



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

MILLENNIAL TASK FORCE

CHAIR: MARQUAYLA ELLISON

Jezamil Arroyo-Vega, Nick Carnahan, Angela Damiani, Jordan Donald, Tenia Fisher, Jeremy Fojut, Adam Gabornitz, Michael Hostad, Amelia Kegel, Noel Kegel, Elizabeth McLaren, Kacee Ochalek, Jason Rae, Ger Thao, and Tiffany Henry

Staff Assistant: Chris Lee, 414-286-2232

Legislative Liaison: Alex Highley, 414-286-8661

Thursday, March 12, 2020

8:00 AM

**Milwaukee Urban League
435 W. North Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53212**

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present 12 - Fojut, Carnahan, Donald, Ellison, Fisher, Gabornitz, Kegel, Kegel, McLaren, Ochalek, Thao and Henry

Absent 1 - Damiani

Excused 3 - Rae, Arroyo-Vega and Hostead

Also present:

Alex Highley, Legislative Reference Bureau

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes from February 28, 2020 were approved without objection.

4. Introduction of new members.

Attending their first meeting, the following members made brief introductions as follows:

Ger Thao is from the Wisconsin Hmong Chamber of Commerce and has lived in the City since 2010 after coming there to attend college.

Elizabeth McLaren is from Bridge the City Podcast, does marketing work, and has resided in the City since coming there to complete her graduate teaching program.

Amelia and Noel Kegel both grew up in the suburbs, moved away for college, and came back to the City to run their family business, Wheel & Sprocket, in the City.

Tiffany Henry is the President of Milwaukee Urban League Young Professionals.

5. Review of the report "Recommendations on Reducing Human Capital Flight (Brain Drain) from Milwaukee and its City Government".

Members discussed the following takeaways from the report and additional insights:

Apprenticeship in the trades is an equally valuable pathway and opportunity for young professionals, results in similar average wages in Wisconsin compared to those professions resulting from college degrees, should be more heavily promoted to attract young professionals and educate them, comes with the benefit of on-the-job paid training, is overlooked, is misunderstood, has the stigma of not being as valuable as traditional higher education pathways, should have its level of prestige risen, should have its narrative rewritten, needs to appear more attractive, has changed, has evolved, should be formalized in schools both in higher education and high schools, and should be more advertised concerning its benefits. Although apprenticeship should be a focus, the conversation should be holistic, diverse, and inclusive of other sectors, pathways, and talent pools.

College graduates with degrees tend to leave or want to leave the City as opposed to those in the trades due to challenges finding early thriving job opportunities, which they desire. Young people are trained to go to college as the best route, and they lack awareness on apprenticeship as a pathway.

There is tremendous opportunity and growth in the technology sector, which is the new trade.

Milwaukee is a ripe and friendly city for entrepreneurship, startups, and young professionals. The City is both big and small enough for entrepreneurs to feasibly test their businesses and for young professionals to progress to the top. There should be more assistance and incentives given to small startups as opposed to resources being given to big companies or startups. Startups are challenging and take time to be successful.

Schools, both higher education and high schools, need better formalized instruction or programs to educate and expose students on pathways.

Retention of talent is important, but equally important is attracting talent to the City.

Companies need to brand better, attract better, and improve their identities. Long mainstay companies no longer seem to be in touch with and are attractive to younger generations. Historic companies should play a role with assisting startups.

Pathways and talent pool pipelines need to lead somewhere better. Internships need to better lead to opportunities rather than simply end for students.

Milwaukee needs an identity, one that is based on authentic pride and making a difference. The City should be a destination of inspiration.

6. Presentation of additional or ancillary reports, data, information, or insight.

Members reviewed lists of organizations and individuals who are doing great initiatives in the region and who may be invited to dialogue with the task force.

Members identified inviting or adding to the lists the following organizations, individuals, or information:

- *Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce; local study on retaining diverse workforce talent*
- *Randy Crump, Prism Technical; insight on apprenticeships, pipeline in high schools and the trades*
- *Greater Together; research report on racial workforce equity, summer internships in the arts*
- *Bridge the City Podcast*
- *Milwaukee Urban League; exposing people to the industries, employers, and professionals*
- *Social X; getting young professionals in front of students*
- *Surveying different college classes*
- *Youth Council*
- *Dept. of City Development Rocky Marcoux; insight on Milwaukee's narrative*
- *Kathy Henrich, Tech Hub Coalition; attracting and retaining tech talent in the region*
- *Adam Carr, Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service; insight on Milwaukee's narrative*
- *Antonio Riley, African American Leadership Alliance Milwaukee (AALAM)*
- *Genyne Edwards, P3 Development Group*
- *JoAnne Johnson-Sabir and Juli Kaufmann, Sherman Phoenix*
- *VISIT Milwaukee*
- *UW Extension report on migration patterns*

Members discussed inviting or connecting with these organizations or individuals prior to or for the next meeting:

Milwaukee Youth Council

JoAnne Johnson-Sabir and Juli Kaufmann, Sherman Phoenix

Kathy Henrich, Tech Hub Coalition

Randy Crump, Prism Technical

Members directed sending a contingent of members to the next Youth Council meeting to obtain and report back to the task force insight from the Youth Council. Members Ochalek, Fojut, and Henry expressed interest in going.

7. Assessment of the major reasons why Millennials and Generation Z leave or stay in Milwaukee, including after college graduation.

Members made the following assessment as to why Millennials and Generation Z leave Milwaukee:

There are City preconditions that negatively impact the quality of life for people such as poverty, poor educational systems, segregation, poor cultural scenes, poor infrastructures, and crime (poor public safety). These preconditions contribute to a regional brain drain to the suburbs. The City needs to better address these preconditions and to install better mechanisms to solve its issues.

Segregation is a unique negative precondition for the City. The City highlights and caters to only a handful of neighborhoods but not the City as a whole. Downtown and the East Side are normally the areas that are promoted. Folks seem to be engaged

within their own particular communities but not the City as a whole. Non-traditional areas need to be highlighted. Milwaukee seems to be a tale of two cities.

Milwaukee seems to lack a cohesive positive identity. Outsiders and residents may differ in their perspective of the City. Oftentimes, the narrative is negative in particular to the preconditions and for persons of color. The disparity and identification between the many communities within the City contribute to the lack of a cohesive identity.

Pushback from the government towards community and grassroots ideas, innovation, or initiatives is a turnoff issue. The City's objection to adopting the organic "People's Flag" for the City despite acceptance of the flag at the community level is an example.

Pipelines and internships oftentimes lead to nowhere.

Young talent may not be getting the proper exposure to the industries and professional fields that they are interested in.

There is high turnover for frontline jobs. Frontline jobs are not invested positions. They oftentimes lack adequate support and training.

The different college grades may not all share the same perspectives and each class may differ on their intention to stay or leave the City upon graduation.

Members made the following assessment as to why Millennials and Generation Z stay Milwaukee:

Milwaukee is an ideal urban city, perfect in size, for young professionals and small or new startups to try out their ventures, test their operations, and seize quick pathways to progress upwards in their careers. The City is big enough for people and businesses to market themselves and make an impact. The City is small enough to minimize risks and to allow better access to opportunities as opposed to bigger, crowded cities like Chicago where risks are greater and opportunities come challenging.

8. Discussion, identification, or analysis of existing or new programs, policies, or initiatives, including peer models, designed to attract and retain talented, young individuals.

Members and staff made the following analysis:

Branding campaigns do not work effectively in general. Oftentimes, they are misdirected or inadequately funded to make an impact. An failed example is a \$7 to \$8 million marketing campaign to Chicago from the State of Wisconsin concerning the CTA lines. Real change to people's perspectives is done through authentic cultural experience. There is still some value with branding. A cohesive identity for the City is key to branding. \$50 million is needed to effectively target a market.

Madison is a city that is growing without having any initiatives. The university there is integrated into the urban fabric there and plays an important role to that city. However, there is, too, a loss of people there.

There needs to be a change in the narrative for the City, one that everyone can positively identify with. The City does not do a good job telling its story. The task force and the Common Council can perhaps direct VISIT Milwaukee and other organizations on how to promote the City, and perhaps some kind of incentive or benefit can be given to these organizations for doing so. The narrative change for the

City should be a bottom to top approach. The Sherman Phoenix development is a good example. The City needs to get ahead of its narrative rather than behind it. Perhaps a media kit can be created for the City in time for the Democratic National Convention. The narrative for the City needs to be inclusive of all communities as a whole.

The City needs to better promote and assist all of its communities (especially nontraditional ones); small businesses and startups; and ideas, initiatives, and innovation from the community. Policymakers should create policy to support these aspects.

Talent pipelines and internships need to lead to opportunities. The City's Direct Connect MKE app, a workforce development platform, should get buy-in and be championed by everyone. The app allows for profiles and a talent pipeline to make connections. There is work to support frontline jobs and creation of a media kit regarding the app.

There needs to be better mechanisms installed in schools and the classrooms (both public and private systems) at all levels to educate and expose youths and young talent to career pathways. The focus should not be on the traditional college education pathway. Equally attention should be placed on the apprenticeship pathway. There should be a resource guide like the one done in Atlanta. Local institutions should implement, as part of the student curriculum, to teach more about Milwaukee and the resources that the city has, either as a class or particular assignment requirement.

9. Discussion on establishing a framework.

Chair Ellison said that there is consensus, at a minimum, for the task force to focus its efforts on apprenticeships; proper talent pipelines; positive identity for Milwaukee; changing the City's narrative; and government support and promotion of startups, community ideas, and all neighborhoods.

10. Public comments.

There were no public comments.

11. Agenda items for the next meeting.

To be determined. One item to be insight from the Youth Council. Any presentations made to be limited to 15 minutes.

12. Set the date, times, and location of meetings.

Next meetings tentatively set for Tuesdays, March 24th, April 7th, April 21st, and May 12th from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Default meeting location is to be at Milwaukee City Hall.

Member Carnahan moved that the task force be able to conduct its meetings, in its entirety or any portions thereof, with its members via teleconferencing. There was no objection.

13. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section
City Clerk's Office*

Meeting materials and documents related to activities of the Millennial Task Force can be found within the following file:

[191649](#)

Communication relating to findings, recommendations and activities of the Millennial Task Force.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR