

TOPICS AND PRESENTERS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

ALLIANCE OF ALLIANCES; MARCUS OWENS

RACIAL JUSTICE MAYORS PANEL: CONVERSATIONS ON RACE, RACISM, & EQUITY

Mayor Doug Anderson welcomed everyone to the May 10, 2021 RCM meeting.

New Brighton Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas and Blaine Mayor Tim Sanders both plan to join the RCM.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- June 14, 2021 11:30-1:30PM - In-person outdoor social at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center, Savage, MN.
 - We will follow COVID protocols in place at the time. Lunch will be provided and your RSVP is very much appreciated.
- July 12, 2021 11:30-1:30PM, via zoom – Annual RCM discussion with school superintendents.
 - Mayors please extend an invite your school superintendents and school board chairs.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

LINK TO INFO SHEET

Mayor Anderson reported that May is Mental Health Awareness Month

He has provided an info sheet to support action items. He walked through this document during the meeting.

ALLIANCE OF ALLIANCES; MARCUS OWENS

LINK TO PRESENTATION

LINK TO WEBSITE

LINK TO STAR TRIBUNE ARTICLE

PODCAST: [Black Leadership Re-defined](#), March 26, 2021 episode overviewed how the Alliance of Alliances was formed.

Marcus Owens, Executive Director
African American Leadership Forum
marcus@aalfc.org

Mayor Doug Anderson welcomed Marcus Owens, Executive Director of the African American Leadership Forum (AALF)

What we have learned as we formed the Alliance of Alliances:

- Many Efforts – Lack of Connectivity: A lot of worthy efforts were underway; knowing who is doing what would help facilitate collaboration.
- Centering the Black Community: We need a shared vision to gain and maintain alignment - an aspiration we all can work toward achieving.

- Co-Created Solutions: A set of guiding principles would help hold all of us accountable to an inclusive process and to collaborating fully with Black leaders in our region.

Our Vision:

By 2030, we want our region to be a place...

- Of shared prosperity, with economic and social inclusion for all.
- Where everyone has access to employment, healthcare, nutritious food, quality housing, and a world class education.
- Where everyone feels safe, physically and psychologically.
- Where long term thinking is embraced, because we know this will make a positive difference for future generations.
- That everyone is proud to call home.

How we will get there:

To build this future, we will need to think transformationally; listen, learn and adapt; and choose action over perfection. Collaboration will be key.

Work to be done:

To support an effort to develop a broad coalition that is black led and fully committed to co-creating and implementing solutions that will create racial equality in Minnesota.

1. Public Safety
2. Shared Responsibility
3. Infrastructure
4. Employment
5. Education
6. Healthcare
7. Housing
8. Advocacy

Black Led and Centered Co-Created Solutions:

We have committed to establish an alliance of alliances, with the African American Leadership Forum (AALF) as its backbone, that will:

- Leverage a Black Centered Design approach to identify policy and programmatic solutions.
- Be supported with a governance strategy and operating plan that will establish measurable goals over a multi-year time horizon.
- Enable a broad coalition of partners to contribute to action plans, provide capabilities and resources, and ensure sustainable change over the next decade

We Center Black People in 4 Ways:

1. Gather Insights - Gather insights through Listening Sessions, Storytelling, and Data Collection
2. Reflect - Reflect on insights through themes: Creating Problem Statements
3. Innovate - Innovate by bringing together the Community's Solution Makers
4. Implement - Implement Solutions by Investing into Solution makers through Workstreams

The next 90 days of effort will focus on the different roles this will take.

The organization hopes to be able to reach back out to the RCM soon.

RACIAL JUSTICE MAYORS PANEL: CONVERSATION ON RACE, RACISM, & EQUITY

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Mayor Shep Harris, Golden Valley: Moderator
Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez, Richfield: Panelist
Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula, Columbia Heights: Panelist
Mayor Jake Spano, St. Louis Park: Panelist

Mayor Shep Harris moderated the panel and set the stage by noting the goals of this Mayors Racial Justice Work Group: Education and creating a safe space for vulnerable conversation.

Shep led the Mayors through a “check your privilege” exercise.

One takeaway: We are a very diverse group of communities and our communities are at different places in this work.

Highlights from the panel discussion:

- There is likely pent-up energy in our communities surrounding DEI efforts, but how do we make sure the efforts are not centered around white people.
- As we dive into this work – concerns will be raised and things will be pointed out. Get accustomed to feeling unconfutable.
- Pushback vs Microaggressions:
 - Pushback examples- “Not that way we do it around here” “More work than it is worth.”
 - Microaggression examples – “You don’t understand” “What’s the big difference for *those* people”, “You are just being sensitive”...
 - Think about our staff – are they using microaggressions in their work with the community? Language barrier is often an area for this to occur.
- DEI work needs to be transformational and is also slow. It is not about making moves to get quick wins.
 - Speed is the tool of white supremacy. We are going to want to move fast because it gives us comfort in making quick progress. Instead, the work should be slow and go deep, to really dig into the issues.
- As a leader there is a need to consistently communicate and be very clear about who you are, your values, and how you are leading.
- As a Mayor – what you talk about instantly becomes important. Talk about it.
- Don’t minimize concerns that are brought to you. People that are not white may be de-sensitized that their opinions don’t matter and they don’t want to get their hopes up.
- In our city’s strategic priorities, make racial equity a named priority.
- Make DEI part of our city job descriptions, make bonuses dependent on it.
- Does your city have a race equity staff position? Does this person have a budget?
- Does your city have a welcoming statement that is specific? The term “everyone” does not acknowledge the unique differences.
- Additionally, language translation and closed captioning are both an opportunity to further enrich our perspectives.
- Consider where our cities host public meetings – is it being held in the community where the project is taking place?
- Be selective with what is a special assessment because it can become a tool of racial inequity.

Closing Comments:

Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez:

- Align to community values
- Seek the greatest good for the community
- Work along with others
- Don't be a 'fixer'
- Listen, truly hear and acknowledge a person (active listening)

Mayor Jake Spano:

On leadership:

- Get to be ok with being uncomfortable - you're going to make mistakes and that's ok.
- Talk about this issue because when the mayor says something, by definition it's important.
- Don't minimize/explain away the concerns brought to u by BIPOC folks. so often, BIPOC folks won't even bother to raise these issues because they're convinced they won't be taken seriously (this might be the thing I emphasize the most is the historic legacy of neglect that makes BIPOC folks not even believe change is possible).

On organizational:

- Make race a strategic priority for your city so all your work and policies are viewed through that lens.
- Make progress on race part of people's job description, especially managers) so their reviews, pay, bonus, etc. is tied to it.
- Create a staff position to work on your DEI issues including a budget and staff. Do not bury them... make sure they report to the city manager.

ATTENDANCE

MAYORS

James Hovland	City of Edina (co-chair)
Doug Anderson	City of Lakeville (co-chair)
Tracy Bertram	City of Becker
Kirt Briggs	City of Prior Lake
Anne Burt	City of Woodbury
Tim Busse	City of Bloomington
Shep Harris	City of Golden Valley
Kathi Hemken	City of New Hope
Joshua Hoyt	City of Farmington
Marvin Johnson	City of Independence
Elizabeth Kautz	City of Burnsville
John Keis	City of Little Canada
Chris Lund	City of Hamburg
Julie Maas-Kusske	City of Maple Plain
Mike Maguire	City of Eagan
Amáda Márquez Simula	City of Columbia Heights
Sandra Martin	City of Shoreview
Deb McMillan	City of Victoria
Rhonda Pownell	City of Northfield
Jake Spano	City of St. Louis Park
Randy Stille	City of St. Anthony Village
Janet Williams	City of Savage
Brad Wiersum	City of Minnetonka
Jeff Wosje	City of Plymouth

GUESTS

Marcus Owens, African American Leadership Forum

Bob Butterbrodt, Wells Fargo Bank; Molly Cummings, Metropolitan Council; Jessie Houlihan, ULI Minnesota Management Committee & Stahl Construction; Andrea Inouye, City of Minneapolis, Office of Mayor Frey; Andrea Kajer, Comcast; Curt Johnson; Patricia Nauman, Metro Cities; Dave Unmacht, LMC; Jonathan Weinhagen, Minneapolis Regional Chamber

ULI MINNESOTA

Caren Dewar, Stephanie Brown, Rachel Keenan, Cathy Bennett

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Monday, June 14 11:30-1:30PM:** - IN-PERSON, Social at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center, Savage
 - We will follow COVID protocols in place at the time. Lunch will be provided and your RSVP is very much appreciated.
- **Monday, July 12 11:30-1:30PM:** - VIRTUAL, Annual RCM discussion with school superintendents.
 - Mayors please extend an invite your school superintendents and school board chairs.