

Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting of the Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program

Date: 3/31/2021
Minutes prepared by: Marcia Nieman
Location: Due to Executive Order 20-20, the Coastal Council met via [Microsoft TEAMS](#).
Approved: June 21, 2021

Attendance

- Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Members: Bill Majewski, Barb Liukkonen, Sharon Erickson Ropes, Jim Ericson, Matthew Brown, Ellen O'Neill, Don Schreiner, and Peder Otterson.
- Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program Staff: Amber Westerbur, Clinton Little, Cynthia Poyhonen, Julie McDonnell, Melanie Perello, and Marcia Nieman.
- Guest Speaker: Rowzat Shipchandler, DNR Diversity Coordinator

Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to look at how to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into the Coastal Program's grant making.

- Define diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Explain the Coastal Program's state and federal requirements related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Review the grant process.
- Explained where resources have gone in the past.
- Explore who we want to be serving and how we might incorporate them into our grant process.

Decisions Made

- MOTION by Otterson to accept the March 31, 2021, agenda, Seconded by O'Neill. AFFIRMATIVE All. MOTION ADOPTED.
- Adjourned at 12:00 pm

Agenda

- Opening
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Introduction
- Discussion

- Closing

Meeting Notes

Opening

- Majewski called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Majewski conducted a roll call of members. The agenda was voted on and approved (roll call).
- Westerbur provided a brief welcome.
- Perello reviewed housekeeping items.
- Westerbur set-up introductions and asked, “What is one thing you hope to accomplish or learn during today’s meeting?”
- Attendees introduced themselves and answered the check-in question.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Introduction

Westerbur introduced Rowzat Shipchandler, MN DNR Diversity Coordinator. Shipchandler set the stage for discussion and explained the DNR’s definitions for diversity, equity and inclusion. They are:

- **Diversity** — Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, life experience, ideas, knowledge and learning styles.
- **Inclusion** — The act of creating environments in which any individual or group is and feels welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully and authentically participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and encourages all people to demonstrate respect in their words, actions and thoughts.
- **Equity** — Achieving successful systems and structures that offer fair treatment for all, ensuring access, opportunity, advancement and full participation by individuals and groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically under-served and underrepresented populations and requires that these inequities be addressed.

A copy of Shipchandler’s PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Discussion

Following Shipchandler’s presentation, the council explored ideas presented in [Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide](#). Key ideas that stood out among members included:

- Remember that pursuing a positive vision is more difficult than solving a narrow problem.
- Find a focus; identify the people we want to impact, determine how we want to make an impact, and describe the impact we want to have.
- Develop explicit shared and tested language.
- Set goals and follow through.

- Address resistance.
- Do not run away from conflict.
- Demonstrate this (racial justice) is part of our (Coastal Program) mission by showing examples, naming scenarios and explaining how this meets our goals.
- Look to your leaders to set the tone.
- Bring together your potential groups, not just the people who are currently getting grants.
- Deepen our relationships; make connections.
- Consider ways we can reach people we do not have a connection with or are not in our network.
- Think about using intermediaries.
- Look at our underlying assumptions.
- Emphasize that racial justice focus may change the foundations of our grant making process.
- Remember it is not possible to get to racial justice without changing power dynamics; power dynamics drive social inequality.
- Consider who has the power to define solutions on issues important to us (e.g., water).
- Consider how we can ease the burden on applicants to meet diversity requirements.
- Remember a racial justice ecosystem exists; everything is interrelated and interdisciplinary.
- Need deep analysis/ review amongst groups and institutions on how to change layers of laws and regulations and cultural and political actions to improve racial equity.
- Move away from issues and move towards strategies.
- Clarify value; determine what motivates the people involved.
- Become more aware of the organizations out there now that are applying for (Coastal Program) grants; recognize they could be racially diverse and we do not know about it.
- Build a collaborative environment; work together.

The later portion of the special meeting focused on identifying possible actions.

Closing

In closing thoughts, members were asked what they took away from the meeting, or share in “one-word” how they were feeling at the end of the meeting/conversation, or a “note to self.” Some of the comments were:

- Encouraged
- Want to be more actively engaged
- Start and end with inclusivity – we are all in this together
- Courage – thankful for the courage to work on this
- Encouraging and important – how can we get this into the Coastal Program and it has to be done everywhere
- This is only the beginning – sorting out the basic things will be interesting going forward – needs to be commonly supported among the council.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm

Regular Meeting Reminder

Westerbur reminded the members in attendance of the regular meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021, at 1:00 pm.