

**REGULAR RACE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HARRISON BUILDING (NEW POLICE-COURT FACILITY)
JUNE 2, 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present: REAC members Eric Stahl, Jing Fong, Peggi Erickson, Renni Bispham, Savanna Rovelstad and Sue Wilmot.

Excused: Deanna Martinez, liaisons Clarence Moriwaki and Brenda Fantroy-Johnson.

Special guests: Chief of Police Joe Clark, Matthew Coates (architect, Coates Design), City Manager Blair King, Judge Sara McCulloch, Chris Wierzbicki (COBI Public Works Director). Community members.

PURPOSE: City council passed a motion to review the police-court facility through a race equity lens. REAC has talked about what this means but has not had the opportunity to discuss this with the people tasked with making this happen. Chief of Police Joe Clark, architect Matthew Coates, City Manager Blair King, Judge Sara McCulloch, and Public Works Director Chris Wierzbicki are here to help us understand the vision for the physical space and uses of the building, and how equity will be embedded.

A review of plans and walkthrough of the building will give community members and REAC background information to generate further questions and make meaningful recommendations.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Chris Wierzbicki: The design has been completed. This is now the window of time to consider hard structural changes i.e. rooms, bigger space. **We'll need questions or recommendations for hard changes by July 30.** We have more lead time for softer changes (non-structural) i.e. color, arts, fixtures—two months+.

Blair King: There's a time element here—the longer time goes by, the window of opportunity closes. Opportunity also depends on suggestion and cost. We got a great bid, which gives us more flexibility, in terms of cost. Example, there's a suggestion for the city's emergency operations center to be housed in this building. Chris and the architect are looking at that. If that is possible, the recommendation would go to council for a possible change order. Other considerations—Space for restorative justice? Is another entrance appropriate?

Chris: Get us your big picture ideas ASAP within next three weeks. We'll need time to look at potential cost, how easy or difficult those changes so we can get at least one iteration done in a week and finalize in about six weeks.

Goal is to open in fall 2023.

Community member: Is the name of the building fixed? Are you open to other names that talk to a broader array of functions like Justice Center. I like this better than police-court.

Blair: Current name is a working name. City managers don't pick colors or name buildings! Council will do this.

Eric Stahl: Our committee was given the charge to apply a race equity lens to the structure. We've wrestled with what this means. What will this building look like in 10-20 years? Two questions: Does our charge resonate with you in any way? Is there room for flexibility other than space for the emergency management center?

Matthew Coates: Help me understand race equity lens. Artwork came to my mind and that is low-hanging fruit. I came to this meeting with an open mind, hoping to learn more. I've never been invited to have a conversation like this for any building I've designed. This is an opportunity for me observe, listen, and help.

Regarding flexibility, we've taken it to the furthest degree. Big open work spaces can transition to anything over time. Electrical drops and lighting are flexible, movable. Changing rooms are not gender-specific—grab your stuff, grab a locker. The one bathroom on the main floor is single use.

Judge Sara McCulloch: This building was designed to last for 50 years. It can be this now and it can be this later. This building provides so much more space than anything we have now. We did a programming survey before the plans were drawn. This building was a compromise to fit into the budget from city council.

We would love to hear from you about the way it's been designed. One focus is meeting ADA accommodations. Elderly, aging and people who use wheelchairs more frequently use our facility.

One goal for the race equity lens is to make sure we are not putting out unintended consequences that will affect a group of people negatively. Bring your great minds and creative thinking to make sure we are not messing it up. We hope you will look at this and come up with ideas or identify what we're doing wrong. Why are they doing this this way?

Community member: I was wondering about the glass walls in the conference spaces and respect for people's privacy and dignity. Some people seek privacy, some don't have a preference, some people won't ask. What about blinds for those rooms so people have a choice?

Matthew: We could do that.

Community member: I'm curious about the 28 desks for police. How we use space matters. I'd like to see less policing in the future. Are we stuck with 28 desks for all these years?

Blair: Space for evidence an absolute. Designing for the size of the agency at the moment is bad. Our city hall is 20 years old. We are crafting new offices because we have more people – the building is now obsolete. We don't know 20 years down the road what we'll look like. In my lifetime, we didn't think there would be space needed for body-worn cameras. Now we need space to load and charge those cameras. There's a sweet spot for flexibility for what we don't know in the future.

Judge McCulloch: The original design was 17,000 sq. foot to accommodate the future. We've downsized a lot of things. In the planning process, it was taken into consideration that things will change. There are specialized things you have to have (taking people's guns, gun storage, processing intoxicated people), laws imposed by legislature that come into play and you want to do it right.

Peggi Erickson: Right now we have one community navigator, How would we plan for her and the work she does in this building?

Chief Clark: She has a private work space and access to the interview rooms. Our community health navigator started in Poulsbo as a shared resource. She is now full-time, replacing one officer position. The navigator is a conduit to connect people to state, county, and local mental health, housing, food resources and can make recommendations to these resources. She's also had victim advocacy training. Victim advocacy used to be only available in Port Orchard— not great for Bainbridge. She also works with the schools, seniors, and Bainbridge Youth Services.

Judge McCulloch: She is a great resource of support for families and understands how the process works on many levels. She does a lot of work that doesn't touch the court—lots of community service.

Chief Clark: Many referrals come from officers and also independently. If she doesn't have the answers, she knows who does. She is 9-5 and not a mental health clinician.

Blair: A growing trend is to have a mental health clinician on-call for immediate response or located within the police department. Slightly different from a navigator.

Community members: We'd like to see more of this!

Judge McCulloch: About seventy-five percent of cases are being solved with pre-trial diversion agreements. People get treatment—lots of social work at this level of court—then come back to see me. For offenders one to three times through the justice system, they are given opportunities to seek services, improve things. Many interventions that people wouldn't seek for themselves help change their lives.

Jing Fong: I'm not an interiors specialist, however, if REAC said there are some things that we'd like people to feel (safe, welcome, respected) or not to feel (trauma, fear) or identified some barriers, is there an interiors person on your team who could translate?

For example, I know there's a psychology of color, lighting, materials, how you enter a room. I know what things can do but I don't know the vehicle. We'd describe the scenario or landscape or desired outcome. How might you treat or remedy this?

Renni Bispham: Who is in charge of that? Do we talk to them directly?

Chris: We can help guide you. We can have thoughts about scenarios or spaces you have in mind. We can help figure that out and provide solutions.

Matthew: We (Coates Design) provided the interiors as it exists currently.

Jing: Next step. What's the best way for REAC to communicate to you?

Blair: Best way to communicate would be for people to send their comments and ideas, especially while they're fresh, to REAC, then a single point of contact for REAC would get back to the city.

Chris: The more specific your recommendation, the better we can respond so we don't rely on our interpretation.

Community member: This is a large building with lots of square footage. Do we have to add the stairwell?

Chris: We asked ourselves the same question. Do we really need this? Yes, because it is a police entrance to the building that needs to be separate from the public and the courts.

Matthew: For this two-story building, without the stairwell, it would be like going outside to get into the kitchen.

We did extensive research for this building. We examined demographics, incident reports (20 years forward), other facilities, needs from police chief. The original was a much bigger building than this. Extensive compromises were made to fit this program into this building. If you haven't seen the existing facilities, you need to see what people deal with today. You have to walk through a bathroom to get to a meeting room at the courthouse. Domestic violence victims have to have conversations in a public lobby. This is a huge step forward.



Savanna Rovelstad, Chair

6/18/22
Date