

Trans Equity Council/MN Trans Health Coalition Listening Session

November 6, 2019

Pillsbury Theater House

3501 Chicago Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55407

(612) 824-0708

Details

The City of Minneapolis Transgender Equity Council advises City Council and the Mayor on policy. Come hear about our work, meet TEC members, and let us know what you want us to focus on. Food will be provided – thank you to MTHC and Pillsbury for providing the food and space for this event!

Informal agenda (not provided in writing to attendees or presenters)

- Who is the transgender equity council?
- What do we need you to know?
- What we need to hear from you
 - Questions
 - Concerns
 - Suggestions

TEC: I am Alma, and this is Charlie, and we are from the Transgender Equity Council.

We are an advisory board who reports to the City of Minneapolis and we want to know what you would like to see us do, and how you would like us to help you. We also have a budget meeting that is tomorrow and we would like to ask you to attend if you would be willing to publicly support more work being done on trans equity in Minneapolis.

TEC: Who here attended this year's trans equity summit?

PARTICIPANTS: [~3 hands went up]

TEC: And who here didn't even know there was such a thing as the trans equity summit?

PARTICIPANTS: [50% of the hands went up]

TEC: Great, thank you – that is exactly what we need to know. There are no wrong answers, because if you haven't heard of us, if you don't know what we do, if you don't know how we can help, we need to know those things. That tells us we need to spread more awareness and knowledge about our group, how you can participate and use our power to amplify your voices, and how we can get you visibility to what is available to you and what progress we are making – or where we are stuck.

PARTICIPANT: What is the scope of your power?

TEC: Mostly Minneapolis. We are a group that advises on policy to the City of Minneapolis but our group includes partners from Minneapolis Park Board, Minneapolis Public Schools, Hennepin County and City staff as well as community members. Our goal is to make recommendations to Minneapolis and create repeatable work that can be used by other institutions and municipalities or individuals so they do not need to start from scratch.

PARTICIPANT: What kind of legislation have you worked on or tried to pass so far?

TEC: We have a timeline we can discuss – next time we will bring copies, or a larger version. Here are some of the things we have worked on. [Reads part of timeline and provides context for what each event or milestone was about - attached] The Minneapolis Police Department came to our internal group with a proposal for an addition to their Policy & Procedure manual because that is the standard to which they are held, and they drafted and got feedback on a new policy around interactions with gender nonconfirming individuals, and that information was provided to all officers.

PARTICIPANT: [MPD] still [misgenders people] though. They still do though.

TEC: They do – and we want to talk more about that, on your behalf. We have made some progress but we are not done and that's why we want this program to have the support and resources it needs so that the work can move forward and be more impactful. And we need to hear from you about what concerns you have – we recognize there are fears about retaliation, about getting deadnamed on paperwork you submit to us as a government entity, about navigating our system and having it result in justice. So what are we doing about it and how are we moving that forward? Right now we are not, due to both a lack of resources and a lack of input from community about that issue – which is part of why we're here right now.

PARTICIPANT: Will more funding help get police officers to stop being disrespectful and harmful to trans people?

TEC: It will in the sense that we will have people who are from community hired by the City to move this work forward during regular business hours – they can get to know who they should have at the table from police and other departments to have this conversation, they can create reports on community needs and present them to MPD, they can make recommendations on the trainings or lack thereof that officers receive, and work with other advisory boards to make further recommendations

about things like how the City handles police misconduct complaints so that trans and gender non-conforming people feel safe. But right now we have one part time temporary staff person, and that position is not sufficient to do all the things that need to be done.

PARTICIPANT: I'd like to see more training, I don't know if you can do safety training for trans women of color but that is an urgent, important need that is not being met. We need more training and resources on accessibility, of a lot of services. Housing, healthcare, public access.

PARTICIPANT: Hospitals, what training exists for staff on gender identity? It's so easy for them to be dismissive, because they have a chart in front of them and they look at that before they look at the person.

PARTICIPANT: I've recently become a nurse and we did get training in the pronouns field that was added to our forms and it's difficult to change the way we have done things, to change a routine, but that training does exist for us.

PARTICIPANT: Be aware that using phrases like 'difficult' to describe looking at a form or asking someone how you can be respectful to them is a lot less 'difficult' than the discomfort that we have to go through – be aware of the space you're in when you use words like that.

PARTICIPANT: What do you want from allies and partners who are not from community?

PARTICIPANT: Respect, really.

PARTICIPANT: Equal rights, to be treated the same as everyone else.

PARTICIPANT: To be treated as our gender without justification or arguments or dismissiveness.

PARTICIPANT: This has me thinking about job fairs. Can the council go to more of those, host more of those? They could have trainings and panels where you pay people from community, and organizations helping with this work can do recruiting.

PARTICIPANT: Back to the bathroom conversation, I'd like more bathrooms to be available especially if they're under some sort of City jurisdiction, and the ones here are a great example of how to do it right.

TEC: Maybe we could come up with a Do It Right short packet to help project managers or other people involved in building projects understand the benefits of gender neutral restrooms, with pictures and bullet points about why it is more efficient for a lot of reasons.

PARTICIPANT: And include the risks, potential litigation or complaints or issues, around keeping bathrooms needlessly gendered and exclusive.

TEC: And maybe we could explore an incentive program for businesses as the City, regarding gender neutral bathrooms. But we don't have the capacity to handle that right now, which brings us back to the budget presentation tomorrow.

PARTICIPANT: The Human Rights Campaign has that score and a lot of businesses take that very much to heart and want a good score. What if we had something like that? Maybe OutFront's score?

PARTICIPANT: I love that idea, they're already known and connected, and it could be more impactful to have a local score that way.

TEC: And as the city we'd want to think about how we could hold people accountable if we gave out that score, and what role we have in maintaining that – but yes, that is something to explore further!

PARTICIPANT: I'd like to hear more about youth, see more for youth of color, we have so many artists and performers and expressive stories to share. There could be training on zines or we could send people to that Creating Change conference!

TEC: If we had staff we could send them and have them train folks when they got back – and if we had more than one staff, the trans equity work wouldn't have to stop while that person went to the conference!

PARTICIPANT: What about a trans fashion show, I think that'd be really fun and a great way to get money in the hands of community – we have so much talent, in makeup artists and designers and photographers and artists. It would be nice to have uplifting events like that.

TEC: Agreed. And our currently capacity to do that is zero because we get \$15k a year and that is basically always ear-marked for the Summit event. We want any and all of your ideas for how we can be more engaged and supportive, but we do need your help to get our budget increased so we can have more staff to do this work.

PARTICIPANT: Where is this meeting? When is it?

TEC: The first meeting is tomorrow in the middle of the day which we recognize can be a real barrier. But if you can make it, wear purple, and come to Minneapolis City Hall. We don't have a narrow window so I'm not sure when our part of the budget presentation will occur, but what we need are people to go up to the mic and say "My name is [name] and I support the asks of the Transgender Equity Council" or however you would like to voice your support for our programming and staff. The more people who show up the more effective our ask is, because it is then more reflective of the communities we serve.

TEC: We're pretty close to the end of our time for this meeting – check out our website for updates, for meeting dates and times, for summit news and photos. Please fill out the sign-in sheets if you'd like to get email updates from us – we don't have a newsletter yet but we may reach out with invitations or surveys. There's also an application on the table if you're interested in joining our transgender equity council when we have openings, and you can email the race equity email if you have any additional questions. Please take food with you if you'd like, and thank you for attending!

