



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Monday, March 18, 2019
5:00 PM

Work Session

Conference Room
1A/1B
Columbia City Hall
701 E. Broadway

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:04 PM (Mr. Ruffin joined at approximately 5:30 PM).

Present: 7 - Ruffin, Trapp, Thomas, Peters, Treece, Skala, and Pitzer

Fair Housing Task Force Recommendations

Attachments: [Fair Housing Task Force Update and Overview](#)
[Fair Housing Task Force Draft Resolution](#)

Interim City Manager John Glascock noted changes to Council agenda and introduced Randy Cole, Housing Programs Manager.

Mr. Cole gave a presentation updating Council on the Fair Housing Task Force. Several Task Force members were in attendance to answer questions. He discussed: the purpose of the task force; impediments to fair housing; the Task Force's draft report. He added that there would be at least two meetings before the final report was prepared.

Mr. Cole noted that the purpose of the task force, to affirmatively further fair housing, was a requirement for the City to receive Community Development Block Grants. The final report was a lead in to the five year consolidated plan as the data analysis would inform the plan. They use the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice to analyze five factors, including: disparities in housing, access to opportunity, segregated living patterns, creating high poverty areas into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.

There are about 18 members to the task force including two council members and members from community boards and commissions as well as key community partners. The task force did a self-assessment to test their knowledge and expertise. He noted that the Task Force overall scored lowest on residential lending practices and local real estate market, but that there were members who were very knowledgeable on this subject. Mr. Cole added that it is especially important to frame affordable housing in a way that is forward thinking and obtainable.

Mr. Cole covered their work plan that highlighted previous meetings and public engagement activities. He also presented a list of the speakers who came to the

meetings. The methodology included bringing in experts, the fair housing survey, collaborative maps, subcommittees, and discussion.

From the survey, they found that about half the respondents (44.7%) feel the City isn't well integrated, about 90% felt there were concentrated areas of poverty, and about 57% believe housing discrimination is a current problem. 77.5% of respondents reported that they haven't encountered housing discrimination, while 17.2% have. Mr. Cole presented several maps including those showing black population, rental information, community features.

Mr. Cole discussed some of the programs to help making housing more affordable. He noted that it depended on the income of group being served and mentioned some City programs, such as down payment assistance programs and rental vouchers. He discussed an example at the Lynn Cottage developments and said they were heavily subsidized. He clarified that the City puts money into the land trust, and those funds subsidize the price of the home. He also discussed average assistance provided to Section 8 housing. He emphasized the importance of affordable housing for different income levels and outlined different affordable housing strategies by group, including shelters, vouchers, public housing, Columbia Community Land Trust, down payment assistance, etc. He added that it is important to consider all portions of the plan while developing goals.

Mr. Cole reviewed the draft resolution, including policy statements and sections. The next steps for the Task Force will be to review the report and, once approved, bring it to Council.

Mayor Treece thanked commissioners for their time. Councilman Skala asked if the Task Force wanted direction from Council. Mr. Cole stated that the presentation was more to update Council. Mayor Treece wanted to emphasize transparency and public engagement, especially as the Task Force considers potential partnerships. Councilman Pitzer asked if the intent of the housing trust fund was for Council to allocate money to the trust rather than specific projects. Mr. Cole said the Task Force had a process that rates projects, rather than Council funding specific projects.

Councilman Pitzer asked about inclusionary zoning. Mr. Cole said it had been discussed in previous meetings. There were group members who wanted it and those who didn't.

Councilman Thomas asked about costs for units built as row houses rather than single homes. Mr. Cole stated that they had looked into that, but that the cost was not much lower. Councilman Trapp stated that row houses were discussed, but there was concern that the houses would not sell and would be turned into rental units.

Rhonda Carlson, a Task Force member, stated that fair housing and affordable housing are often used interchangeably, but they are different things. Mayor Treece asked if she felt the fair housing was being addressed. She stated that through the resolution, they could do work on both.

Virginia Law, another Task Force member, asked if there was a housing advisory council that could operate on a long term basis to provide recommendations and feedback on both fair and affordable housing. Mr. Cole stated that the Community Development Commission was considering looking into incorporating housing more.

Mayor Treece asked about infill development rather than greenfield development. He asked if it was always new construction or if there was another model that would fix aging housing stock. Mr. Cole stated that there were good models for infill. He added they could be less costly, but sewer taps would still likely need replaced. He estimated they could probably save \$15,000. There is an owner-occupied rehab program, but it has added nuisances. He noted Springfield, MO has a program such as this and spends about \$80,000 per house in subsidies. Phil Steinhaus, Task Force member, stated that unless the City addresses affordability, it will be segregated. Councilman Trapp stated that segregation in Columbia exists because there are exclusively white neighborhoods and integrated neighborhoods.

Several Task Force members noted that rental units need to be included in the plan and that without transportation access to good jobs there would be barriers to affordable neighborhoods.

The proposed timeframe would have a final report approved in April, then bringing it to Council in May.

Councilman Skala stated that, while he felt the conversation around inclusionary zoning should continue, he felt that refurbishing core areas was the place to start.

Employee Engagement Survey Results

Attachments: [Employee Engagement Presentation](#)
[City of Columbia 2018 Employee Engagement Survey Results](#)

Human Resources Director Margrace Buckler presented the consultant, Bob Lavigna of CPS HR Consulting, via WebX. He presented a slideshow and provided analysis on the Employee Engagement Survey.

Mr. Lavigna stated that the survey was conducted in late November through early December, and was open for three weeks. He stated that he would focus on city-wide results. While there is a lot to be proud of, there are some areas needing improvement.

The survey included 67 questions in 10 categories, as well as a series of demographic questions and a space for employees to share written feedback. A total of 62% (817 individuals) of employees responded, which is a good response for a city of Columbia's size. The response rates per department ranges from 100% to 43%, with Utilities, Public Works, and the Columbia Police Department having the lowest responses. Mr. Lavigna noted that it was not unusual to have this range of response rates. Only results with at least 10 responses from each department were reported to ensure confidentiality.

Mr. Lavigna explained how they determine the level of engagement utilizing 6 engagement questions. Of respondents, 27% were fully engaged, 50% were somewhat engaged, and 23% were not engaged. The percent of not engaged employees at the city was below the local and government benchmarks. Mr. Lavigna noted that the level of engagement by department was fairly consistent with other public entities. He then discussed levels of engagement by department, noting that departments that were fully or somewhat engaged ranged from 100% to 57%.

He then discussed the Drivers of Engagement, the most important factors influencing City of Columbia employees' engagement. Workplace and cultural factors were identified at the question level to determine which were more important for City employees. These included questions on employee's work, mission, team, supervisor, City leadership, training opportunities, resources, and pay/benefits. Using these factors, a score is calculated to determine which questions drive the overall engagement score.

The reporting was broken down into four quadrants, showing questions that were high influence/high score, high influence/low score, low influence/high score, and low influence, low score.

Mr. Lavigna identified four questions that reflect areas to improve: I am given real opportunities to improve my skills; I feel valued for the work I do; I feel change is managed well in my department; and there are opportunities to develop my career in my organization.

The areas identified to be maintained due to high scoring were: I have a high level of respect for my department's leaders; I feel my department as a whole is managed well; I feel I can make a difference working for the City; I get information I need to do my job well; I have opportunities to provide input on decisions that affect my work; and I believe the actions of my department's leaders are consistent with City values.

The highest scoring areas included: I like the work I do; I know what is expected of me; the work I do is meaningful; my job makes good use of my skills and abilities; and my department's mission is important to me.

The lowest scoring questions included: I feel change is managed well; I believe City Management will take action based on the results of this survey; I feel my pay adequately reflects my performance; I feel my pay is reasonable; and I feel the City as a whole is managed well.

Mr. Lavigna noted that employees may have issues concerning their pay, but that is not the reason they come to work. He also noted that the top three negative gaps involve pay.

The survey also covered intent to stay or leave the organization. Of respondents, 56% plan on staying; 24% plan on leaving; and 20% prefer not to say. This is not inconsistent with other organizations. They broke down the engagement levels of employees based on responses. Employees who plan on staying, finding a different

position in the City, or retire have higher levels of engagement than those planning on leaving.

The survey was distributed to everyone; it was administered online. For employees without a City email address, they received paper invites with links. There were reminder notices during the 3 week period.

Mayor Treece felt that the sense of mission was gratifying and that making a difference to community was something employees share. Mr. Lavigna added that employees seem to feel good about the work they do, but that employees may need more recognition and there could be efforts to make them feel more valued. He stated the analysis could be broken down on different levels, including pay, level in organization, etc. He noted that written responses range from people who are dissatisfied to people who never want to work anywhere other than the City - this is very typical. It will be important to communicate to employees the City's commitment to take action, and what action will be taken. In the future, the response rate will depend on actions taken from this.

Councilman Skala noted that there seems to be satisfaction with management on a supervisory level, but not with general management, including Council. He asked if political or controversial issues impacted this. Mr. Lavigna said he could not comment on political or external factors, but added that employees often respond more positively to people they directly interact with and less positive with people with whom they are less connected.

Councilman Pitzer asked if employees who were either more or less engaged more likely to respond. He was concerned that the survey misses employees in the middle. Mr. Lavigna advised not to speculate. He said it was difficult to generalize employees who do not respond. Ms. Buckler reinforced that anyone with a City email received a survey and that paper copies with links were distributed; they could sign on from anywhere. Mr. Lavigna gave a presentation in January with the department heads to share results. The operational excellence team has been developing an action plan. They will look at these results by department and work to develop plans for each department. Focus groups will begin in May and there will be 8 - 12 groups in total. The groups will focus on the least engaged; there will also be groups for managers and supervisors. They will look for quick fixes where available. They will possibly have departments doing well to work with low scoring departments.

Another report will come to Council after focus groups that will provide updates. Engagement is not an HR program - it is about how departments and division work with and treat their employees. As some action plans will include targeted steps to keep employees engaged, supervisors will be trained. The goal is to re-survey in 18 months to see if there have been progress. Mr. Glascock emphasized employees in the field must have the opportunity to participate. He added that it will take everyone to increase engagement.

Councilman Skala asked if there had been any lessons Mr. Lavigna could share. He

said they did provide a set of recommendations. HR cannot move the needle of engagement alone. He added that if a supervisor is engaged, those reporting to them will likely be more engaged. It is not always about money; leadership needs to understand how to communicate to their employees that they are valued. Councilman Thomas asked for a breakdown between supervisors and those being supervised. Mr. Lavigna said data was provided at those levels to those levels, though it was not included in this presentation. It is a fairly consistent pattern that people higher up in organization are more engaged.

II. OTHER ITEMS THE COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:51 PM.