

**Race Equity Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Liaison present: Jon Quitslund

Deputy City Manager Present: Ellen Schroer

Excused: Raul Camacho, Brenda Fantroy-Johnson, Caitlin Lombardi

MOTIONS

A spelling error will be corrected on the May 2, 2024 minutes.

Motion: I move to approve the revised May 2, 2024 minutes.

Jing/Olivia: The motion was approved unanimously 6-0.

Motion: I move to accept the June 6, 2024 agenda.

Jing/Lynn: The motion was approved unanimously 6-0.

It was noted that in Anshu's absence, Olivia and Ellen will address Anshu's agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jens Boemer, an in-room meeting attendee, shared that he is a member of the Climate Change Advisory Committee. A resident since 2014, Jens shared that he was honored to be listening and attending the REAC meeting. His objective was to reach out to REAC, show interest, learn and find ways to incorporate more equity in the City's Climate Action Plan. Jens identified next steps, including getting to know each other, having a shared vision and improving the policies recommended in the context of climate.

During the remote public comment period, hate speech occurred. Two commenters who engaged in hate speech would not allow their remote cameras to be turned on during their comment time and did not give advanced notice of their intention to comment. A short recess was called for.

At the return of the meeting a motion was made to move the remaining remote public comment period to the end of the meeting agenda.

Olivia/Jing: The motion was approved unanimously 6-0.

It was noted by City Staff that new remote public comment guidelines approved by City Council will be distributed to City Advisory Groups. The guidelines require that remote public commenters give advance notice, display their true name and keep their camera turned on to show their true uncovered face while delivering comments.

ZERO-EMISSIONS LANDSCAPING TOOLS (City Manager Blair King)

Blair discussed the background and the work in progress on an ordinance pertaining to zero-emission landscaping tools; specifically, on how to reduce/put restrictions on gas powered landscaping tools. (The ordinance was included in the REAC agenda meeting materials.) As part of the Climate Action Plan, City Staff was directed by Council to move forward with this effort. As an initial step, the City began converting its inventory of certain gas-powered landscaping tools like leaf blowers, edgers and weed whips to electric tools. The conversion was delayed due to supply chain issues during the pandemic.

Now that the conversion has been completed, the City is ready to take the next step. An ordinance has been drafted and was presented to the Climate Change Advisory Committee for discussion. Blair shared that he would like to engage REAC on the draft ordinance and noted that it can be adjusted and changed based on input.

Blair acknowledged the contributions of City staff member Adam Nebenzahl who helped draft the ordinance. Blair also touched on various studies done that demonstrate the harm of gas-powered tools, citing that they are considered a health hazard. He also acknowledged that this ordinance will only work if the community chooses to conform.

Blair discussed other gas-powered tools that could be eliminated at a future date, including push gas lawnmowers. He acknowledged that some in the community would not support this.

The effective date would be 18 months from the adoption of the ordinance, but Blair shared that it could take as long as 2 years. He emphasized that the purpose of the timeframe is to allow for educational outreach – and to allow people to amortize some of the value.

Adam described the proposed incentive program for lower income residents (i.e., household income not exceeding 80% of Area Median Income). The incentive program would involve a four-step process, including the completion of an online application form. The staff would review and either approve or deny applications based on compliance.

Discussion followed with questions posed by members of REAC, including concerns about professional/commercial landscapers not being included in the incentive program. Blair shared that based on his experience, owners of commercial landscaping companies tend to have more flexibility with raising rates and buying new equipment.

Jing asked about the findings of the City's pilot project. Blair shared that he received verbal feedback that the equipment works; that some operational changes needed to take place (e.g., extra batteries and education on terms of batteries); and some employees noted the electric tools are lighter. Blair hadn't heard anything about the work taking longer.

Jing also queried about the type of input received from independent landscapers, specifically Latinx and other people of color. Blair responded that they were unsuccessful connecting with commercial landscapers; he tried to identify a "guild" or "network," but they all appear to be independent.

Jing attended the Climate Change Advisory Committee meeting and shared that there was an informal agreement that both Advisory Committees meet to have a conversation and make recommendations. She asked if these 2 groups met, by when would Blair like recommendations? Blair shared the importance of having an endorsement from both Advisory Committees and that he is looking at either an August or September meeting with the City Council to present the ordinance.

Olivia asked if the Area Median Income requirement is based on countywide income levels. Adam confirmed that it was countywide.

Olivia inquired about income verification and how that will be done. Adam responded that staff will look at standards that other agencies use. It was discussed that income verification could be a possible

barrier for some residents and that we should look into this more to make sure it's equitable – and to be cautious of too much paperwork. This can be a barrier for people of color.

Renni made one last final comment on the topic. He reminded everyone that if we go about this the same way we've always done this and go ask someone else (e.g., another agency) how they do it – it's always done the same way and nothing changes – in terms of equity.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

As of June 30, 2024, Savannah will step down from her role as REAC Co-chair, but will remain a committee member.

Savannah nominated Olivia for the role of Co-chair. Olivia accepted.

Renni expressed interest in continuing to serve as REAC Co-chair. Eric nominated; Renni accepted.

Jing expressed interest in continuing to serve as Secretary of REAC, supported by Eric and Lynn. Savannah made the nomination; Jing accepted.

A vote was conducted by Savannah to accept the new slate of REAC Officers for the term of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. REAC members approved unanimously 6-0.

A special acknowledgement was made to Savannah for her 5 years serving as Co-chair on REAC.

EQUITY & INCLUSION MANAGER REPORT

- **REAC Workplan presentation to Council**

In Anshu's absence, Ellen provided updates based on notes provided by Anshu.

Discussion took place and feedback was given on the draft REAC Workplan. Ellen noted the edits and will share the recommended changes with Anshu. Savannah and Olivia will present the REAC Workplan at the City Council Study Session on June 18, 2024. The Workplan will then get forwarded to a subsequent City Council Business Meeting for adoption; REAC members are welcome to attend.

- **Juneteenth update**

The Juneteenth Community Celebration will take place on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, from 4-8 p.m. at Bainbridge Performing Arts and in Town Square. There will be music, food, performers, speakers and community. Savannah will be emceeding and Jing, Eric, Olivia, Caitlin and Renni are involved as well. Ellen will arrange for the printing of 25 Juneteenth flyers for distribution by REAC members. More flyers will be available, if needed.

"LANES" UPDATE

Olivia shared that discussions continue about what REAC's lanes are, what we are working on and what we aren't working on. Regarding City Council communications, Olivia shared that the gold standard should be that REAC recommendations occur within our Advisory Meetings, including approvals. Olivia discussed 2 different approaches:

1. REAC receives a request from City Council. During a REAC meeting it would be determined who is going to work on the request. That group would then take the next month to work on the

request and bring back their findings to the next REAC meeting with a recommendation. After further discussion, the committee then votes on what goes to City Council.

2. Empower a group of REAC members to make a recommendation and go to Council without REAC approval. Olivia shared that this approach is not ideal.

Olivia discussed reforming our sub-committees to be more project based. Discussion followed with the consideration of changing from sub-committees to task forces – focusing on specific projects.

Based on this change, the following Task Forces were identified:

- Zero Emissions – Jing, Raul, Lynn
- Guiding Principles – Eric, Renni, Caitlin, Jing – (note that on July 1; reduce to 3)
- Outreach/Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Farmers’ Market - Savannah
- Technology - Olivia, Raul, Renni
- Winslow Sub-area Plan - Olivia

BYSTANDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Jing shared that over 60 people participated in the Bystander Workshop on May 4, 2024, including 2 Council Members and multiple members of REAC. The training was well publicized with outreach to email lists, community leaders, an article in the *Bainbridge Island Review* and social media. Jing shared that over half of the attendees heard about the training from a colleague or friend.

The workshop was a 2-part training. Part 1 focused on “what is racism; what does it sound like; feel like?” Part 2 focused on strategies for taking action. Jing shared multiple comments/responses from training participants. She thanked everyone for their support, including Savannah and Caitlin who were on the organizing committee. Jing also thanked the City and Clarissa San Diego, who produced the promotional flyer.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES UPDATE

Eric shared that this is a work in progress.

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORTS

REAC members discussed if another Bystanders Training Workshop is scheduled, the training could be promoted at the Farmers’ Market. Discussion took place on doing this training in the fall with a focus on youth. Savannah mentioned that she would be interested in a Task Force focusing on youth. Olivia, Caitlin and Jing have met with some groups at the high school. REAC will give some thought to what this could look like.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

Renni reported that at the May 28, 2024, Council Meeting that a discussion took place about changing the rule of 3 with respect to candidates being put forward for the Civil Service Commission. Renni reported that it’s now going to be 5 candidates. He expressed a desire to better understand what this change really means.

Renni also reported that the City is considering adding youth representatives to City Commissions and Committees.

REMOTE PUBLIC COMMENT

No one appeared; public comment was closed

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Renni shared that he and Savannah met with Chief Clark and received a tour of the new Ted Spearman Justice Center. Chief Clark volunteered to give a tour to other REAC members, if anyone is interested. Renni shared that the outside art is still waiting to be installed.

Eric shared that the earlier public comment hate speech was a stark reminder that racism lives in this community. He'd like to see REAC adopt something similar to what the City Council enacted regarding remote public comment guidelines. Ellen indicated that the new guidelines passed by City Council are already in place and that the public comment section of REAC's agenda will be updated. Ellen also will share with other staff what happened with the declined camera sharing on Zoom. In the event that happens again, the participant should be immediately removed. Ellen noted that committees will need to post meeting agendas 3 days or more in advance in order to comply with the new guidelines.

Jing noted that REAC's next meeting falls on the 4th of July. This meeting will be moved to Monday, July 8, 2024.

Jing shared that the Multi-cultural Student Association from Bainbridge High School is having a celebration at Bainbridge Performing Arts on Friday, June 7, 2024, during Moonlight Market.

Ellen shared that Tuesday, August 1, 2024, is National Night Out. If REAC has interest in participating, the committee can discuss further at the next meeting.

Ellen shared that the City is planning a volunteer recognition event tentatively scheduled on Monday, August 8, 2024. It will be an evening event. Details to follow.

REPORT OUT ITEMS FOR COUNCIL

Councilmember Quitslund will report out to Council on the hate speech that occurred during the remote public comment period of this evening's agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Approved - July 8, 2024