

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
FUTURES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Date:** June 08, 2020

**Location:** CIC Room, City Hall, 300 Laporte Ave.

**Time:** 4:30-6:00pm

**Committee Members Present:**

Mayor Wade Troxell

Julie Pignataro

Emily Gorgol

Kristin Stephens (alternate)

**City Staff:**

Jackie Kozak-Thiel, (Staff Liaison)

**Presenter:**

*Dylan Lindsey, Jaeda Rodriguez, Katherine De Maret, Louise Holland, Suhaas Narayanan*

**Additional Staff Present:**

Lindsay Ex, Sustainability Services Area

Sierra Anderson, City Manager's Office

Teresa Roche, Human Resources

Theresa Connor, Utilities

Travis Storin, Finance

Tyler Marr, City Manager's Office

**Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Julie moved to approve May 11 minutes. Emily seconded. Motion passed unanimously. 3-0-0.

**Chairman Comments:** None

**Summary**

- 5 Youth panelists spoke on issues that they see as pressing now and, in their future, especially in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include issues related to Black Lives Matter Climate Change, equity, educational disparities, and the tension between the need for growth and affordable housing and open space
- These issues are priorities for the current Council and many of these issues are touched by sustainability
- Youth panelists spoke to their views on the role of government including:
  - Support public health
  - Support education and providing equitable access to decision-making
  - Being prepared for future events including emergency funding

- Action item: Council member Gorgol and the rest of the committee asked that for an upcoming Futures committee meeting we discuss best practices around community-led processes and virtual engagement

### Think Tank Item 3-2020: Voices of Youth

- Louise, Suhaas, Dylan, Kat and Jaeda each take turns discussing five questions
- **Question one: What major issues and concerns do our panelist believe our leaders should be thinking about in the Future**
  - Climate Change—every young person sees Climate Change as a pressing issue
    - Fort Collins is in the Smithsonian for being innovative with Climate Action Planning and needs to continue to lead the charge in this space
    - Equity and Social Justice need to be embedded in processes and programs to address Climate Change
    - Consider how to incentivize greener choices and continue to work with CSU to reduce emissions
  - Waste Reduction
    - With the landfill closing more education and outreach needs to be done to reduce waste
  - Tension between open spaces and the need for development
    - There is a need for growth and affordable housing and there is a desire to protect natural areas and open space as well
  - Equity
    - More work needs to be done to normalize being non-white in our society
    - There are many minority groups in our community, and we need to rethink how we view and interact with other cultures
    - Need to consider work to make sure Criminal Justice structures are equitable
    - More needs to be done to ensure that everyone in Fort Collins regardless of race, income, or social status has access to resources including housing, public transportation and food
    - Also need to consider housing affordability—young people do not know if they can afford live in Fort Collins moving forward
- **Question 2: How has COVID changed thoughts about the Future?**
  - There is some real concern with Larimer County opening up and seeing many people not wearing face coverings or practicing social distancing
    - Jaeda shares that she works in a downtown business and so many customers do not wear face coverings, which feels very disrespectful and would like to see more enforcement
    - There needs to be more clarity about the rules regarding face coverings and practicing social distancing
    - More expectations need to be set on what it means to relax restrictions and understand how to safely engage with one another
  - The future of higher education
    - Consider how online options will affect enrollment for Universities and what the new “college experience” will look like
  - Importance of funding mental health resource

- COVID can be very isolating for many which can lead to mental health issues
    - Concern over those in domestic abuse situations
    - There is so much comparative guilt (for example, this is sad for me, but my situation is not as bad as another person's). As people continue to feel guilt, they need resources to work through those feeling
  - K-12 education
    - Many inequities in how students can continue their education
    - Kat shares that both her parents are teachers and they see the disparities in their classes and some students from underserved communities have had little to no participation in the classes her parents teach.
    - Many parents of children in underserved communities are frontline workers and need to balance the needs of going to work with taking care of children
    - In the future more resources need to be available to lower the gap in education
    - Teachers also need to continue to be supported
  - Have emergency funds in the future
    - Suhaas mentions specifically that as we see how the City is working to help businesses, is there a way to set money aside for future emergencies?
  - There needs to be more thinking around how best to protect essential and frontline workers
    - Dylan shares that he works for a company that provides essential services and how scary it is to see how health care workers have been impacted
    - Think more about how to encourage protection of employees in businesses such as grocery stores which normally are not considered as important in society
  - More attention needs to be paid to disparities
    - COVID has highlighted how racial and ethnic are disproportionately impacted because of existing inequities and because many of these community members work in essential services
  - Louise wants to become an EMT and has enrolled in Certified Assistant Nursing training.
    - COVID has shaped the ways in which she thinks she can help.
- **Question 3 How has Black Lives Matters impact us in Fort Collins**
  - Dylan begins by sharing that he believes we need to do a better job listening
    - Need to listen, learn from past mistakes and then take action
    - Continue to recognize the diversity that we do have in Fort Collins, encourage, and promote more diversity
    - Continue to make everyone feel welcome
  - Louise speaking as a White person says that it is her job to continue to educate herself
    - As a community we need to do a better job discussing racial injustice and the history of racial injustice in Fort Collins –this information may be difficult to seek out but if we know our past, we can move forward to a better future

- Ignorance is the driver of hate
  - Suhaas shares that there are many policies such as those listed in Campaign Zero that can reduce police violence and brutality
    - Recognizes that Colorado and Fort Collins has done a lot, but more can be done and there needs to be community led solutions
  - Kat mentions that it may be easy to say Fort Collins is doing great to address inequities, but we can't speak to the experience's others have in this community
    - Need to continue to enhance and speak to People of Color and focus on issues they are facing in Fort Collins
    - Recognize as White people we need to listen, amplify voices and have local governments seek those voices out to ensure meaningful change
  - Jaeda mentions that the Fort Collins Police Department is doing a pretty good job and that it is important to focus on the mental health of police officers to see what biases exist
    - Jaeda has lived in Fort Collins her entire life and has experienced racism here. More needs to be done to continue to address these issues.
- **Question 4: Personal plans for the future**
  - Louise is getting her CAN certification and wants to be an EMT. She plans on attending Fort Lewis in the Fall and will be studying Political Science and minoring in Health Science
  - Suhaas is beginning College in the Fall at the University of Pennsylvania and will be studying Business or Health Care
  - Kat will be studying International Politics at Georgetown University
  - Dylan will still be in high school in Fort Collins and will be working on two campaigns. He hopes to continue serve on the Youth Advisory Board and will hopefully get to work on some internships that were disrupted by COVID. Long-term Dylan hopes to study Political Science
  - Jaeda will be attending CU Boulder studying Journalism and Multicultural leadership. She is excited even though she will only be on Campus for 2 month this Fall Semester

#### **Comments/Q&A:**

- Mayor and the other committee members thank the panelists for their thoughts on the future of Fort Collins, thoughts on COVID, thoughts on racial injustice and we are excited about future plans.
- Councilmember Gorgol asks the panelists what they think the City is doing a great job on
  - Suhaas mentions Climate Action planning and work towards carbon neutrality
  - Question: What do you think the City is doing a great job on?
    - Suhaas and Dylan mention the Climate work, Our Climate Future and work to move Fort Collins towards Climate neutrality. It is mentioned that more could be done to incentivize businesses to go green
    - Kat mentions that she is really proud of Fort Collins for how bike-friendly the City is but more needs to be done to expand public transportation
    - Awareness. Would love to see more incentives for businesses to go green
- Councilmember Gorgol suggests that our next Futures session be focused on building community and considering how we build community for people of color. This could be a great topic.

- She also mentions that she and Council member Stephens are having listening session on Wednesday with Police chief.
- Highlights that Equity and Inclusion is a priority and thinking about how we take action.
- Councilmember Pignataro asks experiences they had growing up in Fort Collins that she needs to ensure her son has to feel connected:
  - Louise shares that she loved biking on the Spring Creek Trail and getting ice cream for Dairy Queen. This instilled her love for going outside
  - Suhaas discusses how much he loves going to parks for get-togethers and biking on trails
  - Dylan shares that children should be encouraged to speak they mind and not to shy away from difficult situations
  - Jaeda shares that she also enjoyed the Cultural events downtown such as Cinco de Mayo
  - Kat shares that she loves the outdoors ang doing to hike and walk around Horsetooth Rock
- Councilmember Pignataro mentions that Council has some conflicting priorities and asks the youth how they think they should approach conflicting priorities
  - Think through what the current barriers to participation are and how to ensure everyone as the ability to share their thoughts and opinions with Council so that all voices are heard
  - Redirect priorities as needed
  - Consider City Values to help drive the path forward
    - Kat: can lay out a path forward. Values can help us decide what to do.
- Mayor Pro-Temp Stephens mentions that a lot of change can happen at the local level of government and that these youth members should consider lifting their voices wherever they are
- Mayor shares that the Futures is bright and encourages the group to stay connected, stay curious and to continue to listen
- Darin shares that he wants the youth panelists to have confidence in their hometown and that their priorities align with what you have said. For those who are leaving town, your City is in really good hands with the leaders that we have.

**Additional Discussion:**

- Committee would like to prioritize a meeting on the future of community led processes especially as it relates to People of Color

*Meeting adjourned by Mayor Troxell at 5:50pm*