

Upper Harbor Terminal Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #13

Meeting Minutes

9.15.2020

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) General Meeting:

Introduction/ Updates (Robin and Kate)

Robin (CAC Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, goal of the meeting was to think about how systemic racism can be addressed before and during the development of the park at Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT). Feels strongly that there needs to be a northside park here, not a lot of river access, should provide a park to relax and get away from hectic life. Want to ensure that the right park will be developed to address systemic racism, that it will be accessible for the Northside community.

Kate Lamers introduced the MPRB Staff and Consultants that are involved in the project/process. Caty Royce and Paul Bauknight, the facilitators for this CAC conversation, introduced themselves as well.

CAC Discussion

Caty: To start off this two-hour conversation tonight, we're going to be thinking about how we want to plan a park that is anti-racist in nature; asked for examples/anecdotes of experiences of systemic racism.

CAC Member: Has always felt she has been treated differently because of her race, in all aspects of her life (in her workplace, as a mother, etc.) Has to present herself differently. Feel in Minnesota that it's that passive, behind your back racism, where people can hide behind policy and procedure and protect themselves. Parks can be a place to get away from that, clear your mind, reflect in positive ways. Afraid of gentrification of these spaces. Need to be thoughtful about who is creating these spaces, who is in control of it. Want to create a great place for all people, a cultural landscape that is welcoming for all.

CAC Member: Believes that everyone at the table tonight is aware that systemic racism exists and is active in Minneapolis, want to direct the conversation to being about how to design this park. Feels like asking for examples of systemic racism is for educating white bodied people about things they should know about, it feels offensive.

CAC Member: Not having transit stops to the UHT park is a demonstration of systemic racism as it relates to Minneapolis and the park site. Not having adequate parking for large families, not having sufficient safety measures to get children of color across the highway to the river, Not

returning land to Native American communities, having this conversation when we know the truth of systemic racism are all demonstrations of systemic racism. Continuing along the path of farce is demonstration in real time of systemic racism and oppression.

Caty: Asked for clarification on what this CAC member meant by farce.

CAC Member: Means manipulation of the Park Board in collecting the CAC to waste their time, sign off on a park that will be the private grounds of an exclusive development. The inclusion of the outdoor music venue makes this feel like an extension of the North Loop, not a park for Northsiders, a gated off area that isn't accessible by public transport.

Public: Former tribal chairman, documentarian We need to recognize that we are all relatives. Need to change our education to tell the historical truth. Have the opportunity to work together to create something. Recognize where sites of significance/Sacred sites are, we have seen how this doesn't happen time and time again. We need to recognize that Minneapolis and Saint Paul are in and near sacred areas. Time to tell the truth, expand whose stories are being told, who's being listened to.

CAC Member: Grateful to hear this message as it relates to this work. How does the CAC proceed, cognizant of the fact that they may be repeating history? Don't want to be tricked into creating/delivering a park "to the people" when in reality it could be going right back to the corporations and elites that will cut off access from these communities. Would like to continue to have presence and guidance of tribal elders at the table.

CAC Member: Want to make sure that CAC results in the development of a park. Want to have access to the water. In South Minneapolis there are all sorts of places to access the water, want Northside to have a piece of that also. Believe that we can all share this space together, can recognize the sacred land and recognize that there's an opportunity to create a park for everyone. True that the City and music venue are involved, but she doesn't want it there either. CAC can work around it; can work together and understand how to develop with gentrification in mind. Would love to see many cultures incorporated and represented.

CAC Member: Don't believe we are able to create a culturally inclusive park unless the CAC recommendation is to stop all development until it can be agreed upon that there will be public transportation to this site. Need to figure out safety related to the highway (how do children and families cross). Don't know what kind of housing is going to be there (can a public housing recommendation be made?) Deeply concerned about local residents losing a treasure.

CAC Member: Feels like the CAC is talking in circles, want a productive conversation not a venting session. Asked if there was an agenda for the conversation or if it was meant to be a listening session.

CAC Member: She was one of the CAC members that suggested having this discussion because she wanted the CAC to commit to dismantling systemic racism as a team. Don't believe that all CAC members have the same understanding of systemic racism, don't believe the MPRB agrees that this is systemic racism. Glad we have Native representation at the table tonight. Hope the

CAC can have solutions. Need to have Native elders involved and at the table, not just representation but also people doing the creating/designing. That kind of inclusion is essential to the whole process.

Public: Need Native elder leadership for solutions. Need direct avenues to other Dakota and Ojibwe leaders to come together to make decisions. Minnesota is unique, there is a lot of systemic racism in its history. Even today MPRB has primarily white leadership, only up to 5% of teachers are people of color in all MN; these directly contribute to issues of systemic racism today. Have to EDUCATE around these lies. Have to educate one another, understand one another, have dialogue. Have to bring conversations of systemic racism into the open, shed light on every sector. Need to come together in agreement of shared history. Need to bring young people together, get their energy and momentum, utilize media, bring conscious level awareness to people.

CAC Member: Need to remember that we are supposedly not restricted in our recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The CAC has a purpose, worry that we are going to be ineffective or pawns, but CAC has a fairly loud voice in being able to recommend directly to Commissioners. Also disagree with music venue being developed by entities that aren't located in North Minneapolis. Don't want to make mistake like with Vikings Stadium where the park isn't open to the public all the time. Music venue won't feel like the park, won't be like an amphitheater like on the lakes. Think there are more appropriate ways to dedicate funding. One step the CAC could take is to ask the City to withdraw its #1 priority for the development of this concert venue and transfer the land to make a more substantial park. Can address lots of issues with intelligent design with intentional neighborhood involvement. Can challenge the MPRB and the City. Although no direct authority with City can push them to rethink.

CAC Member: Going back to original question posed about examples of systemic racism. She's fairly new to Minneapolis/North Minneapolis. Some examples she's seen: more liquor stores and funeral homes in North Minneapolis, highway blocks access to the river for folks in North Minneapolis, lack of public transportation, lack of bike path. The fact this conversation is only happening formally this late in the process is also an example of systemic racism. The City should have brought this up when they first had the idea of moving forward with a music venue at this location. Believe that the music venue will displace people in North Minneapolis. Not sure what can be done moving forward to reduce systemic racism in this project, feel like most of the time is spent talking through the uphill battle of the music venue. The City is the entity that needs to be having this conversation.

Caty: Do we want to talk about the City's role? There has been a lot of talk about challenging the MPRB or City directly?

CAC Member: Agree with a lot of the points made tonight, a lot that has been said is very critical to the conversation. Recognize that even within the CAC there is systemic racism; not striving to be problematic, and it's not even conscious because it's so engrained. Part of

working on systemic racism is calling others out and being okay with being called out and self correcting. The CAC can't address systemic racism for the Park Board when the CAC itself can't address it for themselves. This conversation feels like it's to dot I's and cross t's. Doesn't answer the question of how the park will really connect with black and brown people on the North side. Don't see the CAC answering this question without a pause.

CAC Member: There is systemic racism in the CAC because it's happening in the communities that the CAC represents. Understand that it's something that the CAC needs to work on within themselves, have to acknowledge it and continue to hold each other accountable. Recognizes that it's difficult to have lost the ability to physically communicate with one another. Need to come together to fight for the park they want. This is a challenge. Lots of systemic issues to confront (ex. lack of black owned construction companies in MN). Agree that most CAC members don't want the venue. Can go to the City and can fight it.

CAC Member: Need to continue to have deep community engagement and outreach. Have been saying that since the beginning of the project.

CAC Member: Need to create space for all people to be included in the process and be able to speak for themselves rather than on other's behalf.

CAC Member: Believe that there has been a lot of space created for communities to engage with the project/process.

Conversations at this point started to overlap. Some disagreements about community involvement in the process. Recognition that all people are speaking from a place of their own experience and individual bias.

CAC Member: Wanted this conversation to happen earlier, witnessing pent up frustration being brought out. Recognize that all CAC members have things to work on individually and while working together as a group. Work to set a more collaborative tone. Work to hear point blank what folk's recommendations are.

Caty: Encourage people who haven't spoken yet to share.

MPRB Staff: Thanked CAC and community for their time. Want to know if there are any policies/plans/procedures that the MPRB is using that directly contributes to systemic racism? Seems like there are a lot of persona' experiences of individual racism and conflicts of differences of opinion on the CAC that is hindering the conversation.

CAC Member: Systemic racism piece of this process is that the CAC is being asked to plan something when they don't have the horse or the cart. Being asked to create a park around something that is unstable (housing, music venue, transit). Puts all the pressure to try and stabilize this development on the Park Board.

CAC Member: CAC is meant to be representative of communities they are speaking for. Only so much community concern that can be addressed by park. Even if the CAC recommended that

low income housing be developed, community may still say the parks not accessible because of lack of busses.

CAC Member: Systemic breakdown is rooted in racism. The systemic problem is the City of Minneapolis and how they act as an enterprise when they do business.

MPRB Staff: That's the purpose of this conversation tonight, how systemic racism is affecting the project and how to move the project along.

CAC Member: Trying to say that the project itself is systemic racism. How it's been gone about only reinforces that. The way that it is shaping out it will continue to contribute to inequity and systemic racism.

MPRB Staff: Should we expect that a singular project erodes decades of systemic racism? Or should the goal be to create a park that is accessible?

CAC Members: All CAC members want to see a park, there is no one that doesn't want to see the park, that's never been the conversation. It's about HOW to do just that, how to create an accessible park. The CAC's job tonight is to talk about systemic racism and how it can be mitigated while moving forward. Pushing forward instead of pausing is part of systemic racism. Pushing forward when there are more problems to discuss is whiteness.

Public Comment

Public: Appreciate being in the space and listening to the conversation. As an Indigenous person, would not like to see anything Christian in the park because of the traumatic history that holds. Systemic racism is celebrated (ex. Christmas, Easter, etc.) Have to take an unpaid day off so that she can participate in events that are culturally significant to her (ex. gathering wild rice, moose hunting). Need to educate about all histories, different holidays, etc. Need a land survey to see what culturally significant sites are there. Disheartened to hear the City wants the music venue here, would like to see them reassess the situation.

Public: Feels frustrated with the conversation tonight and process. Frustrated that the CAC has to do the personal internal work; it's time spent on things not producing this project for community. The goal should be to make sure that residents in North Minneapolis, particularly black residents in North Minneapolis are the direct financial benefactor and are directly represented by what is put in the park. The park should honor all people, not be separated around one people group, have to liberate all people. Hopeful that the CAC will be clear about what the goals for the park are. Need to dismantle from the inside out and outside in.

Public: Going back to initial question of examples of systemic racism. Provided examples of development processes that were done without Indigenous communities. Have asked for developers to press the stop button, have asked for reset. If it's about Indigenous people, but created without Indigenous people, then it's not for Indigenous people. The music venue is extractive, it creates separation and is closed off. It's a neocolonial move around a center piece. What would a strategy be for everyone to come together to ask that these entities stop and restart under circumstances of what's currently happening in community? How do we stop and restart a process with more equity?

Public: This project is not going to single handedly resolve issues of systemic racism, but that also doesn't give permission to get rid of the responsibility of delivering the community what they want. Don't want a slow down because we don't want a park, want a slow down so that there is time to be thoughtfully listened to. Should incorporate feedback from scratch. Need to re-examine the model that resulted in this development (only one proposal received). Value of property and raising property taxes is stated goal of 2040—history of redlining. MPRB can't solve that. Not on the park board to solve anything. In the future instead of having a session where we air our complaints, find within the container of what we have, how can we honor perspectives and also hear about what people desire.

THANKS AND NEXT STEPS

Kate thanked everyone for the conversation and questions, and invited folks to reach out to her with any other comments.

Robin thanked everyone for bringing their passion to the table and outlined that the CAC has serious questions to build on and address, like how to bring concerns to the City, what the City is doing, and how to navigate the City and MPRB processes. Believe that the CAC needed to have this discussion tonight, and that the friction will lead to progress.

Question about the feasibility of the City's Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC) and MPRB CAC meeting together.

Kate: Have been looking for opportunities to meet with the CPC since before the pandemic. Scheduling issues before the pandemic. Have reached out at the request of the CAC members and will report back.

ADJOURN: 8:07PM