gets what treatment.

Q: Is there City-based aid for navigating the legal system like how to do a name change?

PARTICIPANT8: Gender Justice has a toolkit, some resources for that.

TEC: There are some resources listed on our website - the City of Minneapolis has a page for trans equity and near the bottom of that page is a Resource Hub section with links to OutFront, Gender Justice and other organizations which have their own resource lists. The

Thursday, September 26, 2019

City's website also lists how to find your City Council member and ways to engage with the City as a resident, and information about the TEC schedule, meetings, events, and announcements.

Q: How much outreach does the TEC do?

TEC: That's the other subcommittee, meeting over on that side of the room - we are working on it, but we can do more. A lot of people didn't know our group existed until today, and we do want more engagement from people who are in the community even if they are not 'holding a seat' on the Trans Equity Council at the moment. We can do more.

Q: Is there any precedent for making this larger?

PARTICIPANT9: There are protections (Minnesota is on the forefront of that), restrooms and civil rights protections for gender identity... but it is not nearly enough.

PARTICIPANT10: I'd like to learn the history of social change like in St. Paul. How do we become more active and engaged, and effective?

PARTICIPANT11: This is pretty nerdy but in late 2018 I was learning about international plumbing code which was re-written to be non-gendered or universal. When does Minneapolis plumbing code get revisited or revised? Is there an opportunity to update it with that international code?

PARTICIPANT12: Is the issue with having the code or the cost of implementing changes?

****ONE MINUTE WARNING****

TEC: What are some ways you would like to engage with us?

SUGGESTIONS FROM GROUP:

- Email address
- Facebook
- Phone number
- Website

****END OF MEETING****