

Government Transition Advisory Committee

Government Transition Advisory Committee Meeting #25
December 11, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Leah Benson	X		Zach Kearn		
Brian Belica	X		William Kinsey	X	
Jane DeMarco	X		Destiny Magaña-Pablo	X	
Jose Gamero Georgeson	X		Fred Neal	X	
Terry Harris	X		Amy Randel	X	
Lory Hefele	X		Juanita Santana		Unexcused
Juliet Hyams	X				

Staff / Guests Present
Guillermo Rebolledo Salgado, Transition Team
Julia Meier, Senior Strategic Projects Manager

Welcome & Committee Business

Julia welcomed everyone and provided Zoom logistics. She noted that co-chairs Bill Kinsey and Jose Gamero Georgeson will facilitate the meeting and added that we had Spanish interpretation, American Sign language, and closed captioning.

Bill noted that Joe Hertzberg resigned and that the vacancy won't be filled.

Motion. Motion to approve the November 13 meeting minutes.

- Motion from: Committee Member Fred
- Second: Committee Member Leah
- None opposed, meeting minutes approved.

Destiny shared a few meeting practices that the current co-chairs will implement:

Bill reviewed the working agreements.

Public Comment

Janice Thompson offered public comment. Janice highlighted two impacts of the GTAC's: it's RCV education and its provision of a vital window in the City's charter implementation work thereby enhancing transparency. Janice also cautioned against a code commission. There should first be an identification of issues and problems that would be best addressed by a code commission.

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Terry noted that the idea of a code commission is to create a content-neutral entity that would allow others to not have to spend their capacity on it. Janice isn't convinced that a code commission is the only option, and it would be a strain on the City.

Stefan Saing offered public comment. Stefan thanked the GTAC for its engagement and boosted a program that is vital to his communities – the Diversity & Civic Leadership Program under the Office of Civic Life. The program support leadership efforts in communities of color and immigrants and refugees. It is critical to ensure that this work is taken care of in the transition.

GTAC Onboarding Presentation Debrief

Jose gave an overview of the December 7 GTAC participation in the newly elected officials' onboarding session. GTAC members also sent individual emails to all newly elected officials to share the GTAC's work and offer to meet. When the council selects a President, GTAC staff will reach out to ask about scheduling a public work session.

Discussion followed:

- Fred shared his concern with Michael Jordan that the GTAC hadn't received updates on the citywide disciplines especially community engagement and communication. Michael would be pleased to talk with the GTAC about it.
- Zach asked if newly elected officials asked anything of the GTAC ongoing. Jose noted that Elana asked Bill what conflicts the GTAC might have had with the City. Bill said he would share the final report with her.
- Jose noted that the newly elected officials he spoke to were very engagement focused.
- Juliet asked if there was a sense of similar priorities within districts. Jose said there wasn't discussion of their priorities. Bill picked up on potential tensions, e.g., potential tensions with how inclusive the mayor may be and the attention the City has given to East Portland hasn't been what it has been in other areas.
- Amy said that the GTAC asked to see the onboarding manual and asked to be included and it's a frustration that the GTAC couldn't be a partner.
- Bill said the focus was on introducing the GTAC and giving reasons why the newly elected officials would want to talk with the GTAC.
- Bill shared that Juanita wants the first meeting to be the full council in a public meeting.

2025 Community Presentation & Outreach Strategy

Bill shared that the plan is to give presentations in 2025 and the GTAC received draft slides last week for feedback.

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Guillermo said the goal is to reach out to communities historically underrepresented in City decision-making and share how they can connect with the City moving forward. Guillermo will revise the presentation based on the GTAC's feedback. He also invited members to add organizations that he can outreach to on the GTAC's behalf.

- Lory shared some feedback via email.
- Fred agreed that talking with voters about RCV two-years before the next election isn't relevant and takes focus away from other issues. Community wants to know about how the new mayor and new council work.
- Destiny recommends folks reach out to community peers to ask them to reach out to their councilors to encourage them to meet with the GTAC. She also recommends talking with community members about their fears. The presentation should focus on how to empower communities. The GTAC recommendations would be removed and shared more by individual members with their own networks to spread the word.
- Bill said the slides should be tailored to what communities historically underrepresented in City decision-making need to know to feel included.
- Leah loves ongoing presentations and the movement from the theoretical to the actual. We can share who people's representatives are. She advocated for RCV staying in the presentation because it is with us and it's a part of the new form of government. It's integral to the city council. The GTAC must talk about RCV to talk about proportional representation.
- Lory thinks we should narrow the focus of the presentation. If we want to target people who are left out then we should tailor the presentation to them and how they engage. For this audience, talking about the GTAC's recommendations might not be the right audience. What can we share that will help the audience feel more engaged and more empowered.
- Jane suggested testing the presentation with a group first to find out what parts they like and what parts they don't, e.g., remove slides with charts. Focus more on who the representatives are and how you get a hold of them. Make it people focused.
- Jose agrees we don't need to go into the GTAC recommendation and agrees that we should include RCV education. He said we should ask the City how it plans to engage with these communities and then we should include that information in the presentation.
- Amy said we need information from the City – who are we handing off the relationships to, e.g., the Community Engagement Officer? How can we find that out and add it to the presentation.

Guillermo asked for additional feedback in the next week.

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Lessons Learned

Jose shared that the GTAC has received a draft of the final report. Jose asked for every member to share their lessons learned for incorporation into the final report.

- Jose recommends an Engagement Commission for the new council that workshops things council is working on because council cannot be expected to do all the engagement on their own.
- Juliet believes advisory committees are a flawed model that needs to be rethought. There is something with the culture of the City and how it treats volunteers. What are the advisory committees getting us? There is an opportunity for some analysis, research, and feedback from the volunteers. Some committees are stuck and it's a waste of resources and goodwill. Juliet said she would write up some of her ideas about how it could change.
- Jane shared that some of our advice was taken, and some wasn't. Advisory committees are a circus. The work is better, relationships improved, meetings better with skilled managers. When starting late into a project, ask more upfront questions about what knowledge or expertise we have that could help and how we will know if we've been useful. She's learned from everyone.
- Fred agrees about the need for the City to look into advisory committees. He thinks the City should look into the service area advisory committees. Doesn't think a new advisory body at this point is the right approach. He's learned a lot about the city and is optimistic about the future. He's a messenger for the transition and the new council and believes it's got to get better and it will.
- Leah likes the idea of an ongoing community engagement group. She realized through this work that she loves doing community engagement. She wants to stand up for city staff who has working hard. Ultimately, there isn't time to take everyone's recommendations into account. She advises that the City think about the difference between advisory groups and resource groups. If the GTAC came in with the mindset of how we can amplify and augment, it could have been a better experience for us and a better experience for staff.
- Amy shared having clear objective for community committees is essential, elevated Joe's line of engagement w/o follow through is propaganda. Community engagement at the City is profoundly broken and ad hoc. When you send engaged, informed volunteers into community, great things happen.
- Terry thinks the one GTAC accomplishment was transparency. Our mere existence forced City staff to come here and explain what they were doing. Staff stopped coming and giving updates. That's enough reason for advisory bodies to exist to force some of what happens in the bureaucracy out into the open and explained.

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- Jose said he is considering applying to another advisory body and the staff had heard some of the GTAC concerns and was working to not replicate some of the same problems.
- Bill said that we are constructively giving advice and that's valuable. The GTAC is a sounding board if City staff comes and talks with us. City staff do have an issue that when they communicate with us, it becomes public, so it is a tension.
- Destiny agrees with both Leah and Terry. There's a sense that only certain people get to have transparency from the City. The GTAC got to be a familiar, human face of the City which is an honor. There has to be a level of transparency and it's reaffirming to tell the City to listen to the people who are engaging.
- Juliet said she doesn't know what transparency it or how you measure it.
- Zach asked how much knowledge we would have about the transition if we weren't on this committee. Advisory committees are a way to get people more civically engaged. Our ability to engage with this material gave us the ability to translate the material to community which is powerful. We've gotten an inside peek into things you can't read in the news media which is transparent. Recognize that we spent two-hours a month together – give us a break. We have a unique connection with some organizations that the City doesn't. He found the experience fulfilling.
- Jose said he learned that he's probably going to serve again.
- Destiny said it was a great opportunity to hear from staff who share their work in such a public way. Then we can share that information with the community who will be less frustrated.

Terry shared that he hasn't give up on recommending things before the GTAC's term is up specifically advisory committees in the new government. Can we have a workgroup that can consider supplemental recommendations? Topics he's interested are a code commission, creating advisory committees at the service area level, and an ad hoc advisory committee on advisory committees.

Fred added another area he is interested in which is recommendation that the City refrain from filling non-essential vacancies, eliminating redundant work positions, and reassigning affected employees to essential positions for which they are qualified.

Jose said that the topics can change. The motion is about forming the workgroup.

Motion. Motion to create a short-term workgroup to consider additional recommendations for adoption by GTAC's full committee meeting in January, if possible, but no later than GTAC's full committee meeting in February.

- Motion from: Committee Member Terry

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- Second: Committee Member Jose

Jane – Yes; Jose – Yes; Terry – Yes; Lory – Yes; Juliet – Yes; Zach – Yes but wants to make it clear that he may a no to any or all the recommendations; Destiny – Yes; Fred – Yes; Amy – Yes; Juanita – absent; Brian – Yes; Bill – Yes; Leah – Yes and repeats what Zach said.

Julia asked folks interested in serving to put it into the chat and ideas can be solicited from all members.

Upcoming Meetings

Bill shared that the next meeting is January 14th when we will be joined by the City Election Office, County Elections Office, and the City's Voter Education Contractor to take a deep dive into the November election.

The final voter education subcommittee meeting is January 28.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Julia Meier, Transition Team

Meeting Chat:

18:17:11 From Zach Kearl to Everyone:

Thanks for your kind words, Janice. Appreciate your input

18:17:21 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Thank you Janice!

18:17:46 From Lory Hefele to Hosts and panelists:

Appreciate your feedback Janice!

18:18:07 From Jane DeMarco to Everyone:

Janice, thank you for your compliments and good ideas

18:18:08 From Amy Randel to Everyone:

Thanks for your kind sentiment about our work Janice, and your thoughtful feedback

18:18:15 From Jose Gamero Cassinelli to Everyone:

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Janice, it means a lot to hear that community valued our work. It's heartening to hear.

18:19:18 From Terry Harris to Everyone:

Thanks so much Janice. Would definitely like to talk this through with you. You're right about the details, but I'm worried that nobody's going to do the work at all...

18:19:24 From Leah Benson to Everyone:

Thank you Stefan!

18:19:48 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Thank you Stefan for joining and sharing!

18:20:20 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Link to the DCL program :) <https://www.portland.gov/civic/diversity-and-civic-leadership#:~:text=The%20DCL%20Program%20provides%20annual,for%20the%20communities%20they%20serve>.

18:34:25 From Amy Randel to Everyone:

YES! Thank you for naming this Destiny, connecting with the new community engagement leader is so important

18:35:25 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:



18:35:39 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Thanks Guillermo for this amazing work! :)

18:37:41 From Leah Benson to Everyone:

Guillermo, if helpful I'd love to volunteer to help with any RCV pieces in the presentation!

18:37:47 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

especially because we are seeing RCV impact in real time!!!

18:39:05 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

I was not a GTAC member during the early days of setting goals. Is there somewhere I can find how we determined who was typically 'left out of city council

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decision making'? I don't know anyone that really feels their voice is being heard so curious how we identified various groups

18:41:47 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

who can request a presentation after we are goneeeee

18:42:32 From Fred Neal to Everyone:

Brian's point is most poignant!

18:46:13 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

Thank you Juliet. This is my first advisory committee. I'm deeply confused as to what we delivered vs. what we were expected to deliver. And who is accountable for the gap in that...

18:46:38 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

And apologies... on child duty :)

18:50:08 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

Thank you Jane. This was great.

19:05:50 From Juliet Hyams to Everyone:

I do think that we've accomplished a lot. I would do it again too.

19:07:02 From Juliet Hyams to Everyone:

But I see other citizen groups hamstrung by the city.

19:07:29 From Amy Randel to Everyone:

Seems important for us to recognize in the lessons section that there were major challenges, XYZ, and there were major wins and legacy from having a committee doing this work

19:09:52 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

@Brian, We will invest our education and engagement resources in communities that have been

traditionally left out of City Hall and city decision-making, including Black, Indigenous,

Asian, Pacific Islander, Latinx/e, people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants and

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refugees, non-English speaking communities, people under age 25, houseless Portlanders,

people who live east of 82nd Avenue, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

19:10:07 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Link- <https://www.portland.gov/transition/documents/transition-community-engagement/download>

19:14:56 From Jose Gamero Cassinelli to Everyone:

I will join.

19:15:01 From Amy Randel to Everyone:

I'm interested

19:15:08 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

Thank you Destiny! I have seen that. I guess my question was a bit different... what data/how were those specific groups identified as 'left out of city hall decision making'. Or where did GTAC determine that those groups were the groups to invest in. Does that imply that those not in those groups are 'included in city hall decision making'?

19:15:11 From Terry Harris to Everyone:

I'm interested!!

19:15:41 From Brian Belica to Everyone:

I can send email to the group with my thoughts since we are adjuring!

19:15:59 From Destiny Magana-Pablo to Everyone:

Thanks Brian, will follow up on that question and thanks for reclarifying :)