

Diversity Committee Meeting Notes

4/26/21

Present: Jon, Britania, Brooks, Brandelyn, Iana, Tom, Thom, Mary, Ayisha, Mark P, Diane, Palmer, Melissa, Emma, Lucy, Crystalyn (7:45 arrival)

Draft Agenda

1. Introductions

2. Agree on facilitator and note-taker

- Britania notes, Brooks back up
- Jon facilitator

3. Agenda review, priorities, and objective for today's meeting

4. Approve march meeting notes

- Approve via email

5. Old Business: DEI Fundraising update

- Crystalyn: Did FB push for fundraising recently. Was unable to get update on donations. Merchandise update: \$930

6. Old Business: Diversity Census

- Britania thinks the survey could be run by the consultants, even though it's not part of the contract since it's so short.
- Jon: we should send to consultants and also make sure that there's space between our census and that of other groups
- Diane: haven't reached consensus on the survey.
- Britania: should I contact someone else on survey crew? We haven't heard back.
- Diane didn't realize it had been sent. She has been in contact with survey crew since the beginning. She emphasizes that we have barely discussed the religion question.
- Britania made clear to the survey committee that the draft that was sent could be changed.
- Jon doesn't think the consultants will charge us more since they asked to see it.
- The group agreed that we will send it to the consultants for feedback before engaging further with the survey crew.

7. Old Business: CEDAR feedback

- Jon: one avenue for ongoing interaction with cedar is through FairCARE and grievance procedure
- Britania: has been in contact with Chip. He sent an email to Crystalyn with a final verdict on the restorative justice process with the member, stating it had failed. The communication that was sent to Crystalyn from Chip regarding this issue was not intended for the Diversity Committee and would have been phrased differently if he would have known that we would see it. It became clear that further conversations are needed between the Diversity Committee and CeDaR, especially if CeDaR is going to be the primary place issues around race and marginalization will be addressed. DC has been invited to CeDaR meetings and invited Chip to DC meetings. Chip has done a lot of work around DEI and is a good ally for representing DEI lens within CeDaR/mediations, but more representation and training is important.

8. Old Business: FairCARE and Grievance procedures revisions

- Britania: There have been some email delay between Lily and Jon. They haven't found a time yet, but that is hopefully worked out soon. She has created a feedback document and the link is in the chat

- Brooks: 17 pages long. It's cumbersome. People might rather leave than engage with this process. This doesn't address issue of "my wristband got cut off because I'm black", "someone's being transphobic". There's no way to immediately address stuff that happens during event
- Emma: why grievance filer may not want to file. Indicates that the aggrieved may not have been well informed by org. No room to account for aggrieved being re traumatized by grievance process
- Jon: grievance process not intended to deal with everything. Operations can make decision immediately especially if occurs during event. Lack of clarity around when GP (grievance procedure) is most appropriate way to deal with something vs immediate response from management. Bureaucratic, lengthy, inaccessible. What are the aggrieved's options? Reporting directly to Fair management.
 - Brooks: Crystalyn has said only one instance has made it to her about racial violence. This indicates fear of reporting/retaliation
 - Jon: points out need for looking at operations procedures used in this regard. Group of advocates that can help harmed party navigate existing process. How can we make this process work so people will report and ensure action taken when they do?
- Iana: there isn't initial statement against hate, anti-racism, sexual assault. We need basic hate-free zone statement. We need to state what we don't tolerate and how we'll protect/support people if they get harmed. Intro feels woo woo and privileged. Agrees with case worker/advocate position who will do ridiculous grievance steps, so people don't fall through cracks
- Emma: feels like disability process. Like complicatedness of process is discouragement to go through with it. Would like to attend meeting with FairCARE
- Mary: GP not appropriate for what we deal with. Need to deal with things more immediately, not give people so many opportunities to wiggle out of consequences.
- Thom: It is a non-confrontational approach that in many cases defeats the purpose.
- Jon: engage with Crystalyn and BUMs about real time response, advocates, making GP accessible
- Britania: This stuff can take time. There are ways this can be made too long and cause more harm (like the member issue), but there are times lengthening the process is necessary. Sometimes there are many layers of complicated nuances and we need to take a trauma informed response. Gave all sorts of examples.
- Brooks: former member issue isn't resolved. Ayisha and the member don't feel resolved.
 - Noted that this was not part of grievance procedure

9. Old Business: Virtual Fair

- Brooks: 19-20 hours of content set up. Will be woven into main stream, may not be its own stream. Repeats, newbies, music, dance, poems. Won't have to go through regular screening process. Most artists paid unless doing something they'd normally do at Fair, e.g. Rainbow Village open house. Looking at duplicating content in places. There's a Slack channel

10. Old Business: FFN article to update on DEI work

- Mary started on history of DC starting with diversity task force. First issue was about pole. Consultant survey should play prominent role in our history but don't think will get to it chronologically. Perhaps separate article about survey?

- Brooks: Consultant survey extended to 5/15. Will FFN come out before this? Would be good to include background on survey. Address feedback about there being no option for middle ground e.g. “idk”, “I don’t see it”, etc. Good to have monthly DC FFN piece
- Crystalyn: will reach out to Stevie Prozanski at office who might be interested in ghost writing for a monthly DC column
- Jon: consultants’ recommendations will be out and a board work session in September. Something in FFN around recommendations in July/August would be good
 - There may not be FFN in July
- Jon: article for public about DEI work that Fair has been doing during Covid would be good. How can we ask for help with this work? What message would we want Fair to be sending to general public about what we’ve been doing and how can we leverage that message in moving things further along?
- Crystalyn: I approve everything in Peach Pit, doesn't need to be run by board
- Jon: run by Liz. Her job is outer facing public relations for OCF. Let board liaison know that it's coming together and he can tell board.

11. Old Business: Next joint meeting with Board

- Britania: was Jon or someone looking into a time we could meet with the board next?
- Jon: I did not get to that action item. He thinks we should bring Sam into this discussion.
- Brooks: spirit/lily mentioned board working assembly coming up 9/20. Talk about this at next meeting.

12. New Business: Asian American statement

- Melissa: we should reach out to Asian folks within Fair
- Britania is curious if we could offer payment for an Asian led organization to review the statement.
- Emma: agrees with reaching out to Asian Celebration and other org and offer payment/seat at the table. Board should pay for it but don’t think they will. Emma has Asian friends but they have said they don’t want to be tokenized so has been hesitant to reach out
- Jon: we need to discuss procedure for allocating DEI funds

13. New Business: Allocation and approval process for DEI funds

- Jon: Liz consulted with Hilary about using DEI funds to pay for upcoming NAO workshop. Interim ED can request and approve use of our funds. Need to have agreement with Liz on this process. Long term, things for next year need to be in budget process this Fall. Not an issue for small things but larger expenditures will require going through that budget process. Should be flexibility so that once consultants make recommendations, funds could be dipped into without going through whole budget process. What amount are we thinking for Asian input? 200?
- Iana: what about stir fry consulting? Do they have a booth at Fair? No

14. New Business: Resistance to DEI Consultants’ survey

- Coordinators did not want to forward because they questioned confidentiality and worried that survey was intended to root out wrongdoers. Felt it was structured to force you into giving an answer of agree or disagree without option for I don’t know.
- Brooks: survey is microcosm of how individually managed crews are and how different cultures are between crews. Fair could have done better job explaining it perhaps? Has never seen this kind of response of criticism that consultants don’t know what they’re doing and worries about confidentiality. It wasn’t confidentiality or methodology but was actually about control and stifling marginalized voices.

- Thom: survey would be very simple if you haven't done anything about diversity at Fair. That simpleness shows people how big of a problem we have and they don't want to accept/look at that. Refusing to put themselves in the picture or even have the conversation
- Emma: coordinator and has never been asked to distribute survey to crew. Coordinator before me started out practice of sending out survey for feedback from crew about crew in general and scheduling
- Melissa: agrees with power and control point. Has to do with decentralized authority structure. Survey structure was intentional. Criticism was good info. Ramifications on larger census. Not sure what to do about that. Same resistance will come up from that. Hard to answer survey when you can't go on to next question without saying something. Depends on crew and their culture.
- Tom G.: difficult to retroactively apply DEI. Hard for people to not get defensive or take refinements as criticism. We need to keep going with open hearts/minds. Any new initiative at Fair needs to include DEI from the start. Has seen this as city employee for 25 years. Maybe initiatives need to be packaged differently to protect from peoples' defensiveness
- Mark: recognizes that consultants are pros. What is their experience with making surveys and did they consult with survey crew?
 - Ayisha: yes, they have background in this.
- Ayisha: why are we questioning people who have been hired to do this stuff. DC is very happy with consultants. Three of them are FF. In professional realm, surveys are part of DEI work. Where is questioning of legitimacy coming from? At some point we have to trust what consultants and DC are doing. Says a lot more when those questions are pushed back on and not answered
- Emma: pushback from some members but not most. Coords that pushed back: comes from place of not understanding what was being asked of them. Not wanting to disseminate info that could change their position at Fair. Coords not sending may not be racist but they may be scared/confused about formal process and may not want to "subject" their crew to that.
- Iana: it's white fragility, not wanting to be labeled racist, don't want to say the wrong thing. Not getting why it's important. Don't want to be witch hunted. More about not being called racist than ending racism
- Brandelyn: serious requests less common, formal structures are not new but surveys or direct requests from outside source is new. Historically people respond strongly to this, not understanding that it's a simple dialogue. Probably fear involved
- Jon: more hurt than angry. Don't see Fair becoming more inclusive until we address how people get on crews, how we disseminate that info. Many say we just need to educate people. Need to find balance between education for purpose of people not feeling threatened vs. education for lasting change for future years. Slow change at Fair is obstacle. No longer see glass as half full. We have long way to go. Someone needs to let people know that coordinators are not supposed to have gatekeeper role and crew members have their autonomy. Coords are not parents and crew members, kids.
- Emma: understands where Jon is coming from. Has seen co coordinators treat crew members like kids. Board needs to have strong, loud stance on being anti-racist, zero tolerance on prejudicial treatment of marginalized people. Someone has to be willing to remove people who gate keep unfairly. Can't change every little system, BOD needs to have unified stance.

- Brandelyn: was not aware of language in the past. Doing this work is empowering. Maybe people who aren't aware don't see that what they're doing is harmful. Education is important, learning the language, in order to move forward as a culture. Need to unify crews and have trainings
- Ayisha: trying to work within system that is in continual gas lighting cycle-this is parallel to BIPOC experience. Clear, concise consequence to the movement we're working against. We're in the crux of either changing or going back to what we've been doing. This says where we really are, what harm and trauma really look like. Pillars of OCF have to decide where they're going and we have to decide what that means.

15. Review next steps

- Talk about 9/20 working assembly at next meeting
- Approve/ask for edits on march notes via email
- Mary will submit DC history for FFN
- Britania Asian input on statement
- Jon: Next dc/board meeting-need Sam's assistance
- Britania email Liz about Asian budget item
- Crystalyn: Suzy Prozanski
- Crystalyn: peach pit deadline
- Emma, Brooks, Britania, Suzy (?): figure out what to say in Peach Pit, then contact Liz
- Crystalyn: update on donations
- Melissa and Jon: formal structure of OCF send to consultants along with original recommendations (6/26) and other recommendations
- Jon: send 6/26 recommendations to committee
- Jon: draft committee email to hiring committee about Brooks (Jon draft, someone else send)
- Britania: send email that Jon drafts to hiring committee, page 2, and brooks

16. Next meeting

- Five Mondays next month, still scheduled to meet fourth Monday

17. Meeting evaluation

- We like Emma's stack watching

The committee went closed session:

18. Debrief about consultant training Sunday

19. Recommendations/Fair structure info for consultants

20. Debrief on exit of individual from last meeting

21. ED hire process and possible adjustments to committee procedures/composition