

# Falcon Heights Community Conversation 1: February 16, 2017

## Analysis of Key Themes

*Collated by: Elizabeth Dressel*

*Master of Art in Urban and Regional Planning student at University of Minnesota, Humphrey School of Public Affairs*

### **Background**

On February 16, 2017 nearly 100 people attended the first of a series of five community conversations on inclusion and policing. Information gathered at the community conversations will inform recommendations that the Falcon Heights Task Force on Inclusion and Policing will make to the Falcon Heights City Council in the spring of this year.

These are frequently expressed statements, grouped by theme. They are not consensus statements.

### **First Circle: Participants shared why they came and their most important personal value.**

*Why did people come?*

- Resident of Falcon Heights
- Out of love for the community.
- Participation is a way to be active and involved.
- Feel dismay, shock, outrage, anger, upset over Philando Castile's death
- Want to solve problems and see change

*Personal Values*

- **Compassion, Caring, Empathy, Love:** Treating others as you want to be treated. Caring for others. Being open to others perspectives. Some referred to their religious faith in this context.
- **Equality and Equity:** Ensuring all have equal opportunities and that laws apply equally regardless of race.
- **Honesty and Openness:** Being open, thoughtful, truthful, having difficult conversations.
- **Integrity**
- **Relationships, Community, Connection:** Building understanding through relationships. Being connected with others and sharing experiences.
- **Respect, Dignity, Tolerance, Inclusion:** Creating mutual respect. Honoring others. Treating people with dignity.
- Other personal values, not easily grouped with larger themes: Learning. Courage. Forgiveness. Professionalism. Hope.

### **Second Circle: Participants shared the value they would most like their neighbors and public officials to demonstrate, and why.**

- **Educate Selves and Seek Diverse Perspectives:** Seeking out others perspectives and being genuinely open-minded. Listening to others, especially those we might not want to listen to. Recognizing our own individual implicit biases.

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- **Embrace the Greater Good:** Creating a community beyond oneself and thinking beyond individual values. Working to harmonize the needs of all while understanding different individuals need different things.
- **Empathy and Compassion:** Upholding that we all want the same things as human beings. Insisting that officers need to engage and care.
- **Equity and Equality:** Fairness, inclusivity and equal justice.
- **Forge Strong Relationships and Have Meaningful Communication:** Creating a community by welcoming more diversity and welcoming new people into neighborhoods. Making all feel welcome and important regardless of race or age. Having honesty, creativity, and transparency in communication.
- **Honesty and Accountability:** Expecting honesty from elected officials. Holding everyone accountable for actions. Upholding honesty and transparent communication in all directions.
- **Honor Shared Humanity:** Having mutual respect. Recognizing the value of everyone and treating everyone as human beings. Finding a shared dignity and positive regard for neighbors and officials.
- **Take Courageous Actions:** Speaking up when we see something happening. Challenging others when we see or hear hurtful actions and comments. Being engaged and take action. Sensing that it is our responsibility to fix this.

### **Third Circle: Participants shared how they feel the community fails to live up to these values.**

- **Complacency:** People not speaking up, asking questions, and taking action.
- **Lack of knowledge, understanding, and awareness in the community:** Privilege playing into not knowing that things were different for people of color and into feeling like things were great in Falcon Heights. Not seeing the disparities in traffic stops and acknowledging bias.
- **Lack of integrity and accountability; Eroded trust:** Breakdown in communication, transparency, and honesty from elected officials. Police who don't represent values.
- **Frustration, anger, and disappointment:** Feeling that police and officials have failed them, linked by some to disappointment in themselves for not looking and noticing.
- **Fear and lack of safety:** People of color fear for personal safety and security.
- **Police values:** Need to find ways to support police officers in living up to community values. Need to examine the goals of the police, the revenue streams of the police, and pay attention to abusive practices by police and damaging incentives from revenue structure.

### **Fourth Circle: Participants shared how they would like to see the City of Falcon Heights heal and how they would like to see themselves, their neighbors, and their public officials demonstrate the values.**

- **Community Engagement, Conversations, Communication:** Conversations are important; these should be shared with the wider community. Let's get to know others and make time to connect. There should be diverse participation and events.
- **Measurements, Accountability, Transparency:** Make concrete decisions and have accountability and transparency. Leadership should be held accountable. Use statistics and feedback to create measurements.

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- **Possible actions:** Something should be done with the police contract. There needs to be better police training. Let's explore restorative justice models. Police should be out of the cars and in the community.
- **Take Action and Build Trust:** There needs to be action and communication by Mayor/City Council/Police. The community also needs to take action. Police should be part of the conversation.