

COBI Race Equity Advisory Committee Minutes—January 4, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Renni Bispham, Jing Fong, Olivia Hall (via Zoom), Caitlin Lombardi, Savanna Rovelstad (via Zoom), Eric Stahl. Liaisons Brenda Fantroy-Johnson, Clarence Moriwaki.

Excused: Lynn Beck, Raul Camacho

Also present: E&I Manager Anshu Wahi

MOTIONS

1. Motion to accept November 2, 2023 minutes. Approved 6-0.
2. Motion to accept the agenda (with discussion of possible REAC tabling at 1/14 MLK celebration to be addressed during Good of the Order). Approved 6-0.

REPORT OUT ITEMS

1. REAC will discuss the pending process for updating the City's Design Review processes to comply with HB1293 and SB5290, with an eye toward engaging the review committee and assuring an equity lens is applied to its decisions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Ruys (via Zoom): The Baha'i community on Bainbridge Island has been hosting a race amity event periodically since the 1960's. It takes place the second weekend in June. The community is interested in coordinating with REAC on the 2024 event.

PRESENTATION ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

City Manager King presented, for REAC's situational awareness, a potential affordable housing plan COBI is contemplating for the old police station building (625 Winslow Way East). This is a refined version of a project the City asked a consultant to consider in 2022 but determined was not financially feasible. The current project, to be presented to the Council this month, contemplates 100 units at 60 percent AMI (area median income) with some commercial retail space. The project would be competitive for federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits and financed by a mix of COBI cash contributions, tax credit equity and other housing finds. A City consultant evaluated the project as financially feasible, with more return on investment than alternatives (such as selling the property to fund affordable housing elsewhere). Council will determine whether to proceed with the planning and whether this is the right use for the site.

PRESENTATION ON LAND APPROVAL PROCESS

City Manager King also presented on pending changes in how COBI processes planning permits. New legislation (HB1293 and SB5290) requires cities to expedite the design review process by generally allowing only a single review to be completed within a set period of time. COBI is

convening a committee to assure its design review processes comply with these laws. The committee has not yet convened but will be comprised of members from the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, Chamber and at large. The committee's timeline is unclear, but its process is expected to play out over the year.

Some cities have used this new legislation as an opportunity to consider rules to promote affordable housing e.g., allowing for expedited or no design review. Mayor Fantroy-Johnson noted that DRB is an equity issue, e.g. affordable housing plans sometimes get stuck in design review. The new policy should be considered through an equity lens.

Discussion was held around REAC having input into the process, which is still in the early stages. The Law and Policy Committee will discuss at its next meeting how to engage the process.

REPORT OUT

The committee discussed its existing "report out" template as a means for communicating our work to the City Council. It was recognized that the template is more geared toward a six-month recap of our annual work plan.

The committee also discussed more generally how we communicate with the City Council. E&I Manager Wahi suggested the protocol is to communicate through our council liaisons. It was agreed that going forward, REAC minutes would include a section flagging items to be reported to the City Council.

DISCUSSION OF JOINT CITY COUNCIL-REAC WORKSHOPS + NEXT STEPS

E&I Manager Wahi distributed a summary of the "garden plot" points discussed at the joint council/REAC workshops, and noted that Scott Winn is contracted to provide up to 5 hours of additional work. The Operations Committee will discuss and make recommendations on what REAC sees as key follow-up items and required resources to support it.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ACTION (Caitlin, Renni, Savanna)

REAC discussed follow-up items from its prior discussions. Caitlin is working on an op-ed article. We also discussed adding a high school or youth member to REAC and reaching out to student art groups or others to create a reusable banner for future events; those are still in process. Caitlin has had discussions with BISD administration about having a REAC member sit in on the high school's EMSA meetings.

BYSTANDER TRAINING

Jing reported on her discussions with Healing Equity United, which has a presence in Seattle. HEU could provide an in-person 5-hour bystander training event with 2 facilitators and up to 75 people, for around \$5000. Jing and Eric recommended proceeding with this group as the best option. We have a budget for the event. Issues to consider include access to the event (first-

come first-serve or something else?); timing; potential collaboration with other groups or potential sponsors; and accommodating childcare. Event referred to the Public Outreach Committee for further consideration.

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORTS

- Public Outreach

E&I Manager Wahi reported that we can reach out to people on our existing mailing list to ask if they want to opt in to future REAC emails. She will facilitate.

- Drones

E&I Manager Wahi met internally with COBI's emergency management coordinator about creating a BIPD statement of intent regarding drone use and issues raised by REAC. She will present it for REAC's review.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Akueya Vargas invited REAC to table at the January 14 MLK Seeding the Dream celebration. She noted REAC/RETF was a founding member of this event, which is intended to promote community engagement and cultivate events around social justice and civil rights.

Council member Moriwaki invited the community to the upcoming Mochi Tsuki event at Woodward Middle School.

Savanna announced she probably needs to step down from REAC in March or April. She does so with a heavy heart.

The meeting adjourned 7:47 pm.

Approved: March 7, 2024