

Task Force on Poverty Elimination Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 17, 2014, 4:00 - 6:30 PM
Chancery Hall, Basement Meeting Room
#3 Sir Winston Churchill Square

Present:

Members: Mayor Don Iveson (Co-Chair), Councillor Ben Henderson, Justin Archer, Jeffrey Bisanz, Yvonne Chiu, Dr. Joseph Doucet, Sarah Eadie, Dr. Louis Francescutti (on the phone), Councillor Amarjeet Sohi, Sandra Huculak, Tiffany Linke-Boyko, Eugene Ip, Maria Mayan, Carman McNary, Janice Melnychuk, Zahra Somani, Lora Pillipow

Roundtable Reps: Lisa Weber (ART), Cheryl Whiskeyjack (ART), Pieter de Vos (IRRT), Fiona Cavanagh (IRRT)

COE Staff: Lyall Brenneis, Kate Gunn, Ward Antoniuk, Lucenia Ortiz, Bin Lau, Kris Andreychuk Patricia Waisman, Walter Trocenko

Regrets: Bishop Jane Alexander (Co-Chair), Kate Chisholm, Mark Holmgren, Julianna Charchun (COE Staff)

Minutes

Discussion

1. Call to Order

- Mayor Don Iveson called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.
- The agenda and the minutes of May 27 meeting were approved.
- Regrets: from Co Chair Bishop Jane Alexander, who is convening a conference this week.
- Welcome to Patricia Waisman (Transportation) & Walter Trochenko (Sustainable Development)
- Co Chair Update
Mayor Iveson highlighted three recent events that the Task Force supported/participated in:
 - Adam Kahane Luncheon sponsored by REACH Edmonton with Mayor Iveson. Adam Kahan's expertise in complex issues may inform the Task Force work and process.
 - Provincial Update attended by Kate Gunn and Ward Antoniuk, hosted by ADM Lora Pillipow, who touched on the status of the Provincial Poverty Strategy and next steps.
 - Co Chair Jane Alexander spoke to the influential Funders Forum in June and received their interest in the Task Force process and ways to support it. Sandra Huculak also was present.

2. Definition of Poverty

Mayor Done Iveson introduced this agenda item, noting that at the May Task Force meeting the IRRT presented a draft definition of poverty for the Task Force to consider. The Task Force supported the definition overall but struck an ad hoc committee at that meeting to review and revise the original definition. The request was to consider weaving in comments from the Task Force on social inclusion, an Aboriginal lens and links to the Provincial Poverty work.

Recommendation and Discussion

Pieter de Vos, representative of the Information and Research Round Table, presented the revised definition at this meeting and answered questions about it.

Overall, the revised definition was seen as shorter, more memorable and expressing the recognition that poverty is about more than money by including both social and economic descriptors. It was felt

that this revised definition will be enhanced by some further contextualization around it through a preamble (definition, value, linkages, rationale, what poverty looks like/lived experience) and refining the following points:

- ensure the critical Aboriginal experience is further amplified in the context or preamble and in our framework
- reference in the definition context the need for measurement tools and indicators, and list some of them, including the possibility of looking at the Province's deprivation index
- consider the importance of access to supports and individual/family's ability access supports and the need to address systemic and structural barriers
- consider if the definition attributes causal power and unintentionally limits us, ie quality of life and the link between economic and social lack and full and meaningful participation
- use the term "Edmontonians" at start and tighten up the wording
- may define other terms eg quality of Life and community for clarity

Next Steps/Decision

- This working definition, once approved by the Task Force in July, will ground our work.
- The revised definition presented is close but requires further fine tuning and context articulation to be sent out in the next meeting package in early July.
- Our definition will evolve and get more precise as the work advances.

3. Framework for Action

Mayor Iveson introduced the need for a framework as a foundational element in the Task Force work to shape and guide our efforts to end poverty.

Pieter de Vos, a representative of the Information and Research Round Table, put forward the Framework recommended by the IRRT for consideration by the Task Force, as articulated in the 2013 document "Unleashing our Potential" (pages 5-6) developed by the previous Steering Committee.

He demonstrated how this Framework aligns with the approaches other cities have used, will avoid reinventing the wheel and offers a sound framework for action to end poverty. He also presented an overview of the importance of frameworks and some key elements and success factors found in frameworks elsewhere as follows:

- A framework will help us create meaningful connections around poverty and provide guiding criteria for our work.
- There are no silver bullets but research into other cities on poverty suggests that collaborative, cross silo efforts, attacking the deep drivers or root causes of poverty and looking for quick wins at the same time, are some successful strategies.
- Keys to success also include: engaging lived experience, rooting the approach locally and developing a solid and defensible theory of change.
- A framework needs to support evidence based decisions and action recommendations and solid measures.
- A strong framework will lead to identification of pillar/bundles/working groups.

Discussion

Questions and discussion followed. Some key points raised include:

- The recommended 2013 framework (pages 5-6) clearly outlines key pieces of Theory of Change, including a vision, driving goals and key strategies, as well as principles.
- Our framework has to make a compelling argument for change, be evidence based and help us measure success. We have to organize our logic and ensure it works for Edmonton. We need our own distinctly Edmonton organizing framework and theory of change to help us address this complex issue of poverty.
- If we are seeking a radical change, we need to build a framework that will take us there.
- Discussion on the framework led into thoughts about the focal areas for action, but it was

identified that we need to articulate our assumptions and/or principles first up and make our case. Only then can we deep dive into tactics and pillars that make sense and will take us to our goal of ending poverty.

- The language we use in our framework will shape our work and how we communicate our approach is critical. We need to express this in our own language that captures the social transformation and shift we intend to effect.
- We can look at New Brunswick and its Social and Economic Inclusion Plan, which frames their approach using different language around inclusion and shared prosperity.
- We need address long term systemic change and advocacy for radical change, as well as short term actions and practical tools to build support and engage others in seeing progress to the vision.

Next Steps/Decision

- The recommended framework (pages 5-6 Unleashing our Potential) offers a solid place to start Build on the recommended Framework (Unleashing, 2013, pp 5-7) and incorporate some of the above discussion points in a revised summary document of the recommended Framework to be finalized at the July meeting.
- Some elements that need to be addressed in a revised framework include:
 - Our assumptions about poverty and poverty elimination
 - Our language and choice of words in this framework will shape and frame our approach
 - Engagement of those living in poverty and other Edmontonians, including the business sector
- Task Force members will be asked to submit what they see as assumptions and principles as “homework” in late June, to be collated by our Project Team to kick start the next meeting.
- At the next Task Force meeting, the Task Force will test these collated assumptions and/or principles, refine them and identify any missing assumptions.
- Pulling together these pieces in July will complete our full framework. These elements will identify emerging, effective pillars or buckets around which Task Force Working Groups will be formed this summer.

4.Focal/Priority Areas

Discussion deferred to the July Task Force meeting.

5.Project Plan

The Task Force Project Plan was shared for information. It provides a detailed overview of project scope, process, roles and timelines. It is anticipated that it will be a good starting point and evolve over time.

Discussion

- A question about municipal levers, what role and levers the municipality has, the roles of other orders of government related to poverty elimination. (Will be addressed at the September meeting and Lora P of the Province offered support to help identify these jurisdictional roles.)
- To produce a bold plan we should not limit ourselves by current status quo, boundaries and limitations. Although the municipality and community partners can’t unilaterally generate solutions, they can advocate effectively for change.
- To move the needle on poverty and shift attitudes, it is crucial to engage, inform and build awareness among Edmontonians in order to build their support for our plan.
- This is a broad community strategy and collective effort that identifies solutions that can be spearheaded by many partners, sectors, individuals and players, including the City of Edmonton.
- Our Plan to end poverty and build social and economic inclusion must be rooted in the unique assets , stories and challenges of Edmonton.

6.Announcements

Several Task Force members offered updates on key pieces of work:

Justin Archer- Communications Committee

- The Communications Committee met for the first time June 12 and its focus is how we frame our work and use compelling language when we talk about our work to end poverty.
- The goal of communication is two fold: to build awareness of poverty and build support for the elements of the Task Force poverty elimination plan.
- Clr B. Henderson recommended a new Canada Council on Social Development paper on telling the story about poverty. (link to be sent out)
- The committee is open to suggestions from other members and will be preparing key messages and elevator speeches for use.

Sandra Huculak- Engagement

- Is forming an Engagement Committee to spear head public involvement, particularly with the business sector. Contact Sandra if you are interested.
- Communications and Engagement Committees need to work hand in hand. To engage, we will need key messages and language to frame our questions and our approach.
- We need a strategic, coordinated public involvement plan, especially as the Working Groups get up and running, seeking community input and ideas to form their recommendations in the fall.
- Engaging the business sector is critical.
- We also need to engage Edmontonians more broadly if we are working on social transformation and changing hearts and minds and systems. If we are about thinking in new ways, the way we communicate must reflect new approaches.
- We need to engage early and at key points to make the circle bigger and build support among many Edmontonians.
- Carman referenced a TED talk by Paul Kershaw on Generation Squeeze (link to be sent out) as a good example of new ways of thinking and finding solutions.

Jeff Bisanz: Offer- Quality of Life Commission

- Jeff and Maria Mayan have met with the Quality of Life Commission, who authored studies on poverty in Edmonton.
- They can support the Task Force by providing a social validation process, convening a number of families living in poverty to offer insight, ideas and feedback to the Task Force as its recommendations take shape.

Cheryl Whiskeyjack: Aboriginal Round Table

- The ART met June 2nd and are shifting their meetings so they fall before Task Force meetings.
- ART representative, Rachelle Venne, took part in the sub committee work on revising the definition this month.
- ART is looking at summer opportunities to meet with Aboriginal Edmontonians and is discussing use of focus groups, storytelling, social media and engaging Aboriginal youth.
- Looking at ways to engage the Aboriginal population
- Issued an invitation to fill two vacant positions

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 17 from 4:00 - 6:30 pm

Location: To be determined

This will be a joint meeting of the Task Force, the two Round Tables and sub committees.