



*Deep Listening. Fostering Trust. Bridging Communities.*

**Race & Place**  
**Community Dialogue & Storytelling**  
**January 25, 2018**

Thank you to Workshop Architects for hosting these listening circles. We would also like to thank our partners: Ex Fabula.

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## Executive Summary

The Fellows & Facilitators' Race & Place facilitated listening circle took place on January 25, 2018. During the event, participants heard three stories and were asked a round of three questions:

1. *"Share a detail from one of the stories that personally resonated with you or your life experience? A detail may resonate with you because it's similar to your life or significantly different than your experience."*
2. *"What's one thing that you feel needs to be done to repair the harm done by Milwaukee's history of housing inequity?"*
3. *"What do you feel your role is in creating a more equitable community?"*

Participants were also asked to participate in the Connected Conversation if time allowed. The Connected Conversation encouraged participants to have an open conversation, ask question to peers, and discuss what was heard in the facilitated listening circles.

During the first round, many participants mentioned a certain lack of awareness, namely with many participants reporting being unaware of any housing inequity in Milwaukee. Reasons for lack of awareness varied: 1) Some participants grew up in multicultural neighborhoods or cities and did not experience segregation; 2) Other participants became aware of housing inequity by learning about white privilege or witnessing housing discrimination. Several participants mentioned firsthand experience with housing discrimination, while a few others rejected the idea of housing inequity overall. Participants also expressed gratitude, questioned their impact, and emphasized the importance of listening in response to question 1.

During the second round, many participants felt that public policy was the most effective way to repair the damage done by housing inequity. Reparations and improvement of economic conditions were among the most common public policy suggestions followed by improvement in education equality. Other public policy suggestions by participants included a complete systematic overhaul and improvements in the criminal justice system. Some participants placed emphasis on communication and relationship building to repair damages, while a few others mentioned that personal action and self-education were viable solutions.

During the third round, some participants felt that using their privilege and/or power helped them create a more equitable community. Many participants felt that direct engagement with issues and communication was the path to a more equitable community. Participants talked about volunteerism and advocacy, sharing time and skills, and learning to listen and accept all groups of people as the roles they occupied. A few participants were unsure of their role and others used personal action to bridge the gap to a more equitable community.

During the Connected Conversation, individuals expressed concern about the current political climate. Many participants discussed race relations and cultural divides in Milwaukee. IN addition, feelings of shame were mentioned by some when discussing race relations and cultural divides. Personal action and doing the right thing was another major theme. Participants expressed a desire to step out of comfort zones, listen more, and carry out actionable solutions.

**Questions about this dialogue may be directed to:**

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## Listening Circle Analysis

**Question Round One:** *"Share a detail from one of the stories that personally resonated with you or your life experience? A detail may resonate with you because it's similar to your life or significantly different than your experience."*

*"I was surprised when I drove from northern suburbs south to see how segregated we are. I've never lived in a place where segregation is that evident."*

*"I came here to Milwaukee and got married. I tried to buy a house and each time the home I was looking to buy was already sold, had another offer, or no longer available. After a while I knew that they were lying. I had my husband call the same realtors and they were willing to sell to him. The problems of unfair housing are still happening today."*

### 1.1 Unaware

Lack of awareness about housing discrimination was a major theme for this round. One participant stated:

*"I was driving into Milwaukee and was listening to the radio when a report of a riot was reported going on around 3rd street at the time...I discovered there was a serious segregation issue going on that I was unaware living on 54th street at the time"*

Another participant described how they worked as a recreation specialist during the summer and "had no historical frame of reference with respect to the history of housing discrimination, here in Milwaukee" until hearing the story of Shakespeare Lewis. Lack of awareness continues to influence responses throughout the rest of dialogue. The stories shared by Ex-Fabula Fellows expanded the perspective of participants who were previously unaware of housing discrimination.

#### 1.1.1 Multicultural Childhood

Some participants cited growing up in a diverse neighborhood as the main reason for their lack of awareness about housing discrimination in Milwaukee. One participant describes living in a multicultural neighborhood and never thought "Blacks and Whites lived in separate areas because we all got along in school". This participant was aware of a dividing line where he/she wouldn't go past a certain street, but relayed "I didn't understand there was housing discrimination".

Another participant shared that he/she always lived in mixed race communities. This individual stated:

*"When I moved here I didn't have to consider my race and privilege when looking for housing. People's advice was to look in White areas, but I wanted more diversity. I was surprised when I drove from northern suburbs south to see how segregated we are. I've never lived in a place where segregation is that evident."*

It is interesting to note that a lack of awareness due to being raised in a diverse city or neighborhood appears to present an opportunity to diversify and unravel discriminatory practices. Outsiders of the community are less likely to have an issue living in multicultural neighborhoods. In fact, some participants expressed a desire to live in a racially diverse neighborhood rather than a hyper-segregated one.

### 1.1.2 Privilege

One participant shared his/her experience as an Ex Fabula Fellow where s/he was part of a book club that was reading "Evicted". During this session, a woman the participant was close to said "Some of those people just need to work hard and focus". The participant then reported that:

*"The next week she informed me that she never thought of how her being White in this society worked to her advantage and that how persons of color, have to contend with things in their lives that have no place in her world view or thought process."*

The realization of white privilege usually came with the desire to be an advocate and ally. One participant shared:

*"I work with one of the Ex Fabula presenters and we work on the legal side of housing. What is resonating with me is that I have the privilege to deal with race. I am married to a black man."*

Advocacy and privilege was a common thread. Many participants recognized that their white privilege can be wielded as a force for positive change. One participant expressed concerns as an urban planner. Part of this participant's job is to "bring community input into the decisions of what is built", but s/he had the following concern:

*"I don't always know what I'm suggesting for the community is the best—being an advocate is something I'm concerned about."*

### 1.1.3 Witnesses

Participants who had previously been unaware of housing discrimination and witnessed some form of discrimination comprise this next subtheme. One participant shared this story:

*"Once there was a student from UWM in my class. She was Black, and we were friends. She was graduating and about to leave town for a new job. She needed to have a place to stay for one night and I offered to let her stay at my house. I thought it would be a good thing, but my neighbors let it be known that they didn't like it. I didn't know why I shouldn't feel comfortable offering up my home to someone in need. It was the beginning of my thinking about the prejudice conditions that surround me and begin to stand up for something that was a wrong"*

The same issue arose when another participant rented out a unit to a young black man and his mother. The participant said, "the neighbors were upset but eventually they accepted the young man and his mom they stayed for a couple of years". The neighbors' initial attitude toward the young black man and his mother reflect another phenomenon: mass exodus from diversified neighborhoods.

Two participants described an exodus of people from neighborhoods that were starting to become more diverse. One participant shared that during childhood "friends and neighbors moved away at the time when A.O Smith jobs were filling up and the neighborhood became more diverse". Another participant shared a personal dilemma along similar lines. The participant witnessed an "exodus that leaves the community void of leadership and resources". The person was torn between "staying and risking quite a bit in order to be an example".

#### 1.1.4 Alternative Narratives

Some participants did not feel housing discrimination was a factor. One participant worked in mental health and was helping a Black client find housing. The individual realized that they client had very little possessions in which to move in and decided to help this client by going to Sears to purchase items for the client. The participant shared:

*"I noticed it was taking an awfully long time for us to be checked out; well I later found out that Sears had called my job, and someone had stolen my card and they described me as the robber".*

This client alluded to the idea that being black does not always dictate the way someone is treated.

Another client who worked in a non-profit organization that dealt with evictions and said "I found that people do not understand some of the technical rules surrounding eviction.... I found difficulty trying to understand the racial context or view of what was happening". This participant suggests that there isn't really housing discrimination only that people don't understand the details and complexities of evictions.



The responses from these two participants appears to underline the need for an open dialogue about race relations and housing discrimination in Milwaukee.

### 1.2 First Hand Experience

One participant described difficulty buying a house, reporting the following experience:

*"I tried to buy a house and each time the home I was looking to buy was already sold, had another offer, or no longer available. After a while I knew that they were lying. I had my husband call the same realtors and they were willing to sell to him. The problems of unfair housing are still happening today".*

Another participant shared a story about discrimination against a family member. The participant's father "changed because of an experience he had in the 50's and 60's of prejudice against African Americans". Participant stories about discrimination against family members was shown to be often multi-generational. One participant's parents participated in the housing marches and asserted that "the issue of race has been with me my entire life". This statement is a direct contrast to the sentiments expressed by the individuals who do not believe race plays a role in housing inequity. This contrast further highlights the importance of community dialogues and listening circles.

### 1.3 Gratitude

Gratitude was expressed several times throughout the first session. Two participants shared:

*"It's easy for me to take for granted to pay rent...I hope I remember to be thankful and being aware of others who can't pay".*

*"I'm grateful. Other people have bigger issues".*

It is important to notice that beneath gratitude lies sympathy. The two participants who expressed gratitude were sympathetic to the plight of story in which a woman who could not pay rent was evicted. While the participants did not explicitly mention housing discrimination, their expressions of gratitude suggest that they are listening and understanding to the struggles of others—an important factor for breaking down barriers of housing discrimination in Milwaukee.

### 1.4 Impact

Individual impact was a concern for some participants. Concerns shared among participants are as follows:

*"I'm learning the history of the March. I've learned much but it is too immense to feel the history in the room with you."*

*"I wish I was more certain, had more clarity. In that time, it was clear to them. I had an actual depressive episode after Trump was elected. I questioned my own impact, the impact of my work, if this could happen. I want to know what to do and have the courage to do it."*

## 1.5 Listening

The importance of listening to others was expressed several times. One participant emphasized "[t]here is a need to stop and listen to people" in response to the story of the evicted woman. This participant wondered "Why couldn't he ask, 'Why didn't you pay the rent?' Why can't we stop and listen to people's stories? She was sharing, and she was ignored". The concept of listening will continue to show up in the following rounds.

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**Question Round Two:** *"What's one thing that you feel needs to be done to repair the harm done by Milwaukee's history of housing inequity?"*

*"There is a need for reparations. We have to address institutional racism. We need a government mandate and subsidy that ensures affordable housing. Hence people should only have a certain income go toward their housing."*

*"I live in Riverwest and have been told not to go past Holton St. The language changes when certain people are described. I grew up in section eight housing and was homeless. I want to educate artistically those who are concerned with social issues."*

## 2.1 Public Policy

Many participants felt that changes in public policy were the most effective way to repair the issue of housing inequity.

### 2.1.1 Reparations & Repairing Economic Conditions

Many participants made recommendations for reparations and improvement of economic conditions. Specific suggestions were made such as "a government mandate and subsidy that ensures affordable housing" or "increase home ownership by increasing affordable housing and supporting buyers through all the steps of the purchase process". Others called for the need to "return industry to the neighborhoods". Reparations and public policy to improve economic conditions was among the most common suggestions among participants.

### 2.1.2 Systematic Overhaul

A few participants felt there needed to be a complete systematic overhaul. One participant, who was an urban planner, said “a lot of community decisions are done in a forum by people who propose they are doing the best thing—but with ulterior motives”. Another participant suggested “improving education, improving job opportunities, improving legal services”. These two participants allude to the idea that housing inequity cannot truly be repaired unless there is a complete overhaul in public policy.

### 2.1.3 Improvement in Criminal Justice System

One participant witnessed “the imbalance in court, in particular the evictions and the impact on families and the community” and believes there is “an overwhelming amount of “Systemic Corruption” in legislation, the courts, etc”. This participant believes an improvement in the criminal justice system would help repair the housing inequity.

### 2.1.4 Education Equality

Many participants recommended public policy pushed that for education equality. Common sentiments about education were:

“Quality education should be for everyone and they should be college bound.”

“Many parents don’t want to go to certain schools because there are no resources. There should be an expanded effort to help the students.”

“The corrupted educational system doesn't look at systems, only symptoms.”

One participant suggested “we switch it around and had the best schools in the common neighborhoods” to combat people leaving certain neighborhoods in pursuit of better education.

## **2.2 Communication & Relationship Building**

Some participants proposed open communication and relationship building as a method to repair housing inequity. Building relationships was a common suggestion. Participants emphasized “building personal relationships with all people” and “people getting to know one another”. One participant describes having block parties where “everyone is welcome, and many come to get to know one another as they learn about each other”.

Open dialogue and communication were recommended by several participants. Two participants felt that listening circles and similar events were “one of the best things we can do”. Another participant echoed a similar sentiment and said “we need more circles (like this)”. Listening circles where people from all backgrounds can share their thoughts and listen to other people helps create awareness and unity.

## 2.3 Personal Action & Self Education

A few participants cited personal action and self-education as a remedy for housing inequity. One participant expressed a desire to “educate artistically those who are concerned with social issues”. Other participants emphasized a need to “educate about housing inequality” and to be “nice to others and accept their differences”.

## 2.4 No Repairs

One participant felt that no repairs were necessary to fix inequity. This participant felt that “people feel best when they are with folks who look like them, have similar values”.

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**Question Round Three:** *“What do you feel your role is in creating a more equitable community?”*

*“ My partner is half-black. I wonder how we will do things in the future. I work with the YWCA. The question is how do I reach out and uplift other neighbors that don’t have the advantages that I do?”*

## 3.1 Power & Privilege

Many participants believed their role was to use their privilege and power to create a more equitable community. Two participants mentioned that they “try to get people of diverse backgrounds to thematically speak on our exhibits” and “highlight narratives that aren’t usually told” through their work with museums. They are using their positions in museums to introduce new perspectives and bridge cultural gaps. The ability to control cultural spaces is not something easily accessible to the average person. Recognizing and spreading awareness about privilege was another subtheme, as can be seen in the following testimonies:

“As a white it's very important to be aware and figure out how to share that awareness.”

“It’s important to recognize privilege. A good place to be is to be an example for others.”

## 3.2 Communication & Direct Engagement

### 3.2.1 Engagement

Several participants cited “direct engagement”, and “consistent engagement” as their role in creating equity.

### 3.2.2 Dialogue

A couple of participants said participating in dialogues was their role in creating a more equitable community. One participant viewed participation in dialogues as a method to “eliminate those fears”. Dialogue and communication have been persistent themes throughout all three rounds. This theme is indicative that there is a desire to learn from different people about housing inequality.

### 3.2.3 Volunteerism & Advocacy

Several participants felt volunteerism and advocacy were their roles. Participants gave examples of how they went out into the community to combat inequity. One participant felt it was “my role as an individual is to promote more economic opportunity in Milwaukee as opposed to the suburbs”, and this participant attended “Harbor Commission hearings to advocate for upgrading and maintaining our harbors. There could be employment opportunities there”. Other examples of volunteerism and advocacy were mentioned and showed a genuine desire by participants to play an active role in their community. One participant described “being born into a world of so much promise and opportunity you get lost” and expressed a desire to “work with youth and help them understand their promises”.

### 3.2.4 Time & Skills

In addition to volunteerism and advocacy, sharing time and skills was another role that participants mentioned. One person, who was an architect, participated in an “8-week bilingual school teaching 1st and 2nd graders about architecture” and wanted to participate in more events like the one at the bilingual school.

### 3.2.5 Listen & Accept

Learning to listen and accept everyone was mentioned as important roles to a more equitable community. One person stated, “attending more events like this is the first step”. Learning to listening has been a continuous theme throughout each round which further highlights the need to discussions between different groups of people.

## 3.3 **Unsure**

Some participants were unsure of their role. One participant wondered how their children would “deal with un- equitable communities”. Another participant asked, “how do I reach out and uplift other neighbors that don’t have the advantages that I do?” Participants who were uncertain appeared to be interested in finding a role.

## 3.4 **Personal Action**

Participants recognized personal action as an important role in creating a more equitable community. Mottos like “Do no harm”, “Stay true to my values”, or “Just being my Real Self”

were common sentiments that suggest even the most minor adjustments in attitudes and values could have an impact. The idea of self-education appeared once again. One participant said “I also need to educate myself - maybe start with books and movies” which was an idea that was echoed by other participants throughout each round of questions.

## Connected Conversation & Parting Words

*“Raising kids is a challenge in this new political climate.”*

*“I am proud I had an open mind as I remember my mother hating blacks, Jews and Polish persons. I have built great relationships outside of my race.”*

### 4.1 Political Climate

The current political climate was a concern for two participants. According to one participant, the contemporary political climate has made “raising kids a challenge”. The second participant referred to the “current political state of affairs and the impact it has on us all”. Race relations have been brought to the forefront in the current political climate and have been divisive. It is not surprise that a dialogue concerned with race made some participants contemplate the current political climate.

### 4.2 Race Relations & Cultural Divides

Race relations and cultural divides in neighborhoods were concerns for participants. One participant asserted “We do not live in a “Post Racial Society”—a common attitude in the current political climate.

#### 4.2.1 Neighborhood Concerns

A variety of neighborhood concerns were shared. Lead pipes in neighborhoods were a major issue for participants. One participant blamed cultural disconnect for citizens “not letting officials in to check the lead pipes”. This potential lack of trust may suggest a need for dialogue between local government officials and citizens. Another participant mentioned “gentrification/displacement” as a neighborhood concern. These concerns appear to indicate the fact that housing inequity lays on a deep societal level. Quality of life in certain neighborhoods may be lower than others due to racial disparities.

#### 4.2.2 Cultural Divides & Shame

In addition to neighborhood concerns, cultural divides were an issue. Diversity in neighborhoods is such an issue that one participant said “My husband was astonished that he

had to constantly explain my accent to people. I've never felt so bad; I've lived other places where I didn't have to deal with this". One person from New York characterized Milwaukee's approach to neighborhood involvement as "cut and dry".

Shame over ancestry is a result of racial and cultural divides. Several participants felt shame over or rejected their ancestry. One participant shared the following experience:

*"I would say that I'm from Milwaukee. I wouldn't talk about my ancestors. My dad grew up knowing about the marches firsthand. When I talk to him there's shame in his family who are no longer talking because of their stand—deep shame that could happen in our family is unsettling. My uncle was on a committee that decided which neighborhoods were going to be demolished first—I hate to admit this about my family*

Another participant didn't understand why people always talk about their ancestors when asked their origin. They wondered "why is it so important that people jump to ancestry". Participants who felt shame over the actions of their ancestors felt it was important to share even if it made them uncomfortable.

### **4.3 Personal Action & Doing the Right Thing**

Personal action and doing the right thing were brought up several times by participants during Connected Conversations and Parting Words.

#### **4.3.1 Self-Education**

Self-education appears to be the main way for individuals to take personal action. Participants wished to learn more about housing inequity and their role in it. Participants talked about pledging to "educate myself" because "I just learned about this issue today". Desire to self-educate speaks to lack of awareness—a major theme in Round 1.

#### **4.3.2 Comfort Zone**

In addition to self-education, participants wished to step out of their comfort zones. One participant felt that "it has to start with one's self". This was echoed by other people who said, "we all have to find our level of what we are capable and comfortable with to take part in making things better for all". The wish to step out of comfort zones also relates to themes of lack of awareness from Round 1. Participants were presented with a crisis in their community and wanted to step out of their comfort zones to address it.

#### **4.3.3 Actionable Solutions**

Some participants proposed actionable solutions. One client wanted to use sports to bring people together because "when you're rooting for a team it doesn't matter who you are". Another participant suggested "we can create a program where people can get help buying

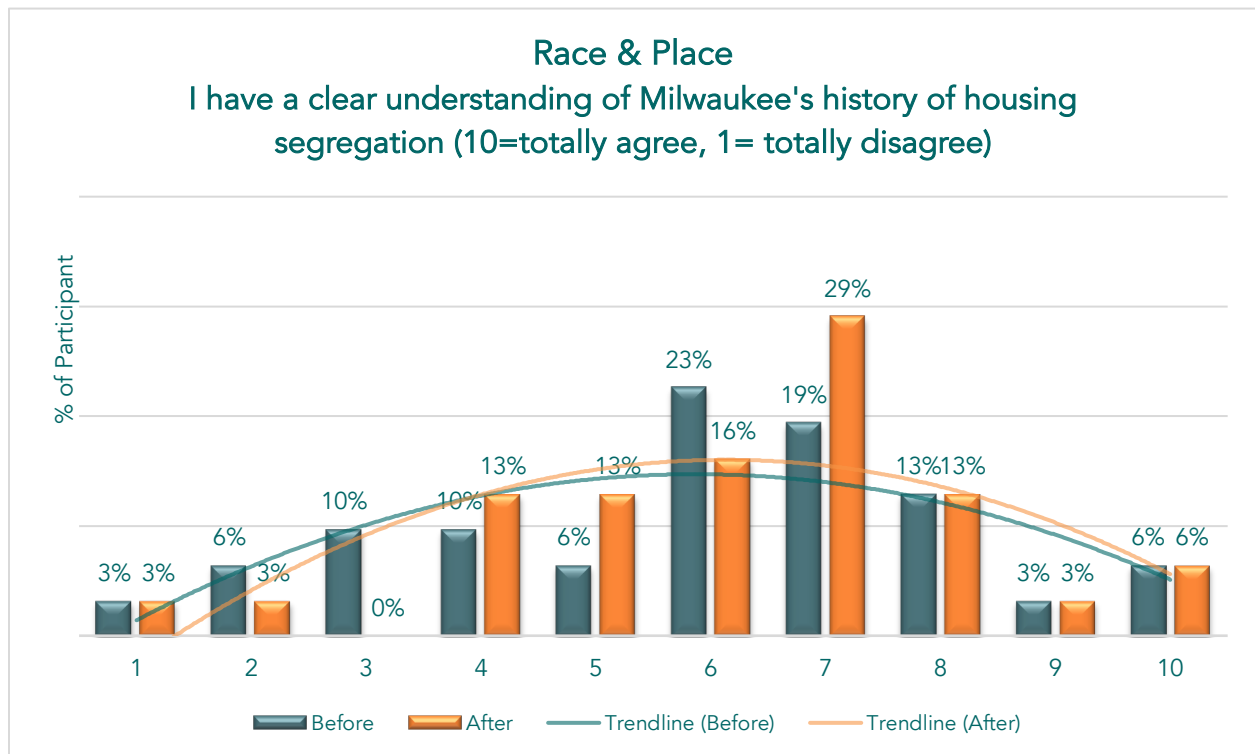
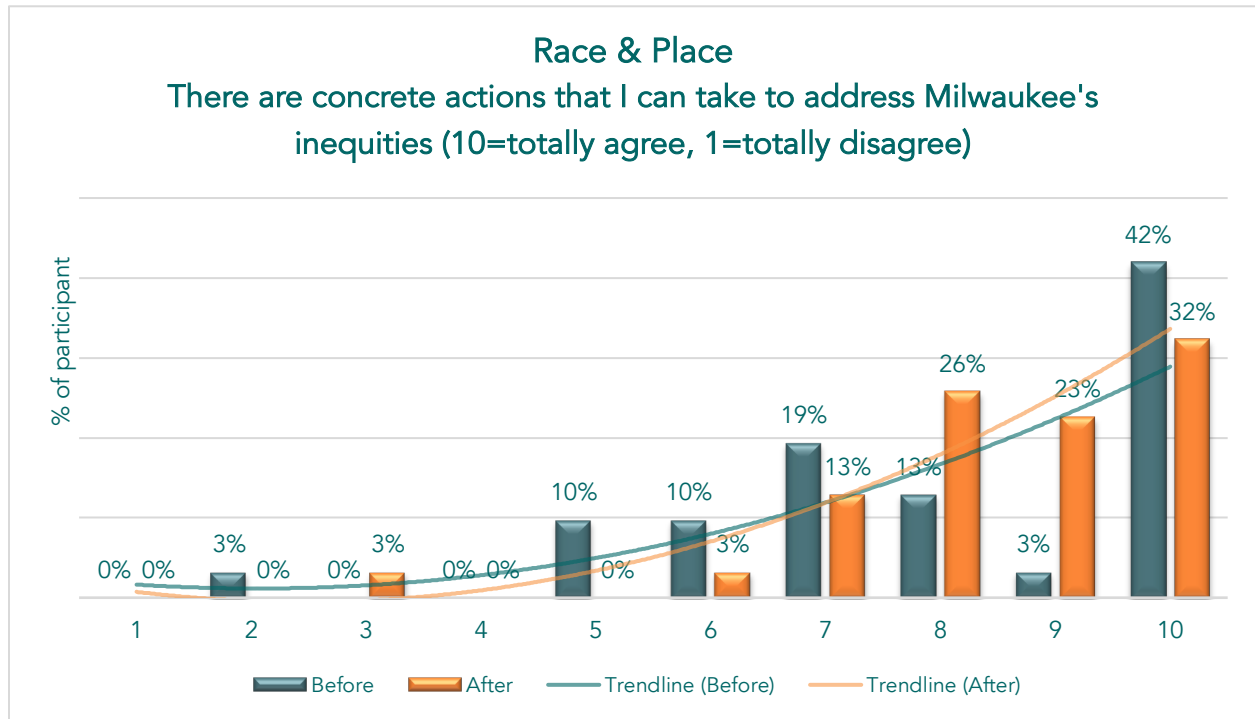
cheap homes. Some houses can be bought and fixed up". Actionable solutions reflect a desire among participants to see inequity addressed with practical ideas.

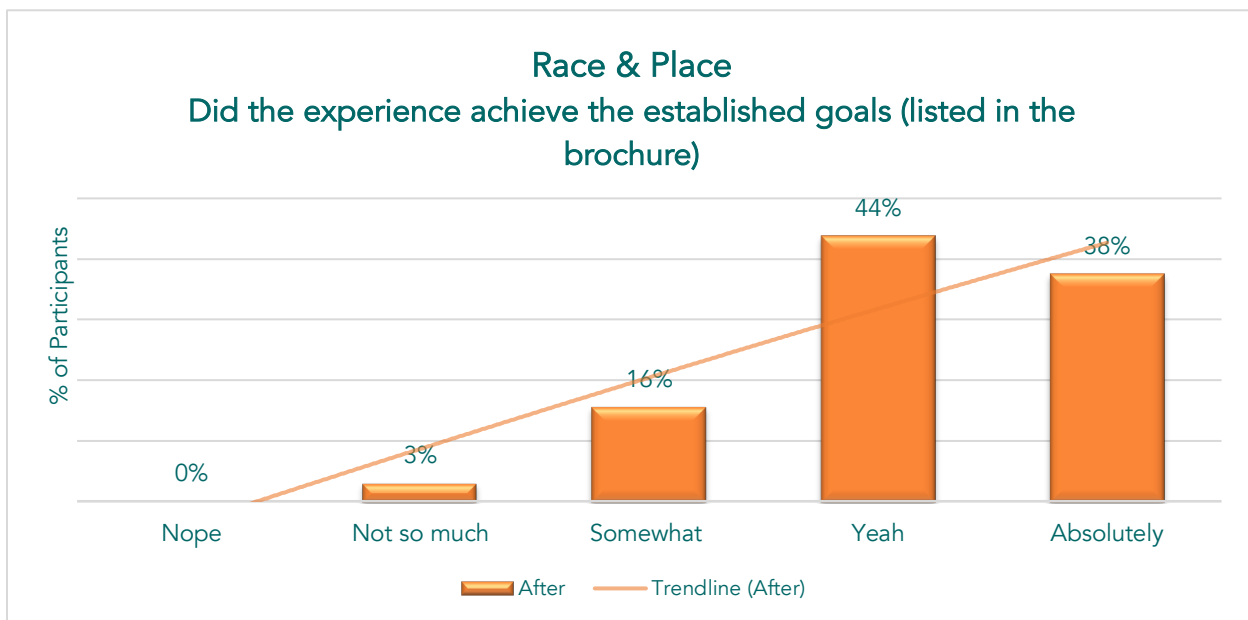
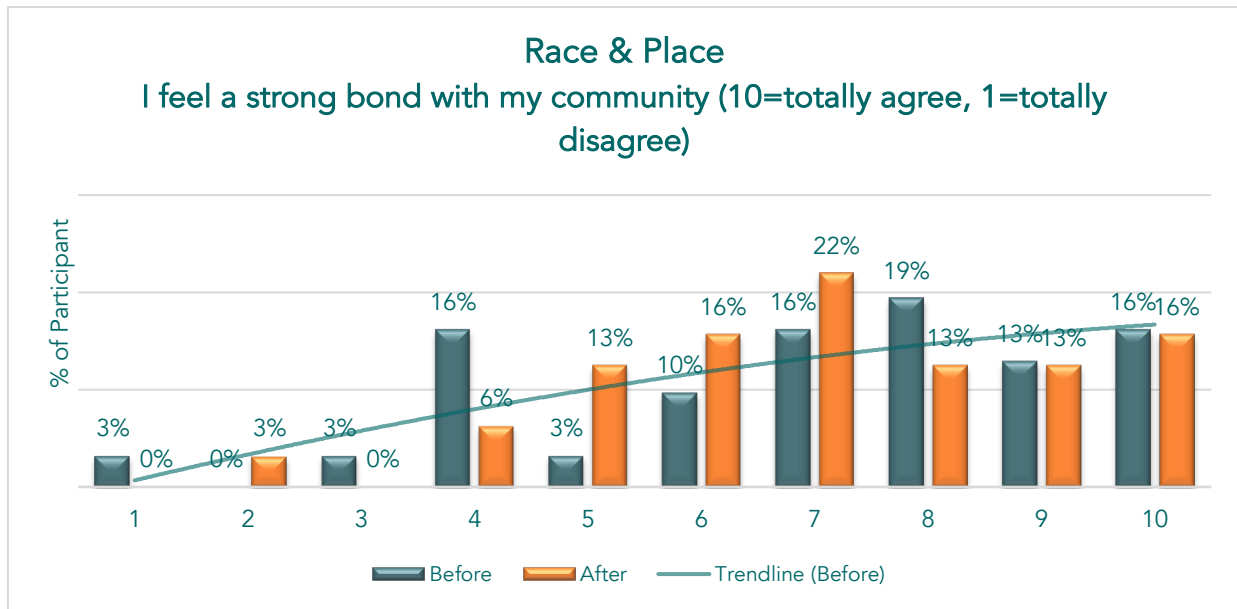
#### 4.3.4 Listening

Listening has been a common theme throughout the entire dialogue. Participants were "appreciative of the structured dialogue" and wanted to "find a community table to have diverse groups". As participants learned more about the history of housing inequity in Milwaukee, they felt the need to listen to different perspectives.



## Feedback Forms

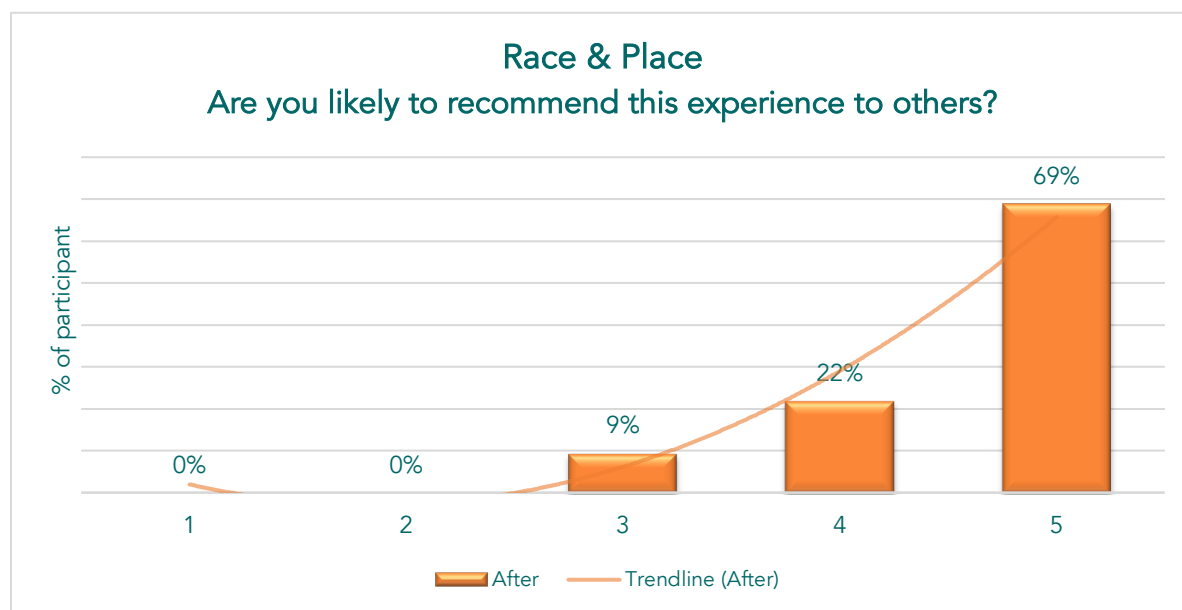




#### Why and why not?

- Because it's an open door to communicate and learn
- To get you intrigue and ask more questions
- To open your eyes to what is happening till the day of today
- The group had a lot of people with different experience
- Good facilitation
- The circle sharing was great
- Strengthen bonds as we shared

- This is the work that builds
- Addressed history of housing segregation vis storytelling. Give people the ability to speak and be heard
- Not enough stories about read hardship
- Real experiences or have to meet and form friendship with black people
- Great dialogue
- Yes, it is a starting place
- It helped to provide context for the little I knew about Milwaukee housing segregation, and also taught me more about the topic. It clarified those concrete actions that I was presently unaware of.
- Heard from participants of the ..... learning more listened to others stories.
- Lots good but we need more
- Maybe a more targeted focus? Even housing inequity is so ....
- Maybe a more targeted focus? Even housing inequity is so ....
- Goals: 1. Could have focused more on the earn being done, to set up a discussion on the solutions. 2. Not so much. 3. Yes! 4. Not really when will we see each other again?
- While the speaker's stories were interesting and added a new perspective, I am not sure I could new information about the history of segregation and housing inequity
- Good talk
- Sharing of personal stories related to Race, Housing, Peace. Open sharing



### Why and why not?

- Because it's a treat to get a brainstorm to make a better life for all Milwaukee
- Leader of our group outstanding! Fair, encouraging, friendly.

- Very positive experience. Excellent facilitation and appropriate group rules
- These discussions are unavailable – beyond the content, actually teaching people how to talk to each other respectfully
- Welcoming space
- I really liked it... others may not.
- Creative Dialogue works
- This is the 3rd time I have attended an event. Love them!
- In all of the dialogues I have attended participants seem to value the experience of listening, learning, community building
- People commonly understand others once they learn their perspective
- Yes, it's a start
- I think it is helpful to come together with ....different ....to discuss their topics.
- Good talk
- Learn a lot. Great moderator pays!

**Question Round One:** *“Share a detail from one of the stories that personally resonated with you or your life experience? A detail may resonate with you because it’s similar to your life or significantly different than your experience.”*

### 1.1 Unaware

- I was driving into Milwaukee and was listening to the radio when a report of a riot was reported going on around 3rd street at the time. I began to fear that the city was going to go up in flames; I discovered there was a serious segregation issue going on that I was unaware living on 54th street at the time.
- The second storytellers story did resonate with me. I work as a recreation specialist for Milwaukee County. . . . I can appreciate the history offered by Mr. Shakespeare~ because prior to hearing his story, I had no historical frame of reference with respect to the history of housing discrimination, here in Milwaukee. During the summer months I am assigned to the far North Side of Milwaukee and my staff is mostly African American and I have been in conversations with them in the past regarding quality of life issues, and to a person. . . . their visions for their communities are exactly the same as people who live where I live”.

#### 1.1.1 Multicultural Childhood

- When I came to Milwaukee we lived on Canal St. We called the area between 16th to about 30th St between the two viaducts “under the hill.” There were still trolleys at that time. I went to 27th St School. It was multicultural and I never thought that Blacks and Whites lived in separate areas because we all got along in school. We always traveled in groups and sometimes crossed the 27th St bridge to go to the movies. It was rare that we went beyond National Ave. That was the dividing line when I was growing up but I didn’t understand there was housing discrimination. Maybe that’s an advantage of being young.
- The story about Jackie’s experience with the eviction process resonated with me. I grew up in Austin and then lived in New York for about 11 years before I moved here. I’ve always lived and moved in mixed race communities. New York’s subways and streets are very diverse. When I moved here I didn’t have to consider my race and privilege when looking for housing. People’s advice was to look in White areas, but I wanted more diversity. I was surprised when I drove from northern suburbs south to see how segregated we are. I’ve never lived in a place where segregation is that evident.

### 1.1.2 Privilege

- During my time as an EX FABULA Fellow, I was part of a book club which convened in Ozaukee County on a weekly basis. The book club, had been reading the book evicted and there was a woman, in the club that I was close to that made the comment. . . “Some of those people just need to work hard and focus” my response was to point out how her White Privilege enabled her to procure financial resources and be accepted most anywhere she desired to reside. The next week she informed me that she never thought of how her being White in this society worked to her advantage and that how persons of color, have to contend with things in their lives that have no place in her world view or thought process.”
- I grew up in a segregated white community in Chicago, Illinois. I accepted a job as a “Housing Tester” in Saint Louis. During that time, I was involved with undercover investigations to advocate for persons of color seeking housing. I experienced some of the egregious actions by landlords and property managers... they are too numerous to list.”

### 1.1.3 Witnesses

- The story of the woman with a Black friend—once there was a student from UWM in my class. She was Black and we were friends. She was graduating and about to leave town for a new job. She needed to have a place to stay for one night and I offered to let her stay at my house. I thought it would be a good thing but my neighbors let it be known that they didn’t like it. I didn’t know why I shouldn’t feel comfortable offering up my home to someone in need. It was the beginning of my thinking about the prejudice conditions that surround me and begin to stand up for something that was a wrong. What I felt by providing a need should have been natural but not everyone feels that way.
- My husband and I own three duplexes around the city one being on North 81st street, we had a young black man who worked and was wearing a TWC uniform to fill out an application for rental of unit. After doing our references we did agree to renting the unit to he and his mother, the neighbors were upset but eventually they accepted the Youngman and his mom they stayed for a couple of years.
- “I wish I would have asked” I don’t remember a lot about the riots, my parents used to talk about Fr. Gropi and I remember reading an article in the Journal/Sentinel about generational problems. While growing up I watched as friends and neighbors moved away at the time when A.O Smith jobs were filling up and the neighborhood became more diverse. I wanted to know if things have changed or gotten better as far as the racial diversity, I come to the city from time to time to see my sister.

- I apologize for being late, I got the times mixed up and missed all the story telling. However; I would like to address something that is real personal to me. I have witness during my life here in Milwaukee, the exiting of people and families, that have the resources to do so. Once they save up and get themselves together, especially if they have a family, I have witnessed this exodus that leaves the community void of leadership and resources. That is currently what I am faced with, I now have a job that can afford me the opportunity to move to a “safer” neighborhood, because I do have minor children in my home. I am torn between staying and risking quite a bit in order to be an example and help to my community.”

#### 1.1.4 Alternative Narratives

- “They are doing this because I am Black”, I’ve had a very different experience in my life. First let me say I have never been refused housing or the right to rent; only because of my finances a few times. I worked in Mental Health and I had a Black client I was working with on finding housing and I discovered he had very little for content and use within the housing. I recalled I had a Sears card I hadn’t used in awhile so my client and I proceeded to go to Sears and shop. Finally we get to the checkout counter and we place lots of things up for purchase. After a while I noticed it was taking an awfully long time for us to be checked out; well I later found out that Sears had called my job and someone had stolen my card and they described me as the robber. I called sears and they apologized, I told the representative I was cutting up my card and I would never shop there again.
- My first job out of college was at a nonprofit organization that dealt with evictions and I found that people do not understand some of the technical rules surrounding eviction. One of the clients I was assigned had a hard time understanding that she didn’t dot all of her I’s and crossed all of her T’s. I found difficulty trying to understand the racial context or view of what was happening.

### 1.2 First Hand Experience

- I came here to Milwaukee and got married. I tried to buy a house and each time the home I was looking to buy was already sold, had another offer, or no longer available. After a while I knew that they were lying. I had my husband call the same realtors and they were willing to sell to him. The problems of unfair housing are still happening today.
- “They are doing this because I am Black”, my father changed because of an experience he had in the 50’s and 60’s of prejudice against African Americans. My father enjoyed spending time outside in his garden, the Parish Priest that was appointed to the parish was African American the priest that the garden was beautiful, so he and my dad had conversations about the garden and they grew close. My dad began to get push back

from the neighbors and he didn't understand why, that was the beginning of his change from prejudice.

- My parents participated in the open housing marches. I was born in 1965 the issue of race has been with me my entire life. The more you look at these issues the more complex and convoluted it becomes. We need open communications. I try not to deal with things on a broad basis I prefer to deal with issues on a one on one basis.

### 1.3 Gratitude

- It's easy for me to take for granted to pay rent...I hope I remember to be thankful and being aware of others who can't pay.
- I'm grateful. Other people have bigger issues.

### 1.4 Impact

- I'm learning the history of the March. I've learned much but it is too immense to feel the history in the room with you.
- I wish I was more certain, had more clarity. In that time, it was clear to them. I had an actual depressive episode after Trump was elected. I questioned my own impact, the impact of my work, if this could happen. I want to know what to do and have the courage to do it.

### 1.5 Listening

- I also resonate with the last story. I had a discomfort with the story because he assumed... he didn't know the whole story. Why couldn't he ask "Why didn't you pay the rent?" Why can't we stop and listen to people's stories. She was sharing and she was ignored.

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**Question Round Two:** *"What's one thing that you feel needs to be done to repair the harm done by Milwaukee's history of housing inequity?"*

## 2.1 Public Policy

### 2.1.1 Reparations & Improvement in Economic Conditions

- There is a need for reparations. We have to address institutional racism. We need a government mandate and subsidy that ensures affordable housing. Hence people should only have a certain income go toward their housing.
- I'm not sure where to start - there are so many facets. We need to promote and support home ownership as a way to pass wealth to the next generation. At the programming level we can increase home ownership by increasing affordable housing and supporting buyers through all the steps of the purchase process.



- We need to return industry to the neighborhoods. There was a time when people could walk to work, school, grocery store, etc. It seems it shouldn't be hard to get a workforce. A city like Milwaukee with neighborhoods should be more attractive to industry. We need complicated, well-paying jobs that require teamwork.

#### 2.1.2 Systematic Overhaul

- One thing I feel is actively challenging things that are that way (towards inequity) or leading down that path. A lot of community decisions are done in a forum by people who propose they are doing the best thing—but with ulterior motives. How do I advocate for this? Challenging it does get to the root of the problem and is really important. Public policy is something that I can identify with as an urban planner.
- This is a systemic problem. I can't just say one thing. No. 1 is accountability for improving education, improving job opportunities, improving legal services. Also, we need more circles (like this). That would improve chances for landlords to learn

#### 2.1.3 Improvement in Criminal Justice System

- I moved to Milwaukee last year and have no sense of the history of the housing challenges faced by many here in this city. I do however; see the imbalance in court, in particular the evictions and the impact on families and the community. In my opinion there is an overwhelming amount of "Systemic Corruption" in legislation, the courts, etc. I see, on a daily basis a loss of humanity in the sense that some folks put money over lives and it is a shame.

#### 2.1.4 Education Equality

- The one thing to work on is the school system. Children went to neighborhood school. Other cities promoted integration across the city. Quality education should be for everyone and they should be college bound.
- I travel to other schools in MPS. Milwaukee should start w/ schools. Many parents don't want to go to certain schools because there are no resources. There should be an expanded effort to help the students.
- One way to change this is to avoid the ideology of desiring to live in the "better neighborhoods." If all schools are the same, then there won't be the problem of people wanting to move into those so called better places for their children. What if we switch it around and had the best schools in the common neighborhoods? The support needs to be for the lesser nationalities and where they lived.
- The question offers opportunity to unshackle my filter, to dream out loud. Those knowledgeable in the history should move out into the community and teach. The

corrupted educational system doesn't look at systems, only symptoms. There's a need to give students more credit to think for themselves.

## 2.2 Communication & Relationship Building

### 2.2.1 Relationship Building

- For me it is about relationships, people getting to know one another. My wife and I have a biracial adopted son who is a school teacher and he teaches at a predominantly black school. I go on a lot of the outings with him and the students and it's been really good. One time he took me to his classroom and he introduced me as his dad, the students didn't believe him at first.
- I feel the same; it's about building personal relationships with all people. It's important to get to know the person not the race. I was a part time teacher and I taught reading at a predominantly black school and one of my friends said to me "You know that you are the only white teacher"? I will say when you get to know people you don't see black or white.

### 2.2.2 Communication

- What we're doing today and other similar events around the city is one of the best things we can do. As an "old White" woman I don't have opportunities to interact socially with people other than Whites. I had Black co-workers but don't see them now that I'm retired. Systems and laws have changed - discrimination is more subtle. The more we know each other on all levels the better.
- Also, we need more circles (like this). That would improve chances for landlords to learn

## 2.3 Personal Action & Self Education

- I have been living in Milwaukee for two months. I read the book Evicted. I live in Riverwest and have been told not to go past Holton St. The language changes when certain people are described. I grew up in section eight housing and was homeless. I want to educate artistically those who are concerned with social issues.
- We need to educate about housing inequality. I don't know a lot and most don't know a lot. We need to educate about the harm done.
- It is important to be nice to others and accept their differences. I talk to myself regarding this. I want to help bus riders. My daughter tells me to not get involved. I was looked as an elitist for redirecting behaviors on the bus. I live w/ people who believe that they are not racists, but I listen the conversations. They are racists. I didn't know about Milwaukee until I lived here.

## 2.4 No Repairs

- Now, I see no reason to attempt to repair these systems, really, because in my opinion, people feel best when they are with folks who look like them, have similar values. My mother currently along with my sister reside in Greenfield with my Sister. My mother is always complaining that there are NO Black Folks out here!

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**Question Round Three:** *"What do you feel your role is in creating a more equitable community?"*

## 3.1 Power & Privilege

- I am a curator at the Sheboygan Art Center. I try to get people of diverse backgrounds to thematically speak on our exhibits. In my community I feel as though I am a facilitator who needs to share space. I do a lot of discussing with others about this space.
- I work in restorative justice practices. I feel a sense of urgency to do this as much as possible in many arenas. My 3 kids are all active in social justice. I help them. As an activist I go to gatherings but am sometimes confused about the effectiveness. I struggle with that. As a white it's very important to be aware and figure out how to share that awareness.
- Leading by example is my personal role. It's important to recognize privilege. A good place to be is to be an example for others. Hopefully if people see my contributions, the others will acknowledge their privilege. It's natural to accept others from similar backgrounds. I have leadership qualities.

## 3.2 Communication & Direct Engagement

### 3.2.1 Engagement

- Direct engagement
- Be in close proximity to the problems
- Consistent Engagement

### 3.2.2 Open Dialogue

- I am going to start with myself by taking opportunity in participation in dialogue with others. I have the opportunity now to go to coffee shops and have conversations; even my church is now using name tags. It's important to find ways to eliminate those fears.

### 3.2.3 Volunteerism & Advocacy

- My role as an individual is to promote more economic opportunity in Milwaukee as opposed to the suburbs. I'm reading about Silicon Valley growth. There are no large sites

here like CA but neighborhoods full of people. I go to Harbor Commission hearings to advocate for upgrading and maintaining our harbors. There could be employment opportunities there.

- I'm still searching for myself. Being born into a world of so much promise and opportunity you get lost. We're all trying to find how we fit into the puzzle. I think of the Adam and Eve story. Eve could have been ashamed or guilty but gave birth to a promise. I can work with youth and help them understand their promises.

#### 3.2.4 Time & Skills

- I'm an architect and I know there's a huge disparity—my friend became the 7th Black architect in Wisconsin—this is awful. He works towards helping young people of color. I once participated in an 8-week bilingual school teaching 1st and 2nd graders about architecture. We spent time looking at neighborhoods, blocks, and homes; designing and building. It was great seeing their reaction as they learned so much I need to find a way to do this again and to harness that energy.

#### 3.2.5 Listen & Accept

- I feel for me it is about attending more events like this is the first step and becoming more accepting of the differences and opinions of others. I use to be prejudice but I've gotten over it by being accepting and getting an understanding.

### 3.3 Unsure

- I have the luxury of thinking about this question because I am apart of Legal Action. As I reach my midlife I look at my kids and how they see inequality. I wonder how they will deal with un- equitable communities.
- My partner is half-black. I wonder how we will do things in the future. I work with the YWCA. The question is how do I reach out and uplift other neighbors that don't have the advantages that I do?

### 3.4 Personal Action

- Do no harm [personal motto].
- Stay true to my values.
- Just being my Real Self.
- It begins with small things like greeting strangers and extending myself. Speaking out is hard for me. I also need to educate myself - maybe start with books and movies. We need to find a way to support public education. My grandchildren in Brookfield are getting an education that is very different from many Milwaukee children. It's encouraging to see some local initiatives like NML using locals for glass making and supporting minority

contractors. It seems that a sense of social justice is developing that needs to be supported.

## Connected Conversation & Parting Words

### 4.1 Political Climate

- The current political state of affairs and the impact it has on us all.
- Raising kids is a challenge in this new political climate.

### 4.2 Race Relations & Cultural Divides

- We do not live in a “Post Racial Society.”

#### 4.2.1 Neighborhood Concerns

- Citizens are not letting officials in to check the lead pipes. There is a cultural disconnect.
- Gentrification / Displacement.

#### 4.2.2 Cultural Divides & Shame

- My husband was astonished that he had to constantly explain my accent to people. I’ve never felt so bad; I’ve lived other places where I didn’t have to deal with this.
- Coming from NY City there appears to be (in Milwaukee) a cut and dry aspect to neighborhood involvement.
- I would say that I’m from Milwaukee. I wouldn’t talk about my ancestors. My dad grew up knowing about the marches firsthand. When I talk to him there’s shame in his family who are no longer talking because of their stand—deep shame that could happen in our family is unsettling. My uncle was on a committee that decided which neighborhoods were going to be demolished first—I hate to admit this about my family.
- If we don’t share the experiences first hand they won’t get better. Whenever I ask someone here where they come from they always start talking about their ancestry 5 generations ago. Why is it so important that people jump to ancestry?

### 4.3 Personal Action & Doing the Right Thing

#### 4.3.1 Self-Education

- I pledge to educate myself. I don’t know enough history re: Redlining. I just learned about this issue today.

#### 4.3.2 Comfort Zone

- It has to start with one’s self.
- I think we all have to find our level of what we are capable and comfortable with to take part in making things better for all.

#### 4.3.3 Actionable Solutions

- I was thinking about bringing things together—how people have things in common no matter their nationality—sports! When you're rooting for a team it doesn't matter who you are—maybe this is a way of bringing people together.
- How do you change who will live in your houses? Maybe we can create a program where people can get help buying cheap homes. Some houses can be bought and fixed up.

#### 4.3.4 Listening

- Agree x's 4 appreciative of the structured dialogue.
- Find a community table to have diverse groups.