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## Public Health and Safety Meeting #7

November 30, 2021, 6:00PM | 2 hours

*Documented by: Stephen Yoshida*

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### ATTENDEES

- Romina Castillo
- Alexander Heaton
- Sheri Cohen
- Alex Meixner
- Francine Dillard
- Todd Wyatt
- LeAnn Hibler (captioner)
- Alexandria Willis
- Victoria Barrett
- Sophie Chisty
- Kate McMahon
- Jade Flagg
- Katelyn Johnson
- Marlita White
- Jennifer Ligaya
- Wesley Eppin
- Nesha Breashears
- Stephanie Dunn
- David Mena
- Brianna Lawrence
- Kate McMahon
- Gloria Rivera



**MEETING GOAL**

*Hear presentations about artist and community partner engagements and the Pillar co-chairs’ report-out from the Advisory Council; and then apply new information from the presentations when revising the Pillar’s Guiding Questions and Objectives in small groups.*

**WHERE WE ARE**

  
 Step 1  
**We Are**  
*Setting the Stage*

  
 Step 2  
**We Have and Need**  
*Develop A Policy Toolkit*

  
 Step 3  
**We Will**  
*Set Policy Framework*

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

1

Artist-Organizer Alexandria Willis presented findings from a game she made to help illustrate inequities in the City for community members. After engaging community members through the game, he concluded that Chicagoans in all neighborhoods are making conscious choices to live there, a choice that should be honored.

2

The working document with revisions to the Advisory Committee’s proposed Guiding Questions and Objectives will remain open to revision at least until the end of the year as the research consultants work to finalize them before starting Phase 3.

3

Policing, mental health care, and any potential Chicago mental health first responders’ relationships to the police were focal point throughout the presentations in this meeting. At multiple points dire situations and points were raised about these issues that are either on-going or are somewhat recent – namely the closure of mental health facilities and the level of service at Roseland Hospital. The scale and scope of all those issues combined with those adopted by We Will Chicago’s emphasis on historical reckoning speak to the daunting task the plan is taking on.

## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“My biggest takeaway was that people are really thoughtful about what they want for their communities and want to be a part of meaningful engagement. People want to stay engaged and make sure that, as policy recommendations come out of this process, the communities are still represented and centered in the development of said policies.”*

**Katelyn Johnson** | Executive Director, Blackroots Alliance

*“There need to be community planning meetings and community groups, with not just the community but the professionals to make sure it’s well rounded. You need the planners, mental health professionals and anyone else that makes sense to be involved so everyone can have a voice and so that this can be not just something that is thrown into the wind but something concrete and sustainable.”*

**Gloria Rivera** | Artist-Organizer

*“Something that was really revealing to me that I thought was so beautiful... When given the option of anywhere you could live on this game board, people still chose Roseland, Englewood knowing what you’re up against. We all do. We’re making a conscious choice to be there so it’s important that we build up our communities and not only replace the people that are there or swap out the communities that are there. People want to be where they are. They want to be with the people they are around. We need to be supporting them.”*

**Alexandria Willis** | Artist-Organizer

*“A lot of cops come in and can’t relate to the people in the community – police should be relatable to the people they’re working with.”*

**Gloria Rivera** | Artist-Organizer

## NOTES

**Preliminary Notes**

- Public Health & Safety Co-Chairs: Jazmine Valadez, Kate McMahon—Chicago Department of Public Health, Alex Heaton – Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction
  - Artist-Organizers: Alexandria Willis, Gloria Rivera
  
- Findings so far:
  - Healthy food options should be convenient and accessible for every Chicagoan, either from stores, farmers markets, community gardens, cooperatives, or other sources.
  - Food education and nutrition information should be made widely available from producers, vendors, and the business community to help people make informed decisions about their diets and food budgets.
  - Healthcare and medical resources should recognize the unique needs of residents based on gender, race, income, and other unique criteria that will help inform the allocation of resources to groups and neighborhoods.
  - Public spending should prioritize the health and wellness of underserved areas by focusing on schools, health care establishments, and other locations that help support the physical and mental fitness of residents.
  - Public safety and justice-related planning efforts should seek to reduce recidivism and substance abuse while working to improve workforce development opportunities for people emerging from the criminal justice system.
  
- Meeting #7 is the final meeting of Phase 2 of a process to develop subject matter reports on We Will Chicago's seven individual Pillars. This is the halfway point for a process running from July 2021 through June 2022.
  - Phase three will see the working groups begin to consider policy practices and performance assessment metrics before compiling the Pillar's final report.
  
- Meeting #7 involved the pillar working group doing the following:
  - Presentations from artist/activists, We Will Chicago community partners, and Pillar co-chairs giving report outs from the We Will Chicago Advisory Committee
  - Working in breakout groups to refine the objectives drafted by the Advisory Committee and the city's consultants for each Guiding Question based on discussions of the working group

## Presentations

### **Katelyn Johnson, community partner, Blackroots Alliance**

- Held a meeting approximately two weeks ago. Recounted lots of community held ideas and vision from nine represented wards and some suburban people who lived/work in Chicago
- Policing was a hot topic: Community residents asked what can be done to support mental health? They also worked to name community faced issues and what the solutions are in terms of policies and benefits.
- “A lot of the questions initially weren’t accessible to folks who haven’t spent the time all of us have spent working through the language. We spent some significant time talking through the issues before we could even ask any questions.” - Johnson

### **Stephanie Dunn, community partner, Star Farm Chicago**

- The New Eclipse and Community Alliance, a partner organization, scheduled a community forum on December 11 at 51st and Halsted. The celebratory event provides childcare, catering and music.

### **Advisory Committee - Kate McMahon and Alex Heaton**

- On November 16th, each set of the pillar’s co-chairs presented their draft objectives and discussed in small groups to offer feedback and identify cross-cutting themes.
- **Advisory Committee Health & Safety feedback**
  - Who defines what a healthy community is?
  - How is the private sector involved or is it focused on government mechanisms for change?
  - Why is so much focus on healthcare access when we know the drivers of health inequity are upstream? We have to get at root causes – Health inequity is an issue to be addressed in all pillars
  - Consider a human centric-point of view, intersecting identities, geographies etc. Consider the unique challenges faced by all sorts of people in the city
- **Advisory Committee Cross-Cutting and General Comments**
  - Make sure learning materials and engagement materials are accessible for people with disabilities and diverse learning needs
    - This is connected to what Katelyn is talking about
    - We need to look at how we are approaching community engagement to increase participation

- Later, Gloria Rivera will raise PhotoVoice as a tactic for getting high-quality communication from people who otherwise struggle in articulating themselves – a type of workshop with photography and participatory action.
- There are opportunities to increase language capacity (translation and interpretation services; train native speakers)
- How can we change the community engagement process to ensure greater neighborhood participation and representation?
- Solution-based community engagement with testing/prototyping
- We need budgeting evaluation in the community engagement process
- Cities want large companies to be good corporate citizens – this message has been diluted partially as a result of globalization
- We Will plan can communicate our city's ideals to the private sector
- Megadevelopments should be addressed in the plan
- Consideration of infrastructure bill funding and how the city prioritizes funding
- The city has been unsuccessful in addressing crises through pouring money into non-profits who do the direct services to respond to crises. As we receive ARP funds from the Federal Government, how can we get it right and create a framework/model for the future?
- Private-sector – how to engage and leverage government tools?

#### Artist-Organizer **Presentation: Gloria Rivera, Honey Pot Performance**

- Overview and main themes from second half of community engagements
- Struggled with attendance early, so switched to new forms of engagement like PhotoVoice and using one-on-ones and small groups of 3-5 people
- In private one-on-ones, people were sharing feelings about distrust, frustration, and hurdles in dealing with the city. They were not willing to share publicly these feelings
- Mental health came up directly or indirectly in every single one of her conversations with people
- Pillar Barriers and Challenges
  - Mental health: not enough support in schools, from lack of access to social stigma in Black and Brown communities, this needs to be more commonplace as people are afraid, cites result of closures under Rahm Emmanuel
  - Focus on youth: support, enrichment, and bad influences, youth are more malleable. Present in ~80% of conversations
  - Accessibility within the community: subpar care, medical facilities, lack of recreation, people have to leave their community to go to the hospital, pharmacies, even to access recreation, people would rather drive across the city than go to low-quality health facilities, in particular, Roseland Hospital
  - Healthy nutrition: Generational habits and cultural issues of unhealthy eating, lack of finances and unaffordability of healthy food in the community
- Solutions

- Mental health: stronger programs in schools, need more school social workers so counselors can give attention to other kids who need it (that aren't diagnosed, are trouble-makers, etc.) -normalize mental health discussions overall
- Extracurricular activities and after school programs: level the disparities in programs, neighborhood schools vs. magnet school, mentorship opportunities
- Work on staffing and quality of care in community hospitals, quality in served communities - reopen pharmacies
- Recreation for adults, children, e.g., families can go to movies or bowling in their communities
- Educational programming in the schools around nutrition
- Rivera names her suggestions—collectively taking in everyone's voices
  - Bring back community centers with interchangeable and standard programming — programming unique to each neighborhood, accessible to seniors and adults, Inclusive of all kinds of people
  - Hold community meetings with community group partners and professionals, planners, mental health experts, etc.—broad based, sustainable topics
- Defunding the police, came up twice, both times with Black women who agree that many are not happy with the police, but they don't want to defund them.
  - One such conversation was with a psychotherapist - Shift money within CPD to bring mental health professionals on certain calls with police
  - The other conversation was with a 30-year CPD officer - 7 years in Englewood
  - Both agree that there is a need for community mental health. They want a “cleaning house” and a restructuring. Large volumes of police service calls are mental health related, which causes issues because training officers to handle those calls is not there
  - Starts at the academy, with bias training and an effort “weed-out” candidates early and exhibit “zero tolerance”
  - Cite Nashville's precedent where newly-trained officers formed a Crisis Intervention Team
  - Proposed solutions include promoting engagement between CPD and youth “in competitive ways to build camaraderie...maybe a basketball game so they have to work together to win.”
- Katelyn Johnson notes "there are huge swaths of the community that do want to defund the police. They showed up at our community meeting - How did you frame defunding the police?"
  - Rivera didn't frame it, instead the issue was raised in one-on-ones by the other person both times. Rivera mentions the police officer she talked with spoke mostly about other topics including a dissertation she was writing on literacy levels and behavior problems among African-American boys. After, Rivera asked about CPD.
  - Johnson wrote in the chat: "It seems like a very strong contrast between what you shared and what we hear on the doors when we're canvassing and having public



meetings, in particular around the desire to reduce police presence / police interactions.”

- Rivera responded in the chat: “I wish I had time to speak on that. I spoke with a group of young adults. They first shared being for defunding the police, but as they continued to speak on the matter it was realized that that are not so much ‘defund’ and more ‘reform’”

### **Alexandria Willis - Road to Healthy and Safe Communities**

- Had different participants and methods than Rivera but had similar responses
- Played a game (Home Tower Game) with community members, police and healthcare workers as “player types.”- players create a “profile” with the ideal characteristics each player type should have, then Willis asked about the roles of each in creating healthy lifestyles
  - A way to imagine healthy and safe communities
  - Illustrates real life inequities in the city between Roseland, Lakeview, Englewood, and the Loop
- Community member’s player profile: According to neighborhood residents, the ideal community member should be clean and courteous, know their neighbors and the neighborhood culture, share information, their mind should be changed through empathy, have the ability to combine anecdotal information with other data to make decisions.
  - Unsafe communities have been destabilized due to a lack of basic services
- Police player profile: According to residents, the ideal police officer is respectful, friendly, builds trust and cooperation through relationship building, is accountable, transparent about misconduct, deescalates situations, reflects the people they work with, are culturally competent, speaks the right language, right sizing of response - training officers should include tailoring their responses to calls about domestic violence and mental health. They should also be physically fit.
- Healthcare worker profile: Ideally, healthcare workers receive more respect and authority, giving nurses badges. Given a “high seat at the table.”
  - Community feedback shows that the Department of Public Health (DPH) isn’t widely known, people struggle with the insurance marketplace, and there is a need for a job pipeline for minority women and mobility assistance for seniors
- Players are asked to pick a sort of “home base” using a table of census data about each “base,” which were communities in Chicago
  - Healthcare workers made the choice to live in areas with the highest need for healthcare, making “a conscious choice to be there.”
- Policy recommendations per neighborhood

- Roseland: lead water testing in schools and home test kits sent out by CPS, tech job training, increased and improved mental health care, young adult housing similar to senior housing, new better-suited education models, broader exposure through field trips for children
- Lake View: sensitivity training for people who are desensitized to the challenges and traumas of other communities, improvements to history curricula and lifelong learning
- Englewood: Certain people should be eligible for free health care based on need, services should be located where they can have the most impact, maintenance to abandoned property, urban farming, more play areas, intergenerational activities, fostering entrepreneurship
- Loop: Block clubs

### **Breakout Discussion Groups followed by Breakout Groups Round Robin**

#### RESOURCES

**Star Farm Chicago Forum scheduled on December 11 at 51st and Halsted - New Eclipse Community Alliance**

[Link to Star Farm's upcoming calendar of events](#)

**Report from the Tennessean about the model of mental health response mentioned by Gloria Rivera**

['Metro Nashville police officers start Crisis Intervention Team training for community policing'](#)

#### NEXT STEPS

- Research and facilitation liaisons and the co-chairs will continue to refine and clarify Objectives based on notes so ideas are expressed as short, clear sentences