

**RACE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 5, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/ACCEPT OR MODIFY MINUTES/ACCEPT OR MODIFY
AGENDA/CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE/CODE OF CONDUCT – 6:00 PM**

Present: Members Renni Bispham, Kamara Blackwell, Peggi Erickson, Jing Fong, James Friday, Savanna Rovelstad, Eric Stahl. Council Liaison: Brenda Fantroy-Johnson

Absent: Member Sue Wilmot. Council Liaison Rasham Nassar.

It was moved and approved that meeting minutes from the special study session (July 29, 2021) be approved at the next regular meeting on August 19.

There were no modifications to agenda.

James: There is no disclosure for this agenda but if there is a land use issue on next meeting's agenda, then I may need to disclose.

Deanna: Point of clarity. I'm watching City Council meetings and I'm going to bring up affordable housing and possibly land use. Would that be a problem for James?

James: The city has a lawyer that you can talk to anytime about conflict of interest questions. I just went ahead and said I may have potential disclosure because of some issues that I may be part of.

Eric: Deanna, you can go ahead and discuss. It is on James to recuse himself and not participate if there's a conflict.

SUQUAMISH ANCESTRAL LANDS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made.

PROPOSAL TO MEET TWICE A MONTH (RENNI)

Renni: A month in between meetings is a long time. Because we're beginning the year for this session, I would rather start fast. Once we get rolling and have systems in place, then maybe we roll back to once a month. We have lots of work to do and I'd like to see us move a little faster.

James: Renni, appreciate your saying that having one meeting is not enough. Two is better. Hopefully, we can have some in-place meetings depending on COVID and state-mandates.

Eric: We have lots of work to do and we're behind. I don't know if a second monthly meeting is necessary. I'd rather give our committees a chance to get rolling. They have substantive work that will take time. They should be meeting monthly and reporting back to us on a regular basis. My preference to having one whole-body meeting, let committees meet as often as they can to get going, and revisit to see if having another meeting on everyone's calendar makes sense.

James: I feel the same way about giving our committees a chance to decide what agendas and direction they want. These committees should send proposals of what they're trying to achieve back to leadership. We need to understand what they're doing, where they're going. This is brand new. We're trying to give the committees a chance to establish themselves.

Renni: My concern is that things are happening so fast that we're not going to be able to address in meaningful, real time. This is not a make or break for me. I just don't want to be caught sitting, waiting for a meeting while something is happening that we should be interjecting on.

Deanna: Personally, I'm going with Renni about the possibilities of what could take place if we're not doing two meetings. Makes more sense to have two meetings – we're behind with equity issues. Let's have a timeline for subcommittees to figure out what they're going to do.

I tend to do better with having structure that holds me accountable. Two meetings every month like clockwork holds us accountable, that those subcommittee meetings are happening.

Clarity (Deanna): My hand has been up. What is the best technique to be recognized?

James: The person who leads the meeting determines who is next. Tonight, that is Savannah.

Kamara: I think having two meetings a month is not just for us but for the public to see us more often and for them to talk to us. If things happen right after our meeting, then we'd have to wait until our next meeting to readdress it with the public. I feel it's important to be available to the public in a public way. Two meetings better for sooner than later is important.

Renni: Another option (from my work experience), meetings twice a week, then roll back to twice a month, then once a month. You can leave the second meeting on the calendar so if something happens it's on the calendar. If there's nothing to discuss, it doesn't happen. A little tricky for scheduling with the public.

Eric: Roz and Brenda, does this pose an issue for the city to attend an additional meeting?

Roz: I would be working alongside with you. Whatever you need to do to get your work done.

Brenda: One of the liaisons would be available.

Peggi: If we don't have a lot to talk about, we could make it a short meeting. If we have something to vote on, we can vote on it. It doesn't have to be 1-1/2 hours.

James: Subcommittees should understand that they need leadership and discussions about what they project they will bring to the table and what needs to be done. One person in each subcommittee needs to inform the co-chairs about its direction. Important to move forward. Big concern: legislation already on the table about changes being made in different cities and counties that we can immediately incorporate. All it takes is grabbing it and moving forward. There are many events that need to be planned with our event committee. We need to meet more than once a month, so we get these events on the agenda.

Kamara: How far in advance do we need to give the city for events?

Peggi: If we have partners, the work is out further depending on their timelines. Two months at least to notify folks and COBI Connects.

Deanna: The second meeting could be that place where we could communicate what has happened at a City Council or Planning Commission meeting. It would also be reinforcement and support to subcommittees.

Jing: James and Savanna, what is a reasonable date you would like information from subcommittees about their scope of work? Roz, are there limitations on dates available for us to meet because of other committee and task force meetings that month?

Brenda: Not a problem if we're meeting on Zoom. Only a problem if we're meeting in-person (getting the meeting room).

James: We need you to lead the way and challenge it in a way you see fit without the constraints other than your experience, strength, and hope. We would like to know your plans when you are ready.

Savanna: I propose that subcommittees report back by the next meeting to make sure they're meeting, and to have a scope of work by end of August, before we go into September. We'd like to know the general idea or direction of each subcommittee. It doesn't have to be a long paper.

Peggi: Moves that we schedule a second meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom. Approved.

Eric: Do subcommittee meeting have to be on the city-run Zoom?

James: No. It is not a public forum. Not a quorum. You can meet wherever you want.

Brenda: It doesn't have to be on the city account.

Eric: It doesn't have to be open to the public, but I don't see why people couldn't attend if they want to.

Brenda: It's not a public meeting. I'm not saying that the public couldn't attend.

Savanna: Jing, do you have a list of subcommittees?

Jing: I don't have Sue's minutes, but I will get that together and send.

James: Who is developing a database of the people we have met at the Farmer's Market. Where is that going? They're waiting to respond and waiting for action! Put on agenda for next meeting.

WATCHING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Deanna: Initial, happy to host and we could have groups of four. I'll be likely to be more conservative gathering indoors given the numbers. We could also watch them independently then have a debrief person. Great to have another person to go to for feedback. How will we decide who watches meetings? Let's bring to the second meeting of the month.

Do Planning Commission meetings fall under City Council meetings? We may want to watch what's going on there, too. Are there other committees where race issues come up? There may be parts of meetings that relate to REAC. We won't know unless we're watching. We may want to speak to someone on that committee about that part, to get more information. Example: July Planning Commission meeting, Island Center, race brought up.

Peggi: Could we get partners on these committees and let us know if there's something on the agenda that relates to our work? We could ask committees, like Climate and Planning, if they would you let us know if there's something on your agenda that is important for us to know about or to let us know if something that comes up during the meeting (not on agenda) that's important. I'd like us to figure out a way that we can stay focused on our topics.

James: We don't know what's relevant if we're not there. If we don't have a presence, and understand the agenda, then we're not informed of the changes they're trying to propose or are proposing. It's a lot to ask our group to be a part of all of these other subcommittees

What is our purpose? Our purpose is to monitor this and provide input before City Council enacts policy that is detrimental to the people we're trying to serve. What are we willing to do for to ensure that equity for all is being done?

Savanna: Roz sent me a notice that REAC members can sign up for email notifications for committee agendas. A good way to stay informed for future items. Check your email!

Renni: Do some homework to build relationship with different people on different committees so they will give you a heads-up that something's coming that REAC should pay attention to.

Eric: Could these be regular REAC meeting items? 1) A City Council report (5 minutes) from whoever is watching about things that are upcoming or that has happened. This could be done on a rotating basis. 2) A five-minute report from our liaison about what we should know is coming up or aware of.

For time's sake, let's refer this to a committee so we can figure out how to do this systematically (cover meetings and report back). I'm suggesting that at least one person be assigned (sign up) to do this on a rotating basis, like we do for the Farmer's Market.

Jing: Brenda, would it be beyond your scope of work, as our liaison, to advise us on council happenings and proceedings we should pay attention to?

Brenda: I think a liaison report was on the original REAC agenda. Only problem is that I can tell you what I think you should hear. but there may be something else. It is incumbent on REAC to look at the agenda and tell me what you are interested in. If I knew what I was looking out for (specific question) that would be helpful.

Renni: I make the motion that we move this item to Law and Policy group. We will figure out what a good system might be to being in know, getting in the know, and bringing back recommendations to the next meeting. Approved!

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT)

Peggi: As of July 12, 26 states have introduced bills which would restrict the teaching of "Critical Race Theory." Five states have passed this legislation. The bills have a wide range impact on teaching of equity topics.

The bills basically says that teachers can't talk about institutions being racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ, privileged, biased, oppressed, bigoted, etc. These laws will have killings effects for teaching this and discussing with their students. It suppresses discussion and analysis.

Brenda: Is this something taken up at BISD?

Peggi: BISD has anti-racist language in its district improvement plan. It also passed an equity policy that has passed.

I am inviting REAC to co-sign an op-ed being put together by BI ERASE and MAC that will run in the BI Review next week because on July 23 conservative syndicated columnist Christine Flowers, It's called "We're simply reversing the skin color of victims." She implies to teach these things makes white children feel bad and its child abuse.

I asked the Review editor if Bainbridge ERACE could put a counter point-of-view. He was very enthusiastic and encouraged us to publish next week.

Kamara: CRT has blown up. This is major pushback by people who don't agree that every child should be taught the inherent racism in our society or be taught independent thinking.—children coming up with their own perceptions based on telling the facts of history from all perspectives. As the teacher of an anti-racist preschool, I think this (anti-CRT) is ridiculous and would love to support and contribute to writing (op-ed).

Peggi: They're calling it no Critical Race Theory, but really what they mean is no teaching of correct history. They're broadening the definition of CRT with these laws.

Eric: Why is it blowing up now? It's a deliberate manufactured campaign ginned up by political operatives based on division and fear. I fully support signing on to op-ed. My concern is tactical. I have some concern giving this debate any oxygen. Why did Review run this?

BISD did pass race equity policy without a whole lot of controversy. Only a few spoke out against it. The response? 120 staff and teachers signed on to letter saying this is part of our mission, to teach students how to thrive in diverse world. I support the same kind of tactic here and signing on to the op-ed.

Renni: Big picture: Every time POC or underrepresented, marginalized folks make progress, there is immediate and swift backlash. We're seeing direct response to getting a Black president, followed by the George Floyd murder and uprising—a clarion call to the good old days, structured and financial to gain power that was lost.

I agree with Eric that we don't want to get into the nitty gritty arguing about fake points but have something that calls out what this really is: backlash and power grab. The op-ed should attempt to counter with truth and the real issue: educating our students and preparing them for the world they're about to enter.

Peggi: With this op-ed, people who don't know about CRT will have an alternative.

James: The people we support know we support them in their history and discovery of the truth. It's critical that we take a stand on this.

Deanna: When we talk about racism there's no getting around what cradles and supports systems of oppression—our colonized mindset. We are taught from a White supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal frame of thinking. These people (who oppose CRT) feel that they're losing power and it's scary. I absolutely support being part of this letter.

Peggi: I'm writing the Op-Ed and happy to get feedback on the draft. I get 700 words. I invite you to email me your ideas by tomorrow at noon. I'll work on it this weekend Anyone who sends me ideas, I'll send you the draft. I'm trying to write a cohesive piece. It has to be to The Review by Tuesday at noon. It will be published next Friday.

Kamara: I hear about the articles The Review is publishing with a tone that is White supremacy. It makes me feel comfortable that The Review is publishing stories like this. with this tone [Tone that is White supremacy.]

Peggi: BI Review owned by Peninsula Daily News. I don't know if the editor made this decision. But Steven is enthusiastic about printing this op-ed with a different point of view and I appreciate that.

Kamara: I have concerns because this isn't the first time or will be the last time that posts makes a specific group of people uncomfortable. I don't know what to do about this. I need everyone to know . Would like to find something we can do or say.

Jing: Bainbridge Review is not a local paper anymore. I think Steven Powell's hands are tied about certain articles being published. Let's explore after submitting the op-ed.

Peggi: I move that REAC be listed on the Op-Ed coming out against the Christine Flowers op-ed.
Approved!

GOOD OF THE ORDER

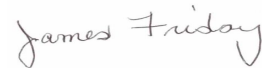
Peggi: Sunday Jan. 16 MLK celebration on BI coordinated by BIMA. March at 3 pm, followed by community celebration @BIMA. Same agenda as last time. I propose we be in partnership. Do we want to continue?

James: I talked with them (BIMA) today. We are part of that. We also need to start development of all our event plans for next year. Critical. Last year, COVID came and we couldn't participate but now we can lead the way. Now you've got your committee commitments. Please take your time and discuss the most important challenges. Come up with a plan. The time is now. The time was yesterday. I appreciate you. Do the work!

Peggi: James, could you send the new communications person (Ken)at BIMA our logo?

Savanna: Our next meeting is August 19 (third Thursday).

ADJOURNMENT – 7:35 PM



James Friday, Chair 8/19/21