

Summary of Joint Quality of Life Work Session: March 31, 2018

3 Key Takeaways:

1. *Clear and Transparent Process:* Quality of Life Commissioners and staff liaisons have experienced frustration and pain points from previous budget cycles (see Rose/Bud/Thorn documentation). There is desire for more clarity, certainty, and transparency in the process for our volunteer Quality of Life Commissioners to impact the budget and community outcomes.
2. *Better Timing of QoL Budget Recommendations:* Quality of Life Commissions are being invited to provide policy recommendations earlier in the annual budget development cycle, allowing for integration into the [City's base budget](#) (roughly \$1 Billion). This creates a greater opportunity for incorporation into the City Manager's proposed budget to Council (as opposed to being inserted "late in the game" and competing with "concept menu" items from a smaller pool of funding).
3. *Spirit of Collaboration:* General sense that Quality of Life Commissions have more to gain by collaborating than competing (without compromising unique community needs).

Follow-up Actions:

Action #1: Joint QoL group will reconvene at least two more times prior to May 21, 2018 deadline to develop FY18 budget recommendations, and continue discussion on the key takeaways listed above. In preparation, Commissions can review areas of alignment with the new [Strategic Direction 2023's indicators, metrics, and strategies](#).

Action #2: Equity Office will develop a template to make it easy for Quality of Life Commissions to submit budget recommendations that align with the City's new Strategic Direction and demonstrate opportunities to advance equitable outcomes. This template could be a combination of individual Commission requests to address specific needs while also providing Council with common themes/priorities across Quality of Life Commissions.

Action #3: Assess role and capacity of staff liaisons to support Quality of Life Commissions, with involvement of Equity Office, Executive liaisons, and staff liaisons.

Action #4: The group would like to take a multi-pronged approach to address known challenges and opportunities. The priorities may be adjusted at any time:

- Step #1: Acquire funding in FY19 budget. Recommendations due 5/21/18.
- Step #2: Explore options to increase opportunities for (and capacity of) community organizations to access City funding
 - Explore “sponsorships” and other funding mechanisms
 - How do City’s social services contacts fit it?
 - If “mini grants” or grants are selected as a funding mechanism, group would like to see:
 - A substantial amount, such as a \$10,000 or \$25,000 minimum (more discussion needed)
 - Clarity around total funding amount before asking community organizations to apply
 - Funding provided up front (not reimbursement) to community-based organizations with minimal hoops to go through
 - Further exploration of one-time funding vs. recurring funding (How much funding to plan for? Could there be a two-year funding option?)
- Step #3: Explore mechanisms for increased accountability and communication around how funds are spent and whether disparities are being addressed.
- Step #4: Re-examine the role and future potential of the Joint Inclusion Committee, working in concert with Quality of Life Commissions to move initiatives forward.

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Minutes from the Work Session on March 31st

The meeting began with an anecdote from Brion to make the point that we can’t keep “mopping up the mess” of the budget process, and instead address issues earlier in the process to make real change. This meeting began the process of creating a more sustainable and effective mechanism for addressing community needs and engaging the quality of life commissions to advance racial equity through the budget process.

Agreements:

- Say what’s on your mind
- Not to expect a full resolution today
- Stay on topic

- Be fully Present
- Be mindful of committees we're serving
- Listen to each other
- Gain an understanding of all the committees we're serving, not just "our" group

"Pair and Share"

During the pair and share, we established several commonalities. For example, we all serve because we care and have the background in the communities we advocate for, and we like to spend money on concerts, food, travel, family, and clothes.

Rose, Bud, Thorn

This activity built upon and established new commonalities.

Thorns –

There is collective frustration around the budget process and an overall feeling of a lack of accountability and clarity. . There was also the expressed feeling that the Commissions were being presented to or met as a "check-the- box" for city departments without any active engagement or intentionality. There were feelings expressed regarding the exclusion of specific Commissions and how that has created a tension or appearance of "fighting over crumbs."

Further, there was a strong expression of concern with the level of funding and ability of the Equity Office to achieve more than "window dressing," and being able to wave a magic wand to fix massive, institutional, problems that are rooted in historical inequities

Buds

e Buds covered a spectrum. Many people were encouraged by the cooperation of the Commissions, and felt this was a powerful avenue for influence. Additionally, there was a recognition that the QoL Commissions had the potential to make a major impact due to their proximity and connection to the community. Finally, many expressed optimism in beginning to understand and influence the budget process at an earlier point than in the past.

Roses

The creation and work of the Equity Office was a prominent theme in the Roses. As was the City Council's recognition of a need for change and the Commissions as a vehicle for that change. Further, the cooperation among both the Commissions and the communities they serve was a source of optimism.

There is an appendix to this document that captures all of the areas
Following this, we broke for lunch and culture shares.

After lunch, Brion Oaks presented on the Equity Framework, Jill Goodman on the Strategic Outcomes, Ginger Jacinic on the Quality of Life Fund, and Ed Van Eenoo on the Budget Process and timing.

During the QoL Fund presentation, we asked for thoughts on mini-grants. Feelings were mixed. Nobody was satisfied with the \$75,000 funding level, but there was some interest in what could be done with the mini-grants. However, for the purposes of this meeting, the issue was put on the back-burner.

Ed emphasized that the QoL fund was meant to be part of a larger whole, as Council had heard from community members and organizations that they wanted a mechanism in place to distribute mini-grants, and thought the QoL Commissions were a good avenue to implement them.

Further, Ed communicated that the Budget process and result will not be the same as past years. To this point, Council has gone line-by-line through the budget with the question, "Which outcome does this align with?" in order to set up the April 4 Council Budget Work Session.

Commissioners once again expressed frustrations with the Budget process in the past, and seemed uncertain on how different it would be this time. Ed responded by diagramming the two phases of the Budget process. In the past, the Commissions had been fighting for the \$5 Million cut of the pie available after August 1, whereas this year, when the work and recommendations are coming before August, the size of the pie is instead \$1 Billion.

A large portion of the discussion also centered on what comes next. The timeline is tight, as Council wants recommendations by May 21. The Commissioners agreed to two more meetings to continue work on determining the process and ultimate objectives of the QoL Commissions' work in the budget process. The Equity Office will work on a template for the recommendations, which will be sent out to the Commissions who can then determine for themselves their priorities. Further, there was an agreement to later discuss the role of staff liaisons in the Commissions. Finally, the question of accountability was raised, but it was determined the best time to address it was after the budget process.