

**REGULAR RACE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 19, 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Renni Bispham (for Chair Savanna Rovelstad) called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: REAC members Deanna Martinez, Eric Stahl, Jing Fong, Peggi Erickson, Renni Bispham, Savanna Rovelstad. Liaisons Clarence Moriwaki and Brenda Fantroy-Johnson.

Excused: Sue Wilmot

Special guests: Mayor Joe Deets and Commissioner Ashley Matthews.

MEETING MINUTES/MEETING AGENDA

MOTION I move to accept the April 28 minutes.

Eric/Peggi: The motion carried unanimously. 6-0

MOTION I move to accept the May 5 minutes.

Deanna/Eric: The motion carried unanimously. 6-0

No conflict of interest was submitted.

No public comment was made.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS GOING IN-PERSON STARTING IN JUNE

Ellen: The city plans to comply with the Public Meetings Act and the governor's proclamation that requires public meetings to be in person, with the provision for remote attendance when feasible and for remote public comment. City Hall has to be open to the public to attend the meeting.

The city's approach is to have committee meetings in person in City Hall's council chambers, starting at the beginning of June. We will provide public access via zoom in so far as we're able. but we've had some technical challenges. At this point, we don't feel that we can support a hybrid option; we have had some technical challenges in supporting the hybrid model.

Deanna: If you all choose to take that course, you do it knowing that you are choosing barriers over entry points and that is not in alignment with what the city has said that they want to do in regards to equity. This is coming out of personal or lived experience of being in an immune-compromised home. We are again putting up barriers for folks from traditionally marginalized communities to be a part of these committees.

Ellen: We are going to continue to record on Zoom and post those meetings so people should be able to watch them when the Zoom capacity is stable.

Peggi: It's a terrible decision in terms of climate. We've discovered a tool that lowers the state's carbon footprint probably by 50 to 70% and now we're going to raise it right back up by attending meetings in person.

I think the hybrid model is going to work best if everyone brings their computer and signs on to the Zoom meeting so that people can hear what everyone's saying.

Renni: I work in Seattle and I'm on the ferry. If I miss the 4:45 I can easily sign into Zoom and be on the call. If it can work this way, why can't I just continue to do it this way?

Ellen: I think it is the city's intention to be flexible wherever we can be, and certainly it is everyone's goal to support the committee's because the committees provide a valuable input for the Council. It can't be that way for everybody because the governor's proclamation states that we need to provide public access in person.

Jing: I understand the public access part, but what if we decided as a group to go on Zoom versus in person. We have some people who want to fully participate and can't.

Ellen: All remote in solidarity doesn't comply with Open Public Meetings Act. We need to provide a public in-person option for the public to attend the meetings.

Savanna: Access changed when the pandemic hit; it created a virtual world. Virtual participation has assisted in furthering equity. We will not be doing what the Advisory Committee intended if we cut off our pathways of openness, as Deanna said. It's necessary to keep that stance and allow the public to be informed and educated. It's also hard when we have people who are not able to be out. The pandemic is still a thing.

Eric: I'm looking at the MRC website, which is the municipal legal advisory website. This is directed to our Council members who are on the call. It seems that there is some flexibility in the in-person meeting requirement that a local agency can't hold remote meetings unless it determines that there are reasonable safety issues at stake. In other words, if it's not reasonably safe to have an in-person meeting, you can go back to remote meetings.

I don't know about everyone else, but you know I talked to three people today we just picked it up (COVID). I would urge our Council members to watch the numbers and to at least consider using that flexibility to stay remote for a while longer, if nothing else for health and safety reasons, because I don't think the pandemic is over. I think requiring us to meet in person poses a health risk to everyone involved.

REFLECTIONS ON GARE CONFERENCE

Joe Deets: Bainbridge was very well-represented. I was inspired by the iftar (Muslim meal that breaks fast) and I really enjoyed listening to John Powell on targeted universalism.

I attended an online workshop on the first day where they were talking about anti debt and anti-democratic incidences that were occurring in a lot of small jurisdiction small cities throughout the country. People, particularly women of color, whether they were a candidate for office or whether they held office, were often harassed and being intimidated.

It struck me that we should we be looking at issues in the same way we look at natural disasters. Under disaster preparedness you actually have a plan when things happen—who's in charge, and what do we do—instead of always being surprised.

Ashley Matthews: I feel like we're probably somewhere between the normalized and the organized. I think we shouldn't stay in that normalize because we are definitely ready to organize. We're in our silos right now. There's REAC. There's MAC. There's Bainbridge Black. There are definitely allies in our community. This experience showed me how important it was to step outside of our silos. We have a deeper community of allies who would definitely want to partake with us on this work. Let's not focus on those who are just never going to be an ally and are never going to want this to work.

They also touched on the importance of how to care for yourself, how to receive care, and how to ask for it. I attend a session on building a budget framework for racial equity. It hit home that these are not abstract ideas; these are action plans that costs money, not just an investment of our time.

Brenda: You know, whenever we're in a room with people and they're given us their plans, whether it's sewage plans or planning plans, the question that we need to ask is *what does that mean for equity?*

Change government to make it work for all people. It's not enough to just be an activist, you have to also be an organizer. How do we measure this? PSRC is working on their equity tracker. I'm going to look at that demo to see how it works.

“Government is the container where everybody belongs.” We have to point out to people that what you're doing is making me feel like an “other.” This is all about me belonging because you already belong; it's about me belonging, too.

I actually felt like I had been away to a spa. For me, it was a part of self-care. We get in the trenches and we feel like we're all by ourselves. This is why self-help groups work because you're in there with the same people going through the same problem and you're trying to come up with the same solution. That's what GARE felt like. It felt like a self-help group for people who are working to try to combat racism and all the other isms.

Peggi: I looked around the table to see the nine of us and my heart kind of melted. It's been three years trying to join forces between the city, Council and REAC. It did my heart good to have us there together.

The workshop that impacted me the most was on decolonization presented by an arts and culture group from Vancouver British Columbia. They talked about how they work with the tribes. They set aside a lot of cultural funding and let the tribes decide how that would be used. It made me reflect on how do we on Bainbridge Island work with our local tribes. How do we support their initiatives and their interests? How do we take leads or leadership from them?

Ellen: It was a nice chance to meet in person and a treat to spend a couple of days thinking. It helps to take time to invest in important topics and to look at them from different perspectives —that's not something that is typical for me. I heard often that this is not a sprint but a marathon.

Clarence: What impressed me the most was the quality of these experts at the breakout sessions. I also noticed how engaged everybody was in the breakout sessions and gatherings in the big hall, connecting with the speakers. That's a community thing.

I was especially impressed by the group from Fairfax County, northern Virginia. It's worked on race equity for a decade or decade and a half. As we plan and look forward, we have to be patient. It doesn't happen overnight. I took that to heart.

Jing: Fairfax County inspired me to say "Let's plant those seeds now." Another thing I got out of one of the sessions was the question, *How do we move things along? How do we get people invested in race equity?* The panel's response was to elect people who believe in race equity and are committed to it. Make this one of your questions and your benchmarks when you're looking at candidates. Also, hire people who are committed to race equity and can make that happen. This reflects on human resources and how we recruit and identify. We shouldn't expect people to come to us; we should go to places where we can find BIPOC candidates and people who are committed to race equity.

Another takeaway was community, community, community. Engage community from the very beginning and throughout the process because in the end we are serving community.

Accountability. You can have the greatest policies in the world when it comes to race equity but if you don't hold your departments and your elected officials accountable to carrying them out it's just a pretty policy that sits on the shelf. Mechanisms to keep them in place, including people to enforce them, have to exist. It reconfirmed that there needs to be either a race equity officer or somebody within the city to uphold a race equity plan and policy that we have yet to adopt.

Deanna: You need culture shifters—people who are willing to shift culture. There's something that predates racism and that's the culture part, the colonialism part that we have to grasp, or we are not taking care of all of all the parts.

There was an excitement for me of having shared understanding of language. Equity work is not just core values, it's a set of skills. When I'm speaking, I'm not always sure if the message is getting across. The message isn't always going to get across if others don't share that language and those understandings of those words.

Being an activist is my background and foundation. Sometimes it's a struggle to merge those things with government and with systems that were not built for you, and, in many cases, built against you.

I went to the overview of the City of Portland Tribal Relations. They had a training on how to communicate with each other because you're really talking about different cultures. When people do not have an understanding of your culture, when you have different value systems, along with all of the added history, it's going to be really difficult to have productive conversations not understanding, not knowing where other people are coming from.

Savanna: We have to be willing to teach and create and sit in spaces with vulnerability and open lines of communication. Communication, communication, communication.

Leading from a racial equity lens requires community and accountability. It's a grassroots effort that requires acknowledging power and privilege in all sectors and coming together to create change. Standing in allyship isn't sufficient with equity work. One has to actually understand the power of community and let them lead. Know who has access to power and what risks my allies or peers can take.

It was really nice to be in the same space as folks that understand where we're coming from. It was invigorating to come back and feel like I went to a soul spa. I'm ready to do some more work so sign me up. I really appreciate having so many people from my committee and from the city show their support for race equity. Let's talk about community at the center, the beginning middle and end of what we do.

Jing: First, it starts with listening and it starts with going out into community, not expecting community to come to us or to the city. Department directors or community leaders have come to REAC with an idea or a policy and they're not quite sure how to get in touch with BIPOC communities. I don't know how to be in touch with those people and I want to understand how this may impact BIPOC communities .

Brenda: The other day, I met the new planning director. She and I both right away started talking the same language. We talked about the voice of the customer and how everything we do is around the customer. I thought wouldn't it be great if we started listening to the voice of the community. How do we make sure that the community knows that their voice is important? It's really the only voice that we need to listen to.

We need to go out to where people live and talk to them about what they want you know. We also need to have more community events. What if we had a big barbecue? Invite local businesses? The creative district is planning a lot of events and I wonder if we can piggyback on some of these events and have some information ready for people, so that we can find out the community wants—some sort of informal survey at the beginning to find out how we can tailor it to something more direct something more measurable.

We think we know who the leaders are in the community, we think we know what the community wants. We don't. We don't know anything. We just know what we've been told. It may just be wrong, especially when it comes to tribal nations. It's about building relationships with groups before we start asking groups for things.

Joe: Be available. Since I was first elected, I've had open office hours. I love the idea of gatherings, the BBQ that Brenda mentioned. Breaking bread with people is powerful.

Eric: I tried to attend some of the budgeting and finance stuff since I'm the finance subcommittee for this group. My takeaway from the city of Dallas was on institutionalizing and normalizing asking equity-based questions in their budget process. They talked about how it's now fairly normal for every department when they're budgeting to ask specifically how these decisions are going to affect BIPOC people. What are you doing to consider the equitable impacts of every spending decision. They have an equity tool that they use for budgeting. I think the end game is for us is figuring out how to reach out to people, but also that we're institutionalizing City Hall processes that consider all of these issues, and looking for and finding tools that that will make this happen automatically.

Deanna: The community benefits agreements feels like something that would be beneficial for us all to look into in regard to community.

Renni: What I heard was that we need to be strategic about what we're doing and we need to find ways to normalize, standardize, operationalize.

One concrete thing that we can do is have additional opportunities for community gatherings.

We need the council to be available to the community, other than just at the meetings. We also need to make an attempt to bake equity and inclusion into our policies and practice within the government. We can take a look at the community benefit agreements and find our champions, those who are already on the journey and willing to be allies and co-conspirators. We're also looking to put together a coalition of community leaders. These are some things I heard that we could try from the GARE conference.

Peggi: One thing I would like to see going forward is some way for us to check in on what initiatives are going on, what the city is doing, what the Council is doing, what REAC is doing and how we're moving equity forward.

Joe: Brenda, Clarence, Ashley, Ellen, and I got together and we asked ourselves what we want to do this year. We said get an equity officer, training and equity lens.

Jing: it would be wonderful to understand and learn about what executive leadership and Scott Winn are doing. Likewise, once council agrees on training, where they're going to get the training and to understand where that's headed.

REAC DRAFT WORK PLAN

Jing: On Monday, I sent each member a latest work plan draft to prepare for our discussion tonight with the hope and goal of making any amendments and approving it so that we can present it to city council. Two particular areas where I have questions are budget and tactics—did I overthink and therefore don't need.

Eric: One item I thought we might consider adding is developing a race equity plan and making recommendations for a toolkit. That would be a big ticket item. We might want to encourage the City Council to bring in a consultant or to extend Scott Winn's work. I don't see any reason why we wouldn't want to include a line item for that. It would be at least five-digits. , and you know how much should it be it's a imagine a big ticket, you know at least five digits.

Eric Stahl: I don't know what Scott's contract was but I don't think it was six figures. I have in mind 30 hours or 30 grand.

Ellen: I can get that information for you. It's more than 30 hours.

Jing: Would that item be a REAC item if a race equity toolkit was to be developed for the city and city department use?

Eric Stahl: That's a good question for our liaisons.

Brenda: If the whole city's going to use it, it would be in the city's budget. It shouldn't come out of your budget.

Eric: I've got specific budget change suggestions and then a one-word change. I'd like that to specify that we that provide *baseline* equity training or *general* equity training so that we're not suggesting this is the "be all and end all" of the training program.

Jing: Based on what I'm hearing I'm probably going to have to go through one more revision and share it with our liaisons and Ellen. This means that we might have to do another round at the beginning of our first June meeting because I don't know any other way we would be able to get a decision made with our current quorum.

Please get your amendments or recommendations to me no later than next Wednesday.

Deanna: We asked for money to support the Kitsap County Juneteenth event. I imagine this will be a recurring annual thing. Is that something that we should have in our budget for the future?

Ellen: An annual city contribution to the Bremerton event would be built into the budget process—we would just plan for it. That would be the kind of decision that the City Council would make through the budget process.

Peggi: The events and outreach committee estimated \$100 each for Juneteenth speakers. Our senior center partners told us that they give their speakers \$250. Are we being cheapskates? It's the same problem if we underpay as if we ask them to do things for free. Are there guidelines?

Ellen: I don't think I can give you any guidance on the speaker's fees.

Renni: There will be money needed for onboarding new people, for training, hopefully, some GARE training, within the first 60 days of coming on. I'll do a little research on that and give you a number.

Peggi: \$50 for the online workshops that are out there now.

Clarence: I do this for a living. My minimum honorarium is \$300 plus travel expenses for a full PowerPoint presentation. I've also organized a lot of public events around the island I've never paid anybody to be the keynote speaker. I would think for a community event that people would just want to do it just because they support you so that's going to be your call on how you want to proceed.

Peggi: We decided that we're not going to ask people of color to come to the island to speak and open our events without giving them an honorarium. That's a decision I think we made earlier on, maybe before you joined us as a liaison, Clarence. For Juneteenth, we're going to pay \$100 per person, but going forward we may do something different.

For our work plan, we might consider a Race Forward conference in the fall. You can sign up online It's going to be in Phoenix. It's another training opportunity for not only us but city council. It should be part of our onboarding process and if people on our committee haven't had a chance to go to any of the training online or to the GARE foundation's training, there is the Building Racial Equity training GARE has online.

Deanna: Clarence, I think that shared reciprocity between BIPOC groups might be a little different than representing governments. When it comes to a government, everything from local to federal, I don't think it can be both ways. I don't think that we can have money being such a big part of our culture and then say, "Oh, but none for you." I think when it comes to this government that speakers should be paid absolutely .

Jing: People are going to send me their amendments no later than Wednesday the 25th. I will incorporate them and then send that final document to REAC members, our liaisons, and Ellen.

Peggi: Do we send it to our liaison and they take it to the Council, or do we send it to the whole Council and asked our liaisons to put it on the agenda?

Ellen: The Race Equity Advisory committee work plan has been on the agenda for quite some time in terms of just holding space and waiting for it to be ready to go. So when you when the committee as a whole passes the work plan as a recommendation to the Council then it'll be ready to be considered. There's time on the agenda, maybe in June or July, depending on when you're done.

The mechanics would be for the committee to approve the work plan by motion. The Chair would send it to me, and I would put it on the agenda.

Typically, the chair of the committee or a representative of the Committee attends the Council meeting to make a presentation (what has happened in the past and what is coming)and take any questions that the Council has.

Peggi: I will dig around for a past PowerPoint.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Jing: This is with regards to the police court facility and the race equity lens motion that Brenda proposed and was approved. No RFQ submissions were received and therefore, Blair Chris, and Ellen proposed that the architect of record and the subcontractors, the architects and designers be available to answer any questions with regards to how these folks would apply a race equity lens to the building and for us to voice any concerns, any things that we want to see at this meeting. This has been punted to our next meeting, which is on the first Thursday in June 2.

Ellen: The city has decided to have Juneteenth be a holiday for the first time this. City Hall will be closed on Monday.

Peggi: I see this meeting with the architects as an opportunity for us to reach out to community and ask for input. I personally will reach out to Kitsap ERACE and some other organizations and let them know. And I will ask them to send me questions or attend the meeting and maybe present questions at the beginning. We talked a lot tonight about community, community, community. How are we going to include community in this conversation about the police court building? How do people think we can actually reach out to impacted people and groups and include their voice?

Jing: One way is to publish the agenda ahead of time—the sooner that we can get the agenda online and available the better. Another great way of promoting is to personally reach out to people in the Community.

It was unfortunate that the city didn't receive any submissions for that for that RFQ. One of the questions I will ask to the architect and subcontractors is what kind of experience, do they have applying race equity lens on the work they're about to do, especially with plans that are have already been developed. What kind of flexibility do we have?

Ellen: REAC appointments for four positions are scheduled for the 14th of June. In one case, I think that person will start right away and could potentially attend the meeting on the 16th. That was for James' position. The other terms roll on the 30th of June to the first of July.

We can share the names with you at the next meeting.

Deanna: How the new way of going back to meetings affect our special meeting with Bremerton REAC? I'll leave that and we can come back to that. with the new way of going back to meetings How does that affect our special meetings like.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.


Savanna Rovelstad, Chair 6/16/22
Date