

Grow Together

Seeding Employee Success



Prospect
Park
Alliance

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY GROUP - MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: November 19, 2019
Attendees: Kate Abrams, Mark Anthony, Maria Carrasco, Luis Garcia, Lucy Gardner, Jasmine Haynes, Milagros Kennebrew, Ira Machowsky, April Miller, Jonathan Patrizio, Paula Unger
Not in Attendance: Daniel Clay, Amy Peck, Camilla Wilson
Minutes Prepared By: Ira Machowsky, Senior HR Consultant

Group members discussed the following issues and action items:

I. HOUSEKEEPING & GROUP NORMS

- a. The group reviewed the October 22nd Meeting Minutes and there were no changes.
- b. Maria briefly reviewed the process for collecting agenda items for the meeting noting that this would be coordinated by the Senior Director, People & Culture through email solicitations to all staff, gaining input at All Staff Meetings and seeking suggestions from members of the Employee Advisory Group. There was also a brief discussion about the “advisory role” of the group in helping to inform HR in its planning various HR transformation initiatives as well as addressing employment and work life issues that emerge for the group to address at its meetings.
- c. Future meetings of the group will be held at varying venues throughout the Park. The December meeting is scheduled for the Boathouse
- d. Lucy and Maria, Co-Facilitators provided an overview of norms for the group noting their importance in establishing an orderly process for discussing issues among the group and creating an environment of respect for all members such that members feel comfortable expressing and sharing input and suggestions.
- e. There was brief discussion of possibly adding a few additional members to group to cover for absences, etc.

ACTION/FOLLOW UP:

1. Ira to distribute the October 22nd Meeting Minutes and Draft Charter to all Prospect Park Staff

II. “GROW TOGETHER” HR INITIATIVES

Ira reported on the status of the following HR Transformation Initiatives:

- a. **New Paylocity Payroll and HR System** – Plans are to roll-out the new Paylocity Payroll and HR System with a “go-live” date at the end of December 2019. The initial modules coming on-line will be payroll and automation of recording time and attendance followed by new employee onboarding, a new self-service employee portal where staff can gain access to leave balances, benefits and other helpful employment information and

improvements to the recruitment process. Other HR components will be rolled-out in the first quarter of 2020. Ira noted that this new technology and automation will have a significant impact on the Alliance organization culture and that a series of meeting with staff will be organized in December to address these new developments. Members asked about the new payroll and time collection process in addition to how this would affect various payroll rules and processes. It was recommended that HR summarize these changes in a question and answer document to the staff. Members also recommended that there be a back-up plan for addressing those staff who did not have immediate access to technology. Ira reviewed the current plan for improving access to technology in the park and the various methods that will be available to the staff to record their time each day.

- b. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** - Lucy provided a brief overview including hand-out of the core definitions of DE&I. Following this, Ira reported that a DEI Consultant with subject matter expertise in this area (Dr. Richard Orbe-Austin) has been engaged by the Alliance to help develop the organization's DE&I program, strategy and engagement activities with staff. During the month of December, the Consultant will be meeting with various staff across the Alliance in addition to members of the Employee Advisory Group at its December 17th meeting. There was also a brief discussion about potentially forming a DE&I Council and members of the group felt this could be beneficial and enable the Alliance to gain input on an on-going basis from a cross section of the staff. The group noted the importance of aligning the seasonal and per diem staff with the planned DE&I work.
- c. **New Employee Onboarding Program** - the group was asked for feedback about the current (previously held) onboarding/orientation programs for new staff. The majority of the group felt that having representatives from various areas of the Alliance meet with new hires was generally positive but that it extended over too many months. It was recommended that the onboarding period (currently one year) be shortened and that some of the group meetings be organized less formally to foster an environment enabling staff to openly share their employment experiences, bond with colleagues and form new friendships. Ira asked the group whether they felt there would be a benefit to pairing newly hired employees with other staff who would serve as mentors. All felt this wasn't necessary and that it was more appropriate for HR to assume the "mentoring" role for new hires.

ACTION/FOLLOW UP:

1. HR to distribute to all staff, a Fact Sheet and Q&A document outlining the new Paylocity system roll-out plan. These documents should address the benefits of the new Paylocity system and the newly planned payroll processes, automated time collection system and payroll rules affecting staff.
2. HR to invite DE&I Consultant to the December Employee Advisory Group Meeting. An overview of DE&I will be provided, and the group will share their suggestions and further discuss the potential of forming a DEI Council.
3. HR to revise the current Onboarding Program incorporating suggestions from the group with plans to launch the new Onboarding Program in January 2020.

III. HR/WORK LIFE ISSUE

The group discussed the current working relationship between NYC Parks and the Alliance and how to best improve the existing framework. Concerns expressed by the group included: a) tensions between NYC Parks Managers and Alliance staff around core supervision and "chain of command" issues; b) disparities in compensation between City employees and Alliance staff doing similar work in the Park resulting in employee morale issues and staff leaving roles with the Alliance for opportunities with NYC Parks; c) NYC Parks staff not feeling fully integrated into Alliance operations or as valued contributors at All Staff meetings; and d) lack of clarity and documentation around policies and process between both organizations in various operational areas around the Park. Ira suggested that perhaps there be a small task force put together between NYC Parks and the Alliance to begin to address these issues. It was agreed by all that this is a complicated partnership but that its impact on work life issues is important for the Alliance to begin to address.

ACTION/FOLLOW UP:

1. Ira will discuss these issues with Sue, James and the Senior Staff and report back to the group on some potential next steps to address this issue. This work life matter will be tagged as a pending item to be further considered by the group.