

Equity Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 29, 2023 | 5:00-6:30pm

In Person @ CCRPC's Office

Attendees: Jasim Mudaffar, Ragab Mohamed, Lydia Diamond, Elaine Haney, Omar Derzi, Bruce Wilson, Melissa Heitkamp (EAC Members), Mona Tolba (Translator), Charlie Baker, Sarah Muskin, Annie Henderson, Anne Nelson Stoner (CCRPC Staff)

1. **Welcome, Announcements, & Agenda**

Anne Nelson welcomed EAC members and invited everyone to get some food and a drink before taking a seat. Everyone went around and shared their names. Anne Nelson announced that the Equity Statement was officially and unanimously adopted by the Board and thanked everyone for the time and care they put into workshopping that statement. Lydia said thank you to Anne Nelson for rallying everyone to get that done. Anne Nelson announced that the Regional Equity Convening, that is now being called the Planning for Equity Summit 2, has been moved from November to February to give CCRPC some more time to plan that even thoughtfully. Anne Nelson shared she is meeting with CVOEO and Kim Carson from Burlington's REIB office to discuss co-convening/collaborating. The event will now be on February 10th from 9:00 AM –1:00 PM. Anne Nelson will share this update in her follow up email and send a calendar invite.

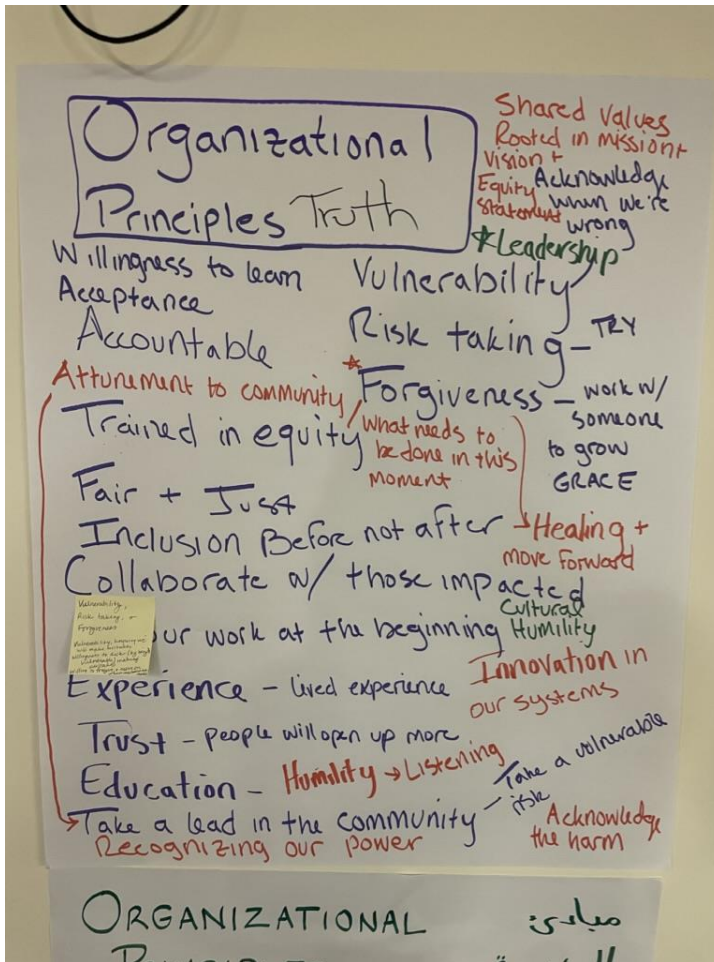
2. **Revisit EAC Priorities & Projects**

Anne Nelson started by revisiting the Equity Advisory Committee's four priorities (Engage with Chittenden County Residents, Provide Accountability, Identify Opportunities for Direct Action, and Support the Equity & Engagement Manager). She then reviewed the "to do" list for the EAC, explaining that we are now working on a Code of Conduct and the Equity Action Plan, both of which fall under the Provide Accountability goal. We will soon work on developing a public participation plan for the ECOS Regional Plan and invite communities to attend the Planning for Equity Summit 2, where we will be discussing housing. These both fall under the Engage with Chittenden County Residents goal. And lastly, two EAC meeting times (late this winter and early spring) will be used for focus groups—one for the Winooski Bridge Project and one for Climate Action. These fall under the Opportunities for Direct Action goal.

3. **Workshop CCRPC Staff, Committee, and Board Member Code of Conduct**

Anne Nelson shared that CCRPC currently does not have a code of conduct besides the preliminary and legally necessary code of conduct around harassment, discrimination, ADA, etc. Mona added that everyone has this and was surprised CCRPC had no further code of conduct. Anne Nelson shared that it is incredibly important that we develop a code of conduct/organizational principles to guide CCRPC Staff, Committee, and Board behavior. Anne Nelson met with all CCRPC staff in small groups to workshop a preliminary list of values Staff hope to uphold in their work. Before sharing this list with the EAC, Anne Nelson had everyone take five minutes and write down the values that come to mind when they think of how CCRPC staff, committees and Board members ought to conduct themselves.

The following notes were taken on the wall as members discussed:



Anne Nelson shared a draft list that she developed from CCRPC Staff input. Melissa commented on how interesting it is that this list of words is so different from the list staff developed.

Bruce brought up that the word equity is being overused without a clear understanding of what we are talking about. Equity was not a word that was used prior to a couple of years ago. What does it mean? Elaine shared that it seems like Equity is the goal, not a value. Lydia offered that equity was a value, a way of thinking about things. Bruce asked what equity means. Melissa shared an image that came from Catarina of people picking apples from a tree. Equality is everyone having the same size ladder, but some people having all the apples. Equity is when people have different sized ladders and the same number of apples. Anne Nelson said it seems like Justice is the action, and Equity is the outcome, so maybe equity should not be a value, but rather the goal of upholding all the other values. Equity should be named in all the values.

Bruce expressed concern over these just being words with no follow through, and how so many people and organizations have had these nice words to show but continue to cause harm. How are we going to actualize these values? Anne Nelson shared that we will need to do staff, committee, and Board training to both implement and enforce these values. Melissa added that accountability needs to take into account power differentials. Mona shared that training around

sharing power is really needed, and also around handling conflict, because it is inevitable people will be made uncomfortable. Melissa suggested a training or education experience where we can simulate for staff the feeling of being in the minority. Mona said race needs to be centered in everything we do. Cultural humility and competency was brought up as important. Melissa suggested that we could publish these organizational principles on our website and have a way for people to provide feedback and view them as living and changing.

Anne Nelson shared that she will integrate all of this feedback into the draft principles and take that draft back to staff in another round of small group staff meetings. We will revisit this list and the draft updated code of conduct at the next EAC meeting, as well as the Equity Action Plan, which will really start to get into the actions that need to follow all these words.

4. EAC membership check in's & strategies to diversity membership

Anne Nelson sharing that she would like to have more EAC meetings in person. Mona suggested hybrid for those who cannot make it in person. Anne Nelson asked how we can get more people to show up and whether anyone knows of others who might be interested in joining the committee. Bruce said before trying to get others to join, we should try to get more people who are already on the committee to show up. Anne Nelson thanked everyone.