

**Race Equity Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Lynn Beck, Renni Bispham, Raul Camacho, Jing Fong, Olivia Hall, Caitlin Lombardi, Savanna Rovelstad, Eric Stahl

Liaisons present: Brenda Fantroy-Johnson, Jon Quitslund

Equity & Inclusion Manager present: Anshu Wahi

MOTIONS

Motion: I move to approve the January 4, 2024 minutes.

Jing/Olivia: The motion was approved unanimously 8-0.

Jing shared that the next REAC meeting occurs during spring break and could pose an issue with quorum. The topic will be discussed during the “Good of the Order” section of the meeting.

Motion: I move to accept the March 7, 2024 agenda.

Olivia/Eric: The motion was approved unanimously 8-0.

Olivia welcomed REAC’s new-term liaisons: Brenda Fantroy-Johnson and Jon Quitslund. Brenda expressed that she is looking forward to the coming year. Jon shared that he is happy to be here and that he feels solidarity with REAC’s mission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Rise shared that the 2nd Sunday in June is National Race Amity Day (amity means friendship and peaceful harmony). The event falls close to Juneteenth and the Filipino-American Community Hall Strawberry Festival and there might be some synergy. Barbara is interested in learning if there are any organizations or individuals that might be interested in partnering.

EQUITY & INCLUSION MANAGER REPORT (Anshu)

- **Something New Program** – COBI is working in partnership with Arts and Humanities (Bainbridge) and the Public Arts Committee on the island’s annual art rotation. Each year the collective group requests art submittals from regional artists for a one-year sculpture display in the downtown Winslow area. There are five locations and selected artists each receive \$2,000. There is an effort to diversify this year’s artist submittals and who serves on the jury to select the artwork. A “call for artists” email was sent encouraging LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC community members to participate. Anshu asked REAC to share with the committee’s network. Five-to-seven community members typically serve on the jury. Savanna expressed interest as a REAC member to potentially serve on the selection jury.
 - **Note:** Olivia and Jing shared that a list including LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC artists was created for the new police station art project. Steve Rabago is the contact for this list.
- **Council Chambers cultural timeline art piece** – A meeting took place with a cross section of community groups on the island. Meeting participants brainstormed what could be done to make the cultural timeline art piece more inclusive and how the piece could better represent the true history of Bainbridge Island. Anshu needs more input from the Suquamish Tribe before

moving on to any recommendations made to City Council. Anshu met previously with the artist separately; the artist was open to changes in the artwork and is very supportive of the effort.

- **Kitsap ERACE call for statement on Palestine/Israel** – The Kitsap ERACE (Equity, Race, And Community Engagement) Coalition sent a call for a statement to be made by COBI City Council about the Palestine and Israel conflict. The request was sent to the Bainbridge Island City Council, Kitsap County commissioners, and council members of other jurisdictions in Kitsap. The group is asking for a statement that calls for a cease fire and names the tragedies that are happening to everyone in the Israeli-Palestinian war. There was much discussion about REAC's role and whether the committee would consider signing onto the statement or drafting its own statement for Council consideration. Anshu shared that she would forward the Kitsap ERACE statement to REAC members for further thought and consideration. REAC will plan to discuss at the April committee meeting.
- **Juneteenth Task Force** – Anshu and Brenda met with Elizabeth Allum (Bainbridge Performing Arts) who is offering space for Juneteenth celebrations. During the meeting with Elizabeth, a potential theme and other elements were brainstormed. Anshu expressed the need for event support and asked if REAC would consider a task force to help produce the event; there is a budget line item for Juneteenth. Savanna worked on the event last year and plans to work on it again. Caitlin and Raul also will be part of the event planning committee. Everyone on REAC will be invited to volunteer on event day. Brenda was thanked for her work on Juneteenth and for allowing more time to plan. This will be a community-led celebration, supported by COBI and other organizations. It's early in the planning process, more details to follow.
- **Racial Equity Lens** – The Racial Equity Lens draft is ready; the document was originally drafted by Renni and Olivia. Scott Winn, racial-equity consultant, has reviewed the draft. The Racial Equity Lens will be co-piloted with the Climate Lens that Autumn Salamack (Climate Mitigation & Adaption Manager) worked on prior to her job departure. Anshu will share the draft Racial Equity Lens with REAC. It needs to be ready for the Environment Impact Statement being released in April. Renni acknowledged the work that has been done on the Racial Equity Lens and as it's piloted, the resulting progress will further demonstrate REAC's impact. A round of applause followed.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT (Liaisons, Law & Policy) – Olivia shared that there is now fencing around the former police station. City Council has directed Blair King, City Manager, to secure bids on the demolition work; the Council will approve a final contractor to do the work. A favorable light was shed on the City and its partnership approach with the people doing the work on the project.

Eric discussed a resolution brought forth by the Law and Policy sub-committee. In the resolution, REAC advises the City Council: to evaluate the proposal for affordable housing through an equity lens. The resolution further recommends that City Council view skeptically and critically claims that the existing building merits protection as a historic structure and that public objections to demolishing the building did not arise until the City proposed to use the site for affordable housing. The resolution also alerts the Council that preservation regulations can function as exclusionary barriers of entry to historically underrepresented groups. Because the City is moving forward with the development, REAC doesn't need to formally adopt the resolution, but will keep it as a template for future projects.

Discussion took place on how some members of the community speak disparagingly about affordable housing projects and apartment buildings – at times being framed as a lower form of growing up compared to single family housing. A community meeting will be held after the building is demolished allowing for more input on the project development.

Caitlin and Jing discussed a Kitsap Sun article that references research conducted by the University of Washington that identifies neighborhoods that had racist housing covenants, including Kitsap County and specifically Bainbridge Island. Generations have been affected by these covenants. It was noted that Bainbridge has an opportunity to start talking about this research and make reparations in response to it.

COUNCIL-APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES (Anshu)

An ad hoc sub-committee on committees of the City Council came up with recommendations for Advisory Groups. New templates were shared for public comments, minutes and work plans. Two items were discussed specifically pertaining to REAC: the 2024 Work Plan and a reduction of membership positions.

During a Study Session, each Citizen Advisory Committee would present to Council their 2024 Work Plan. REAC is requesting to present at the May 20 Study Session. Anshu will share her Work Plan for alignment purposes. Olivia noted that the Work Plan will feed into the work REAC is doing with consultant Scott Winn. This work will fall to the REAC Operations Sub-committee.

Membership positions were discussed, specifically the establishment of 5-7 positions per Committee. This change impacts REAC which currently has 9 positions (i.e., positions 8 and 9 will go away). Currently REAC has 8 positions filled with Renni and Jing's terms ending in 2024. Both can reapply, but there will only be 1 spot available. Discussion followed and REAC is entitled to push back.

This change would also impact the idea of having a youth liaison serve on REAC; the Committee has been talking about having a youth voice at the table. Jing pointed out that this is an example of a one size doesn't fit all approach. REAC's workload is extensive – more than what 5 to 7 positions can handle. If REAC abides by this, it will limit REAC's possibilities and impact. Renni pointed out that this change demonstrates a misunderstanding with equal and equity. An equal approach is not an equitable approach. REAC is not the same as other committees. REAC is different and should not be considered the same. Providing public comment at the next Council meeting in support of REAC's position on this was discussed.

COUNCIL-APPROVED PROCESS FOR FILLING PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCIES (Anshu)

The City Council Citizen Advisory Committee recommendations do not apply to the Planning Commission. Anshu reported that 2 people are leaving the Planning Commission and both are people of color. The Council would like someone from REAC on the application review panel to fill the 2 vacant positions to ensure a race equity lens is used during the selection process. Renni volunteered to be REAC's representative on the selection panel.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ACTION (Caitlin, Renni, Savanna)

Nothing to report

UPDATE ON BYSTANDER WORKSHOP (Caitlin, Jing, Savanna)

Jing, Caitlin and Savanna met to discuss the Bystander Workshop proposal by the consultant. Two dates have been identified for the Workshop: May 4 or May 18 for up to 75 people to participate. They are looking for a space with 2 breakout rooms. A two-part workshop approach would include discussions on: What is racism? What does racism look like? Sound like? What actions one might take when they see or are involved or impacted by acts of racism.

Rather than an open registration approach, community groups and individuals would be identified and invited to participate. Groups would include: City representatives, police, youth, educators, Chamber representatives, the BIPOC community, equity groups and people that don't agree with us – there are so many that could benefit from this workshop. Groups would determine on their own who would attend.

Anshu suggested doing a share-out from the Bystander Workshop at the Juneteenth celebration.

Raul asked since we can only accommodate 75 participants, is there a way to provide an online forum for additional outreach. Jing shared that this had been explored with the consultant and it was determined that it is more impactful to conduct this training in person.

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORTS

- A. Public Outreach (Savanna) – Covered in Bystander Workshop update (see above)
- B. Finance – Nothing to report
- C. Law & Policy – Nothing to report
- D. Operations (Olivia) – The “garden plot” that came out of the race equity training sessions with Scott Winn was reviewed and 3 separate buckets were identified: Lanes/Roles (i.e., what is REAC doing and how are we operationalizing it in an equitable manner?); Specific Examples (i.e., what we have seen within the City and community that felt biased); and Racial Equity Lens (i.e., apply this to everything). The next step is to schedule a meeting with Scott Winn; attending the meeting: Ellen, Anshu, Brenda, Olivia, Lynn, Jing and Eric.

Anshu shared that there is a request for REAC to put an equity lens on the Guiding Principles that appear at the end of City Council meeting agendas. Consider doing this as part of REAC's 2024 Work Plan.

- E. Climate (Jing) – Nothing to report; sub-committee standing by until we hear of something that needs REAC's input.
- F. Drone (Eric) – Anshu, Raul and Eric met the Chief of Police (Joe Clark) and the Emergency Management Coordinator (Ann LaSage) on the drone policy (draft statement of intent in agenda packet). Eric and Raul had made suggested edits to the policy. There's a separate draft policy for the Police Department's manual that mirrors the key points of the drone policy. Discussion took place on what the suggested edits were, including when drones are called for. Renni made suggestions to consider, including the addition of metrics to evaluate the drone program's effectiveness.

Anshu will bring the suggestions to the Chief of Police and Emergency Management Coordinator for review.

- G. Comp Plan (Olivia) – The focus right now should be helping the City elevate the public comment period. We need to emphasize that community members have a voice in this process. When encouraging community involvement, Jing shared that it would be helpful to have messaging around why this might be of particular interest to your community.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING REPORT (Eric – 1/6, 1/23, Savanna – 1/9, Olivia – 2/13, 2/20, Jing – 2/27)
Covered in the earlier meeting agenda items and discussion.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Olivia apologized for using a word earlier in the meeting that was possibly disparaging toward the disability community.

Jing shared the next meeting date falls during spring break. Anshu will let REAC know the status of the meeting once she confirms who is not able to attend.

Jing also commended Calvin Culver and Dashiell Tibbals for offering public comments at the last City Council meeting. They shared what it's like to be Chicano and Mexican American in this community. They expressed a desire to be a part of a decision-making platform. Jing was happy to hear their voices. Calvin referenced the landscaping tool replacement and Jing reiterated REAC's interest in offering an equity lens to this process. Jing reminded the committee that a survey was conducted as a means to get community input after REAC articulated in a resolution that this was not an effective means for community "on the ground" input. Jing expressed disappointment and shared that REAC is interested in this issue and there is an expectation that REAC will be kept in touch going forward.

Anshu clarified that the Planning Commission process is the first three weeks of April.

Anshu shared that her name is pronounced "Unshu" not "Onshu" or "Annshu."

REPORT OUT ITEMS FOR COUNCIL

The REAC liaisons will report on REAC's concern about reducing its membership number per the recommendations for Citizen Advisory Committees (see above). Each REAC member is active and there is a lot of work to do. The one size fits all is not a solution for REAC.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Approved – May 2, 2024