



Inclusive Community Task
Force Report
February 2019

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I. Learning

A critical and encompassing portion of the Task Force's work was to learn about various institutions and processes as it relates to inclusivity. These learning sessions were spread throughout the length of the Task Force's work. They allowed the Task Force to learn more about how these institutions are addressing inclusivity and how they could do so in the future. A summary of these learning sessions is below.

Department of Justice

Sarah Conway
April 18th, 2018

Sarah Conway provided the Task Force with a presentation on how the Department of Justice can serve as a resource to this group. She provided the group with a fact sheet on the agency and discussed how her organization addresses hate crimes. She noted all services provided by her organization were confidential and free of charge. She explained that she acted as a neutral party that facilitated communication between two parties and described the wide range of groups she has served. Staff commented if this type of experience were pursued it would be separate from a Task Force meeting.

Parks and Recreation

Jennifer Fink
April 18th, 2018

City of New Brighton Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Fink spoke to the Task Force on how the City of New Brighton has addressed inclusivity through parks and recreation and what more could be done.

She believes Parks and Recreation has a place for everyone. She explained to the Task Force how the City worked to make their programs available and inclusive for all. Adaptive inclusion has been the focus for some time and staff have been and continue to ensure programming is racially inclusive. The City of New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department could be a willing partner to address inclusivity with the Task Force or a future Commission.

Public Safety

Tony Paetznick
June 18th, 2018

New Brighton Public Safety Director Tony Paetznick provided the Task Force with historical information on the New Brighton Public Safety Department and how Public Safety have worked to foster inclusivity through their multitude of partnerships and connections such as National Night Out, a faith community partnership, Community Resource Officers, VIPS, SRO's, Coffee with a Cop, and Public Safety Spotlight messages.

Director Paetznick also spoke to the Task Force about the agency's focus on 21st Century Policing and that it is a high priority for the City to focus on the strategy, including recruiting and mentoring minority and female police officers.

Director Paetznick stated during the past couple years, one of the policies most asked about by local community members is the agency's handling of immigration-related matters, and specifically, the interaction of New Brighton police with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. The Task Force was grateful to learn about such policies.

Hiring Practices

Devin Massopust

October 15, 2018

The Task Force learned about hiring practices within the City and how it relates to inclusion and Diversity. Assistant City Manager Devin Massopust noted that cities across the metro are focusing on hiring practices to create a more diverse workforce, including New Brighton. The Task Force was able to have input on what success looks like in terms of hiring for diversity and that diversity training should be a routine training for City of New Brighton staff members. Based on these discussions a future project that will likely need to be complete is assessing each of the departments in terms of their diversity and training that has been had.

Public Spaces

Devin Massopust

October 15, 2018

The Task Force was able to review the public buildings that the City of New Brighton has in terms of their inclusivity. The Task Force noted that City Hall could be made more welcoming through signage in different languages, artwork and staff. Partnerships with the local school districts were also discussed. The result of this learning session can be found in the recommendations of this report in terms of making certain buildings more welcoming.

II. Council Directives

The City Council passed a resolution on October 10, 2017 creating the Inclusive Community Task Force (resolution attached). Within that resolution were reasons for creating the Task Force, which the Task Force has used for the learning and research completed in 2018. The directives were: **Identify Barriers; Cultivate Connection; Pursue Partnerships; Diverse Workforce and Housing; Public Space Welcome;** and **Examine the need for Inclusivity Commission.**

To get a grasp of the understanding the Task Force members had in regards to these directives a survey was completed by the group. The survey results assisted the Task Force in recognizing what each of the members knew about the directives and where future conversations could go based off of that knowledge. These survey results helped identify different community sectors that the Task Force members had access to and could utilize for learning.

Sectors were then assigned to each of the members based on their connections, knowledge and familiarity of the community institution. These sectors included Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Faith Communities, School Districts, nonprofit groups such as Community Partners in Youth (CPY) and Northeast Youth and Family Services. The Task Force members were tasked with learning from representatives of these groups how they do or do not feel welcome in New Brighton, what barrier or difficulties existed to participating fully in society and to learn generally how they feel being members of this community.

Sectors

Public Safety

The New Brighton Department of Public Safety identified perception as the biggest barrier to operating effectively. The Department is active in ensuring that they work as a partner with the community through various events and proactive engagement. The Department has a Community Engagement Officer that spearheads these initiatives. However, due to the public narrative around policing there can be hesitancy to engage with officers due to perception. The Department will continue their engagement efforts to overcome negative perception. Staff from the Department of Public Safety encouraged the Task Force to report back on what the findings of the group were and how the Department of Public Safety can use such findings for their continued engagement efforts.

Parks and Recreation

Members of the Task Force met with representatives from the New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department also. The Task Force found that the Parks and Recreation Department offer numerous activities and events to many groups of people which create strong community interaction. It was found that Parks and Recreation has a multitude of different types of employees, many of whom only work part-time or seasonally. A challenge for the Department is ensuring that all of these employees are properly trained and knowledgeable on how to engage with people from all walks of life and communities. It was noted that the Parks and Recreation Department would like to partner with the Task Force on community events that promote inclusivity.

Faith Communities

Numerous faith leaders were engaged by the Task Force through its work. Representatives from the Task Force met with the Faith Community Partnership which is a conglomerate of faith leaders in the community and New Brighton Department of Public Safety officials. Through this meeting the Task Force was able to create a contact list of faith leaders in our community. Members of the Task Force also met individually with said leaders to learn about their work and life in New Brighton. Those faith leaders reported that New Brighton was a welcoming community and that they appreciated the City's proactive approach in addressing inclusivity. They noted that transportation and affordable housing are the most prominent barriers they have seen for the communities they serve. Continued engagement with these communities is important and encouraged by the sector.

School Districts

Leaders from the St. Anthony-New Brighton and Mounds View School Districts were engaged by the Inclusive Community Task Force. Through their engagement the Task Force learned that the school districts are working to attract teachers that reflect the students they serve and that mental health issues were of a big concern. Stable housing, access to food and public transportation were detailed as areas where barriers exist.

Nonprofits

Nonprofit leaders from Community Partners in Youth (CPY), Northeast Youth and Family Services and the Suburban Ramsey County Family Collaborative were engaged in regards to inclusivity in New Brighton. They noted that the City's involvement in supporting the nonprofits and engaging with underserved communities has been effective and encourage continued work in those areas. Public transportation and access to food were identified as barriers for the members served by these nonprofits.

Business Community

The business community is an important sector that needs to be engaged and explored further. There are opportunities for partnerships to address inclusion and diversity in the workplace and the community.

The Task Force was able to address the directives of the City Council through their work in 2018. Barriers were identified through communicating with community sector leaders and hearing first hand from members where and how barriers exist. Connections were made with other agencies as well as community institutions. Related to these connections are partnerships. Though no formal partnerships were created during the Task Force's work, contact was made with other entities that were open to and encouraged future partnerships. The Task Force has made tangible recommendations to City of New Brighton staff on how our public spaces can be made more welcoming and those recommendations will be pursued and made reality in the future.

Continued Work on Directives

Though the majority of the directives were explicitly addressed by the Task Force, there is still more that needs to be explored in regards to the directives. Below are areas of inclusivity and the directives that were not addressed:

Race Relations

Race relations is an expansive, sensitive and important topic. It is also a topic that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner and the Task Force did not have the time in the end to grant the topic adequate time. The Task Force did discuss how the topic could be addressed in the future, either by the Task Force itself or a different body. A well supported idea was to first have a listening session with people of color from the City of New Brighton facilitated by an outside resource like the YWCA. By doing so, the members of the group could be made aware about what they do not know in regards to race in New Brighton and work to address issues garnered from such discussion.

Ableism and Ageism

Another area of inclusivity that was discussed briefly through the Task Force's meetings, but ultimately not addressed comprehensively is in regards to the elderly population in New Brighton.

Workforce Training in Diversity

Workforce training and diversity was discussed in the hiring practices informational meeting, but more can be done to address this topic in the future. Ideas included creating a diversity training plan for specific groups of employees that interact more often with certain groups within the community. Diversity in recruitment practices can also be looked at more in depth in the future.

III. Council Submissions

A. Contacts

Faith Group Contacts

First Church of Christ Scientist, Terry Erickson – 612-787-8798; terickson@elmare.rr.com

Salem Covenant – Alice Erickson, Executive Pastor – 651-633-9615

Faith Christian Reformed – Adam Stout, Pastor – 651-633-5252; adams@faithccmn.org

New Apostolic – Ives Leiser, Pastor – 727-366-0016

Freedom Center – Chris Apperson, Pastor – 651-216-1679

United Church of Christ – Amy Moore, Pastor – 651-633-1327; uccbame@usfamily.net

Abu Huraira Mosque – Fatah Adbi, Director – 651-598-0680

School District Connections

Sam Carew – ISD 621 – 651-621-6799

Ali Ali – ISD 621 – 651-724-7482

Angel Toro – ISD 621 – 651-724-2854

Mee Yang – ISD 621 – 651-724-0396

Chinedum Oji

Travis Decory

IV. Recommendations

Based off of the work that the Task Force has done over the last eight months the following are recommendations for the City Council to consider. These are not listed in order of importance or emphasis. Some recommendations will take time to consider and complete while others are more short-term, tactical considerations. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Advocate for increased and enhanced public transportation within the City of New Brighton.
2. Work with the City of New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department to create a festival of nations/open streets event to promote the diversity in New Brighton.
3. Short term, address language barriers by updating signage in the New Brighton Community Center and City Hall. Long term, create gateway signage at certain access points to the City and provide kiosks in public buildings to assist with translation.
4. Create a more welcoming space in in the New Brighton Department of Public Safety, New Brighton Community Center, park shelter buildings and City Hall through diverse art and people centric furnishings.
5. Create a long-standing, official body to continue the type of work done by the Task Force and recommendations from the City Council. Ensure that the membership of the body is made up of diverse individuals.
6. Explore creating a staff position within the city or with other partners to focus on carrying out directives of the City Council and a future commission focused on diversity.
7. Utilize resources like the DOJ and the YWCA to complement and deepen the exploration started within the Task Force. In 2019, work with the DOJ to identify issues any potential body and staff can address in 2020.
8. Continue supporting nonprofit organizations within the City of New Brighton, including Community Partners in Youth and Northeast Youth and Family Services.

