

**REGULAR RACE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 16, 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

MOTION I move to approve the May 19 minutes as written.

Peggi/Eric: The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

MOTION I move to approve the June 2 minutes as amended.

Eric/Sue: The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

MOTION I move to approve the June 2 agenda as amended.

Sue/Jing: The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

No conflict of interest was submitted.

Thank you to Sue Wilmot for her dedication and service!

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rachael Reese: I'm part of a large network gathering together to address and strategize how to interrupt and stop the constant discrediting environment made to our Black and Brown community leaders at REAC, City Council, the Planning Commission and our beloved community activist Olivia Hall. We are tired from the constant harm the city council and public are causing our black and brown community members. If you are working toward justice on Bainbridge, you know who Olivia is. That Olivia, a black woman, with her breadth of justice work was not accepted into REAC shows the tremendous amount of racism that is embedded in our city council members and our government structures. We will not stand for this. I'm here to let REAC and the public know that we are here to support you in your plan of action.

Cindy Anderson: I'm hoping that from now on the committee selection process is public and that we can be more transparent in the future. Regarding the police facility, it would be nice to find a different place, have a separation for Kitsap Alive and the police navigator. Having social services co-located with police makes it hard for people needing social services to access them.

Katy Curtis: When I heard what happened at the city council, I was confused about this conversation about ethics. One of the things that was upsetting to me was when someone of color says *It's racist*, that doesn't land on me, but it does land on me. *It's racist* means that systemic racism is steeped in this. That we need to look at this through a lens. Why is the power being played this way? Why does it feel this way in the room? What's going on?

Debby Haase: I was deeply disturbed at Tuesday's meeting that your recommendation and approval of Olivia's application was ignored. It feels disrespectful, as if REAC isn't being given any significant agency, authority, and respect from city council. More importantly, it is angering how Black women, women of color and men are being denigrated and disrespected. In one city council meeting, Brenda Fantroy-

Johnson, Olivia Hall, Deanna Martinez, and Ashley Matthews were targeted. I want the city council to seriously look at their own biases, systemic racism. It went unchecked. It's so sad that none of Brenda's colleagues backed her up and Olivia was judged as having no experience in race equity as a Black woman. These are unacceptable ways to treat our Black women leaders.

Promise Partner, member of Kitsap SURG (Showing Up for Racial Justice) and Kitsap ERACE (Equity, Race, and Community Engagement Coalition). At the City Council meeting on Tuesday, I saw the resistance of the city council to questions about equity and also the attacks on women of color who are asking the city to center that work. I'm here to speak in support of those women. Thank you to Deanna Martinez for the questions to Planning Commission candidates and for bringing a race equity lens. Thank you to Councilmember Brenda Fontroy-Johnson for tireless work for racial equity and showing up with deep truth and integrity.

I'm also speaking in support of Olivia Hall, who I've worked with through Kitsap ERACE. She would have been an asset to REAC. It was disappointing to see council members Moriwaki, Schneider and Hytopoulos oppose her appointment.

The resistance to their leadership is further indication of systemic racism and sexism and the deep need in our community for racial equity to be a priority. I join the other voices to tell you that I'm here to work with you as an ally.

Marsha Cutting: I am showing up in support of Brenda, Olivia, Deanna, and Ashley.

Janna Cawrse Esarey, member of Kitsap ERACE, SURG, and bus driver for BISD. I'm here in support of Ashley, Olivia, Deanna, and Brenda. We need a racial equity lens because otherwise the status quo is racial inequity. I've heard folks saying *what's up with all this race equity?* I think people need to realize that everything is racial—it's part of the fabric of our lives and our culture.

Welcome to new member, Frank Jacobson!

REVIEW OF HARRISON BUILDING TOUR/NEXT STEPS

Peggi: The building is moving forward. One of the things I thought was a plus was you can move things around and can have community gatherings within the courthouse. Another place we may be able to have influence this project is in the name of the building. Could it be the Bainbridge Justice Center, which sounds different than the police-court facility?

Also, I've been looking into quotes and art work. I found a great Cornel West quote, "Justice is what love looks like in public"—an example of something that could be hung within the walls of this building so that the tone doesn't feel intimidating.

Deanna: Was there any mention of universal design? I don't know the principles by heart but I'm thinking that might be an option.

Peggi: There is a very short window to influence the physical design. If you have ideas for things that you feel would be important to incorporate, get them in ASAP. For things like art, we have a longer timeframe, but the hard physical things you can submit to Chris Wierzbicki by July 15.

Jing: My understanding of the process is a little different. The actual deadline for hard structures is July 30 but that means that recommendations should be made in the next week or so. Soft structures recommendations, such as interiors, should be made in the next two months (August).

Request for communications was for REAC to accumulate all of the ideas and have one point of contact for REAC to send these recommendations to Chris, Blair, and Ellen. How do we gather these ideas? Reach out to individuals who were invited and put something out on the website to call for ideas.

Text for REAC website:

REAC has been asked by City Council to provide recommendations on the new police-court facility (Harrison Building) using a race equity lens. The committee would like to hear from you. What would make you and other community members feel welcome and safe inside and outside of this building?

Please send your ideas on hard changes (structural) no later than July 15. For soft changes (interiors, colors, furniture, etc.), your suggestions are appreciated any time through August 19. You may send your recommendations to jing.fong@cobiccommittee.email Thank you!

All suggestions made during the walkthrough's Q & A session were captured in the minutes. They and other recommendations made by the public will be forwarded to REAC for review and then to Chris, Blair, Ellen, and the architect.

Jing: I requested for more current plans if those are available. The plans that were handed out at the walk-through were furniture plans from February 2021. If there are any significant changes that we should know about, they should be uncovered.

Sue: I think it was wonderful that we had our community partners and stakeholders there with us, and I think the architect was surprised that so many people showed up. This lays the groundwork of the community taking ownership and control of that building.

Jing: Let's reach out to folks who were there and others we know for their suggestions on changes or additions to the building using a race equity lens.

Renni: One of the questions I asked the architect was *Do they know anybody that is an expert or skilled in building design with equity?* He said he doesn't know anybody and encouraged us to send people if we knew someone, which is all fine, but I have a day job. The architect also told us he hasn't done any work putting up buildings with an equity lens. I would like to recommend, at a minimum, to the architect that while we're doing what we can to generate ideas, that somebody that's getting paid should be researching what can be done. Maybe it's as simple as looking at universal design. Find out who the experts are and talk to them.

Giving us plans from February 2021—if there are newer plans now ... this is a relationship business. It speaks to trust. Why would you show up in 2022 and hand out [old] plans that are not the most current to a bunch of people who are not architects?

Jing: I won't wait until everything is sent in. There may be ideas that need more feasible because of cost or. I may send ideas to every few days because they need more time to deliberate.

MOTION: To have the statement that Jing read inviting comments on the police facility with Renni's amendment approved.

Sue/Peggi: The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Peggi: I would like to talk to the Suquamish people, to Barbara Lawrence, about how they feel about the possibly of having art there that acknowledges the ancestral.

Ellen: There is a public art committee thinking about this public structure and excited about public art in this building.

Ellen will get this committee in touch with Savanna.

WORK PLAN

Jing: The biggest change has to do with events and training. Most of those come under Strategy 1 (Community). Activity 2a (\$1,000 per event). Activity 3a (stickers). 3b (workshops—not tied to a particular topic). Total: \$3,350. No budget for City and City Council. Strategy 3 (REAC): GARE training for new members.

Eric: I recommended most of these budget costs. It gives us a realistic budget with some flexibility and still under \$11,000 , which is reasonable.

Renni: Did we have a space for training for current REAC members?

Jing: This work plan is for this year —now until end of December. If we have training for current members, that would probably for next year and not in this budget.

Sue: Previously, we had a separate budget for the training that was approved back in 2019. Did we ever get resolution as to where that training money went to?

Ellen: At that time, Council expressed support for that training. Money and the concept was approved. It hasn't been spent. That appropriation has lapsed, which means it's not sitting somewhere waiting to be used. Where we are right now is understanding what the actual availability is. We have REAC suggested activities. I'd really like to take this back and discuss the budget with the finance department to make sure budget is covered if council approves. For example, the suggested training for new members. You're looking at \$1350 per person but we need to multiply that by so many new members and need to make sure the budget would cover all of these things.

Jing: Ellen, that was \$1350 total. \$450 for each new member.

Peggi: The GARE training is \$450 for institutions sending in members for its virtual basic equity training course.

Ellen: I want to make sure I understand this. If it's not enough money for whatever reason, we'd want to present Council with what finance believes will be the right amount to do the activities you have. Then, Council discussion is about what is the desire for the council because you are an advisory board to the council.

For the conversation you're (Peggi) having about looking at Ted (note from Jing, I think Ellen meant GARE), we would have to have a different conversation about an annual budget request and how that would be factored into rest of the city's budget development.

Peggi: The parent of GARE is Race Forward. It will have a small conference in the fall. I think it's going to be in person in Phoenix. Some of us may want to attend that, as well.

Brenda: I'm going in November. I just need to register.

Ellen: Next step, if REAC approves this it would go to Council for review and consideration. I will share this with finance and will work with the city manager and the liaisons to request time on the agenda once the motion is approved.

MOTION: I move that we approve this version of the work plan for approval by the city council subject to the review and revisions of the city manager's office and finance department.

Eric/Deanna: The motion passes unanimously 7-0.

JUNETEENTH

Peggi: The event is 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, June 19. The senior center will have chairs available for an indoor event in case of weather.

Renni and Savanna will emcee. Barbara Lawrence will open the program. Brenda will read a proclamation from COBI and also be a speaker. Other speakers include: Chas Malatesta (MAC), Dakin Brown (sp? Bainbridge Black), Isaiah Brown (BHS student), Akuyea Vargas. James Friday to be confirmed. Food, fun, art exhibit (history, slavery, post-Emancipation, Jim Crowe, today's movement, and local happenings). KRL will have a table. Aunt Dolly's food will be available for purchase.

For Bremerton event: Savanna, Peggi, Renni, and Eric will participate. Setup is from 9:30-11. March is at 10. Breakdown is at 3pm.

Ellen can print postcard handouts on regular paper (not cardstock). Jing will send Ellen copy for this one-time purpose. Waiting for vendor booth confirmation from organizers.

Reminder: Turn in receipts to Eric for reimbursement. From Ellen: If possible, please have staff purchase your items. It's a preference because receipts get lost.

Peggi and Ellen will work together on speaker reimbursements.

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS

Law and Policy (Eric): We talked about REAC appointments and need for an action plan (not ready to report out), Planning Commission appointments (will address in city council report), police facility process (already addressed).

GARE and Training (Peggi): Renni is incorporating training for new people on REAC.

Strategic Planning: Work plan submitted

Finance: nothing to report.

REQUEST TO UPDATE TIMELINE IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Ellen: We're looking for some input from REAC, if you're interested, on what's there now and what might be added. Then, we can reach out to the artist.

Jing: Apparently, there was a resolution or recommendation made in 2016 to add an important date (or dates) from the Indipino community to this panel. My request would be that we be able to work with a city staff person so that we can support them and help them understand what it's like to look at something through a race equity lens. Many of us would be happy to provide insights. I also feel it is a goal of this committee to have city staff, council, executive leadership be able to apply a race equity lens to every proposal, every decision made on their own in the future. We would love to collaborate with this staff person rather than make this a task for REAC to do on its own.

Deanna: *"Each one, teach one."*

A consensus was made for city staff and REAC to collaborate on this effort.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Eric: REAC appointments: Savanna was renewed. Frank was approved. Clarissa San Diego will start next month. Olivia Hall's nomination was pulled after a 3-3 vote.

There was another issue on Planning Commission appointments that I think is important and that this committee needs to be aware of. It impacts or touches on how we communicate with community and the obstacles and the fits and starts that happen when we try to discuss race equity issues and when the city, to its credit, follows through on its commitment to look at things through a race equity lens.

One *speaker* expressed concern about the makeup of the selection panel, including REAC's participation. What none of the commenters or The Bainbridge Review article mentioned—but what Mayor Deets, to his credit, mentioned—was we didn't insert ourselves into the process. We were invited by the city council and I think the city manager's office to participate in order to help the city fulfill its commitment to address systemic racism and look at all major city issues through a race equity lens. That motion passed unanimously and Deanna took part in the process.

There were some questions asked that touched on race equity issues. We did what cities all over the country are doing: using a race equity lens to impact diversity and inclusiveness of community. One of the rejected applicants and the supporters of an incumbent who wasn't reappointed took issue with these questions, including the candidate's openness to consider equity-related issues and especially this question: Here are two statements about the origins of single-family housing. Do you believe these to be true? Why or why not?

To me that's an interview question that doesn't have a right or wrong answer. There could be a range of responses to that. You could agree or disagree. It tests the applicant's willingness to address, acknowledge, discuss the issues we're talking about. The speakers didn't see it that way. One commenter emailed calling it a litmus test to exclude anybody who thought single-family housing was the way to go. One of the disappointed applicants commented to the effect that this was a plan to abolish single-family zoning in the city. The same speaker, Ms. Neal, said that Deanna had the *temerity* to "demand" an answer to a follow-up question—what community leadership did she consult to inform her answer to that question.

Credit to the city for putting it out there and letting the process go through. I think some of the reaction shows the obstacles we face. It has a name—White fragility. It remains an obstacle in incorporating a race equity lens into city policies. Ironically, the same people who were unhappy about an incumbent planning commissioner who didn't get reappointed were undermining the diversity of opinions of the Planning Commission. They also were vehemently objecting to these interview questions, which to me are nothing but an attempt to solicit planning commissioners who will have a diversity of opinions.

Renni is up next to cover city council.

REAC ITEMS

***Leadership and incoming members**

Savanna: I personally believe co-chairs are great collaboration. Deanna has also brought up a couple of times, do we need one? Why can't we choose all of us?

Deanna: I don't object to having a chair. I don't object to having co-chairs. What I object to is having a hierarchy type system that is in alignment with the systems we're trying to dismantle. It was mentioned at one of the GARE workshops that government is going to have to find ways to make it so folks who are doing equity work make it in alignment with core values – there's a rub there when you know there are systemic things in place that are holding up and keeping together certain structure.

We have a wonderful team. I love our subcommittees. We respect each other's skill sets. We collaborate. We communicate with each other about how we feel about things. In part, if we could keep doing that, co-creating. At GARE, I heard, we care about what we co-create. It's a good argument for local government to co-create, to bring community into co-creating and it's also good for us.

Renni: Subsection C. In July, the committee elects a chair or one or more co-chairs and a secretary. It's a one-year term.

Peggi: If we decide to keep a chair position, I think a co-chair is a good idea. The reason is just work. They can share the load, divide work, lighten the load.

Savanna: I can say from my experience as James' co-chair that it's a team job and works well when there's two of you. Helpful when there are emergencies, helpful to have a co-chair who can step in.

Deanna: Because we're talking about work load, Ellen, I know there's been mention of a future equity officer. Is there a timeline for that? Even for the next five years.

Ellen: The city budget process runs on a calendar year. Fall of this year would be the time when new positions are considered for the coming years. My expectation would be that the conversation would happen this year. The earliest it would be created is January 2023 and it would be filled after that.

Renni: The way I read it is it's not chair and vice-chair. It is co-chair. It's not hierarchy. Those are two folks working together to get something done. With that in mind, I'd be interested in being the chair, co-chair, whatever.

Eric: Clarification, the code actually says one or more. It doesn't say two. We could have nine co-chairs.

Deanna: Our city council does a rotation. If we wanted to look at it like everyone taking a turn at certain things just for the experience and ability to support each other even further. If all of us knew how to do a thing, then it means all of us could help fill in. We could still have a chair or co-chairs but if we did a rotation...

Sue: The secretary may be a position that could be shared because it's a lot of work.

Savanna: I propose co-secretaries.

Eric: Code says there needs to be one secretary.

Sue: Maybe one person is the minutes person and the other is the agenda person for one month, then they flip. One person could be the communications person. Let them decide.

Eric: We have to elect a chair and secretary, the rest we can decide later.

We should resolve this at the first meeting in July. Eric will brief Clarissa on the secretary responsibilities.

Sue: From the beginning, we decided that we wanted a good written record. It's more in-depth minutes than just recording motions. We wanted it to be written so it can be referred to in the future. When we look back at what happened in the past with the city, there's no written record. We have video but we want that written record for future reference, how it happened.

Savanna: I would serve with Renni if others would like me to remain.

***Race equity plan and toolkit recommendation**

Jing: This was approved May 24 with further action for a work plan and budget from the city manager.

Ellen: This item is on the council agenda for July 12. I'm working with Blair to scope a way to respond to those recommendations. We plan to bring it back in July.

Jing: Is that a document where we'd have any input?

Ellen: Let's talk about what that might look like. How do you envision that?

Jing: Just as we discussed our work plan and it's been forwarded to council, I would assume if there's a race equity plan and a work plan that goes with it, that would affect the work we do. We'd be able to look at it.

Ellen: Let me take that request back.

Jing: That's my opinion.

Renni: As with most things, I don't know if you have equity if you don't have inclusion. Without inclusion it's hard to get buy-in. If you're going to flesh out your plan to achieve those recommendations, it'd be good if we could get some input before it gets finalized.

Jing: I'm also saying that with the recommendations, there could be interpretations that are spot-on or there may be interpretations that aren't correct, or there may be further questions. I see it as a collaboration.

***Farmer's Market**

It was decided that REAC will be at the July 30 Farmer's Market.

***Fourth of July**

Deadline for marching in the July 4 parade is June 24. 2019 was the last time REAC marched. What if we invited community? Hold signs and wear their shirts representing their community group?

Size: 40. Eric and Ellen will coordinate on the application.

Peggi: Everyone reach out to their groups and encourage them to wear their shirts.

Frank, Renni, Savanna will walk. Savanna and Renni will coordinate.

Renni: Community leadership list is filling up. What I'd like to do once all leaders are contacted, gather them all so we can do some strategizing. Let's make sure we get all the communities and allies together.

***Summer schedule for meetings.**

How are people feeling about having one less meeting for July and August?

Deanna: If we have decisions on issues, can we call a special meeting immediately?

Ellen: The factor is the room. It is possible to call a special meeting in 48 hours if there is a need.

Sue: Before, we designated a subcommittee so we didn't have to gather as a whole group. You designate the decision. If you wanted this for the police building, you would create a subcommittee tonight.

Eric: I think we already have a process for the hard design. We're gathering recommendations and passing them on.

Jing: We're organizing them, not editing them. There are no decisions to make.

Ellen: What you're really deciding is which meeting to cancel.

Deanna: Let's look at the timing of council's decisions and meetings so we're not cutting ourselves off time-wise to in our response. Getting in front of something is challenging enough.

Sue: We empower a police subcommittee to make a decision without getting the group together.

Eric: We already have a process in place for passing on recommendations. In the interest of transparency, anything else of substance should be done in a public session.

Sue: I disagree with you, Eric. I think it would be nice to have our input as to which ones stand out. Passing on stuff is not a recommendation.

Deanna: My concern is we've never been here with the police station. Personally for me, if I don't know the future, I'd rather stay on the conservative end. If someone feels a way about something, I am in agreement with Eric in calling a special session if we need to.

Peggi: We should probably meet July 7, that way we have the option to meet later. Also, people don't have to run their recommendations through us. They can send them directly to Chris or Matthew. We don't have to be a clearinghouse.

Jing: I will be gone on July 7. Can I call in?

Ellen: We are still working on how to support the committees with new guidance from governor. Zoom meetings are not an option because we are legally obliged to provide an in-person option for the public.

Renni: Talk to BISD, they've been doing this forever. Hybrid for two years. Why is there an issue with Zoom when we've been doing this for two year?

Ellen: We've spent an extraordinary amount of time on the staff side thinking about this and I'd be interested in hearing your feedback on what it's been like to meet in person. We're thinking about how to support the desire of some people to call in and some people to be in-person. How we have staff who are here. If it's a choice, how many people come (in person) and how many call in—what that balance looks like.

Peggi: I propose we keep July 7 and cancel the July 21 meeting, and we keep our first August meeting (August 4) and cancel the second meeting (August 18).

MOTION: I move that we keep the July 7 and August 4 meetings and we cancel the July 21 and August 18 meetings.

Peggi/Eric: Motion passes unanimously 7-0.

Subcommittees can decide their summer schedules on their own since they are not public meetings.

ADVISORY REPORT FOR COUNCIL

Ellen: I'll send something to you and hope you can provide me with some feedback in July or August. There are three questions: 1) a rough estimate of time you spend on your committee work (hours per month); 2) a list of your recent achievements as a committee; 3) a list of challenges. What do you think the city should take into account to make your work more rewarding and successful?

You can send this in as individuals. We can have a review as a committee, especially the last two questions.

Sue: Is the city considering any compensation for volunteer advisory committees?

Ellen: That's not been discussed.

Sue: I know that the Public Board of Health just instituted compensation for folks serving on that board. Might be something this committee might want to forward to the council as an equity issue.

8:23 PM: ADJOURNMENT


Co-chair 08/04/22