

**Race Equity Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Present: REAC members Deanna Martinez, Eric Stahl, James Friday, Jing Fong, Renni Bispham, Savanna Rovelstad, Sue Wilmot. Liaison Brenda Fantroy-Johnson.  
Excused: Peggi Erickson

Minutes were approved.  
No conflict of interest.

NOTE: Power was going out all over the island, so some members were showing up late and dropping off.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laurie (Suquamish) thanked REAC for all the work it does and for showing up for all of us.

**FOLLOW-UP ON SCOTT WINN CONVERSATION**

What did people think about Scott's conversation with REAC, his work with executive leadership staff, and his suggestions to REAC on how it can articulate to city council about how to best use us?

James: I feel like we've been denied everything that we've worked for. It seems to me that we're not being included within all these conversations about the changes that are going forth within the city council and I'm disappointed.

I'm confused that City Council decided to make us an advisory committee and yet, not give us any knowledge of what's going on the city council. I am really looking for a solution to where the City Council can step up and say this is our race equity advisement committee and we lean on them to make decisions about equity. I think we have been summarily dismissed.

We have a great team here and need to hold Council responsible. We can't continue to think we're making progress when we're not even part of the conversation the majority of the time.

I think that REAC needs to take a position to let the City Council know that this is what they set us to up do and we're not being included.

Deanna: As I heard Scott talk about things, it bothered me that every time it came up who needed to be on board, who was going to be talked to, REAC was always at the bottom of that list. I give the city, the benefit of the doubt. I'm going to think and believe that. They were trying to do something good here and I'll start from that place.

There was a moment at 1:58, where people were talking about how we would like to participate with Scott, the idea of a quarterly report came up and training from Scott, or from someone else.

It also brought up my own personal views, which I've already shared via email with our liaisons and our co-chair and the city manager about if we would want training from Scott, or would we want

training from someone else. My opinion is that we only know what we know, and we don't know what we don't know. For me, in the learning and understanding that I already have from the lived experience that I already have, I do not feel that I necessarily would have something to benefit from Scott's training. I feel strongly also about the fact that there are so many Black Brown and indigenous women that are doing this work as well and could have been hired for this position and I do feel that their knowledge and their lived experience would extend past what any white male would have to offer us.

James: We need to suggest to executive leadership that we start with working with city government to create that common framework and language around how we do this work. We have not been included in this.

Eric: We clearly were not consulted in the engagement of Scott. I didn't hear a particularly satisfactory explanation for that. I'm not sure there's much more to be gained about focusing on that. We at least have the city manager's attention. I do think it was a positive sign that the city manager was there, and at least listening to us.

Point of clarification, James. You mentioned Scott being the one to train the city council and he's not. Setting aside my concerns about how Scott came to be engaged, I have a hard time seeing that as a negative thing. It sounds like groundwork for a citywide race equity plan. My hope is that we are kept in the loop going forward and that the city manager or the liaison report back to us on what's actually happening there.

The other thing I wanted to say is that I agree with everything James said about the lack of consultation, the kind of check the box feel that this committee sometimes has—at best, if we're considered at all. The Law and Policy Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee have been working on a plan that was circulated for this meeting. The overarching idea is to insert us into the process and to say here's what we are here for, here are the specific things you need to consult with us on. Frankly, we've been working off a two-year-old work plan. I think this (new plan) is something we need to approve soon and use as a launching pad for being engaged and getting consulted on going forward.

Jing: At the meeting, we not only heard from Scott, but we also heard from Blair. There were a lot of promising comments that Blair made at the meeting that you (James) and I attended with him and Joe Deets. He said that you and him agreed to get together for lunch every other month. I think that's a step forward because so much of this is about relationships.

Our city manager is open to having not only conversations, but also taking action on what REAC is doing with city council. He said, "I want to show up from time to time and strategize with you and think of how we can present to Council a plan that would involve REAC with the Council." It's about us being very direct with specific ideas about how we want to interact with Council and how Council should use us as a resource. We've got Blair who's willing to partner with us and making that happen.

The other thing that came up during the conversation with Scott was this North Star document and how it's used as a guide—just like the North Star—or decision-making tool. The council, staff, and REAC have to agree on this document to be on board with race equity for the city. We have an opportunity to insert ourselves, to be a decision-maker in this process.

I understand the hesitation, but I'm going to take people at their word because they said it out loud and it's written it's part of public record that they're going to partner with us and we will be part of the process to make these important decisions.

Sue: I just wanted to point out the positive of this first step the city has taken. On their own, without people pushing them —without us pushing them—to get some training for staff. We may not agree with how it happened, that we weren't involved, but they are taking it upon themselves to do something.

Renni: Are we going to consciously say we're done with the Scott Winn issue for now, or is there, something that we feel that we need to do, moving forward about that? if there's nothing then let's just move on.

James Friday: We can have input with Scott whether or not there are some avenues that we can follow to help REAC be a more forceful force within the city council. This has nothing to do with Scott's ability to train or his willingness to train the City Council. It has to do with the way that it was done. That's, the only thing I have a problem with.

Brenda: Maybe the path forward is to look at the plan that was in place before and see where we're going with that. I think you are already working on that.

As far as the direction that you want to take, you now have the ear of the city manager. Provide him with the plan of action, the path, that you're going to take. Now is the perfect opportunity to do that.

Sue: I think that Scott said that Phase One is the administrative phase. They (executive leadership) are going to be crafting a North Star document, and I think that's where we can have our input. Scott said to use our connections with our liaison. I think our path forward is with that North Star document. I don't think we have input into the administrative training that they're doing.

Brenda: When you get that document or when I see it, we can talk it through. That'd be great when you guys get that document or when I can see it, we can talk it through. Let me know what you want me to do with it. At this point I haven't seen it.

Jing: I wouldn't hesitate to contact Scott or Ellen to tell them if you're working on the North Star document, we'd like to be included in that.

As soon as we can come to agreement on that (document drafted by Law and Policy) and convey that to city council, then we will have something written down that says "here, use us as this resource." if we do have something that's written down and sent over to council, then it's up to council to decide how they're going to utilize us because we have articulated our points of knowledge.

Renni: Law and Policy suggests that we send the topics we'd like to be consulted on with the strategic plan. If we paired these two together, we might have a chance for more impact.

In the draft strategic plan, we said that one of the things that we want to do is bolster the city's development and adoption of policies programs and processes that enable all people to have equal access and opportunity.

One of the ways to bolster all these things (development of all these plans) is to make sure that we have input. We're also recommending that they (Council) have a practice of automatic referral of things that would impact BIPOC. This includes things that might impact economically challenged folks or things that require expenditure funds greater than \$50,000, including out of cycle funding requests. We pared the prior list. This is where we are. Our recommendation is to adopt both the strategic plan and the automatic referral recommendation.

Eric: We discussed at our committee subcommittee last night that we'll be taken more seriously if it is wrapped up and connected to our strategic plan, which I think is supposed to be our governing work plan for the year.

Sue: I like the way this is presented. It's not like we were saying we need to have input on this we're saying we want you to come to us for our advice on these specific things.

Discussion of mission, vision, and purpose wording on draft strategic plan

Roz: The document that you guys were reviewing just a minute ago was based on when you guys were a task force. You had the two documents when you guys changed over to an advisory. One of the original documents that you guys had put together when you became a task force, and then, when you changed to be a committee. We just changed the wording so.

Brenda: Probably should just change it instead of trying to make it like it was.

Eric: Except our ordinance has a different statement. I don't think it necessarily limits us but it's a different iteration.

Brenda: There are parts of the ordinance that we have to be true to, but when it comes to the vision and those type of things, I think you, should be able to change that to whatever it is that the new vision is.

Renni: As long as what we say here is not inconsistent with what the ordinance says, we're okay.

Eric: Include wording ... "to provide informed recommendations to the city council." It would be unproblematic to include wording on "community and legislative options to address and rectify systemic and structural racism and bias within government and law enforcement." I think that's a good statement. I don't think it necessarily needs to replace what you've got,

Can I ask one other clarifying question? The ordinance the requires us to provide a report to the city council on committee work completed within the last year and to approve a work plan for work to be performed by the committee in the following year. My question is: Is that what we're calling a strategic and tactical plan?

If this is a true work plan, there might be a specific to add. I've got some ideas, and I know people just seeing it for the first time this week may have others. With a little bit of tweaking and some additions, we can turn it into a 2022 work plan and send it over to the Council and get their buy-in because that's what we're supposed to do, right?

Renni: I don't see this as a work plan. These are the goals, the strategy, and tactics. This is the big umbrella; this is what we want to do in this general category and how we're going to do it. A work

plan is going to have much more specifics. It could have dates, times, specific programs or things that we're going to start or do.

Jing: If I can interject here. The work plan spells out specific activities, so "listen to understand" could be to "conduct listening tours in the north, central and south parts of the city or meet with the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community or meet with the leaders of the following group." A January calendar with specific activities of who does what by when.

Eric That makes sense. So, this is the broad outline and the work plan gets filled with activities and dates.

Jing: Yes, because we need to get buy-in on this before we can even articulate specifics, like events.

Sue: I can send our old work plan from July of last year and we can just develop the new one from this.

Renni and Jing: REAC members, please send your suggested edits to the Strategic Plan subcommittee. We'll review and incorporate as appropriate.

James: Climate Change Committee update.

Sue: Savanna and Deanna are not here to report.

James: REAC member vacancy. We need to talk to our liaisons.

Brenda: Roz sent out options.

Eric: We agreed to have a standing agenda item for City Council report back. That seems to have fallen off our agenda. I don't know if the people who are responsible for attending the meetings or watching the meetings for the last couple of weeks have been doing so or not. We don't need to hash it out now, but if we're going to do something that we approved, I think we've got to do it and if we're not, we should affirmatively say we're not doing it.

Sue: We voted on this and put it on the agenda. If folks don't aren't able to do it, we can put out an email to see if somebody else can do it.

Jing: It was on the agenda, but Roz and Savannah had an interchange on email that the Council did not meet, so that's why it was taken off.

Sue: Hopefully we'll get to the point where they'll come to us and it'll be the other way around.

Sue: Motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



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James, Friday, Chair 11/18/2021

