

MINUTES
Belonging Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 10, 2022 6:30 - 8:00 PM
City Hall, Second Floor Conference Room
DRAFT

Board Members Present: Clark Sheldon; Mareesa Miles; Leah Christopher; Reier Erickson; Reese Kelly; Keith Longmore

Via Zoom: Eliana Castro; Preston Fuller

Members of the public present Via Zoom: Dr. Jen Williams; Lauren Dees Erickson

1. Call to Order

Leah Christopher called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

2. Land Acknowledgement – Reier Erickson

Reier Erickson delivered the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Agenda Introduction & Review

Leah Christopher reviewed the agenda.

4. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Dr. Williams mentioned that during April, the St. Albans PD unknowingly used a logo belonging to a harmful anti-autistic group when trying to show support during Autism Awareness month. She felt this was an oversight on their part and would like to see it corrected in the future.

Keith Longmore questioned Reier Erickson's choice to give a land acknowledgement instead of the pledge of allegiance. Reier Erickson explained that the choice was made in order to be more respectful towards the native population of the area.

5. Consider approval of April 12, 2022 Minutes (D&V)

Motion to approve minutes made by Reese Kelly. Seconded by Clark Sheldon. Motion carried.

6. Remembering Fern Feather – Reese Kelly

Reese Kelly read a memorial he had prepared in light of the tragedy of Fern Feather's murder. His full reflection can be read [here](#).

7. Community Agreement (D&V)

Leah Christopher opened the floor for discussion on the creation of a community agreement, with an emphasis on an agreement that feels right for all members present. She provided a document outlining proposed agreements made by committee members to be discussed during the meeting.

Committee members discussed their ideas for a finished community agreement, and these ideas were recorded to be polled later. This can be found [here](#).

Mareesa Miles asked Keith Longmore if he had anything he wanted to add. He said he would explain more later in the meeting, but brought up that he believes the people of the community are good people and is against the idea of the community being a racist one. He explained that he is coming from a place of love for the community.

Mareesa Miles agreed that all board members are here because of their love for the

community.

Leah Christopher went over the items listed so far, emphasizing the importance of attendance and engagement. Leah Christopher suggested looking again at the agreement at the next meeting in order to give board members time to reflect, and working to revise the initial document in the meantime.

8. Interview Participation Request (D&V)

Leah Christopher asked committee members if they would like to choose someone to represent the BEI committee in serving on the interview panel for the City's Rec Manager position.

Reese Kelly made a motion to recommend someone from the committee to be appointed. Keith Longmore seconded. Reese Kelly asked if someone needed to be nominated, and Keith Longmore nominated Reese Kelly. Reese Kelly expressed his interest in the position but stated he had scheduling conflicts with the proposed interview timetable. Reier Erickson said that he would be available. Clark Sheldon asked to determine who would be interested and available while waiting for more information on exact times, and Reier Erickson said he would be interested and available. Mareesa Miles moved to appoint Reier. Keith Longmore seconded, motion passed unanimously.

9. Juneteenth Banner (D&V)

Leah Christopher asked if the board would appreciate a calendar outlining plans for various events to keep things organized.

Reese Kelly agreed that it would be helpful to have a calendar as well as a process for involvement in decision making. He also expressed his curiosity towards community members' opinions and suggestions for a Juneteenth event to be put on. He called attention to previous issues with disconnect to communities while making plans on their behalf. He expressed concern towards the expectation of the BEI committee to represent every culture in the community, and requested that community members be consulted and given the floor on events like the Juneteenth celebration in the future.

Reier Erickson added that if the city would like to hold a Juneteenth celebration, it would be best to fully commit to it.

Keith Longmore added that he has seen city hall interest in a Juneteenth celebration. He explained that the enthusiasm towards the event was very high.

Reier Erickson expressed his confusion for what exactly was being asked of the committee. He suggested including the Juneteenth flag and BLM flag on the banner on main street.

Reese Kelly motioned to approve the addition of the Juneteenth and BLM flags for the banner. Reier Erickson seconded. Keith Longmore mentioned that adding the BLM flag may cause problems.

Eliana Castro suggested finding ways to provide the most education possible in regards to the history of Juneteenth, specifically the idea of a QR code on flyers leading to information. Reese Kelly suggested for the city to provide a statement to give to the BEI committee to review and put onto their website, including resources and educational links. Leah Christopher requested to move forward with the motion of adding the BLM and Juneteenth flag to the

banner. Motion carried.

Leah Christopher motioned to have the public statement of the city reviewed and approved by the BEI committee as a whole, as well as to print informational QR codes on flyers. Motion denied.

Reier Erickson moved to appoint Eliana Castro to advise the city on the Juneteenth statement. Seconded by Preston Fuller. Passed unanimously.

10. Public Comment on Agenda Items (limit 2 minutes per person)

No public comments.

11. June 14 BEI Committee Agenda Items

Leah Christopher expressed that she wanted to prioritize important events for the agenda and that she wanted to make the agenda as efficient as possible while still covering important topics.

Reier Erickson asked if there would be a way to make sure the mayor's quarterly newsletter was sent out to more than just homeowners, that way everyone in the community would be updated on events.

12. Other Business

Leah Christopher opened the floor for Keith Longmore to explain his reasoning for joining the board. He stated that he joined because of his connection to the community and its traditions. He respects the people here, and knows that the community is offended at the labeling of the community as racist. Leah asked him his connection and reasons for joining this board specifically. He said he wanted to be a voice for the community members that would otherwise not be considered.

Reier Erickson clarified that the committee was not accusing the community of being a racist or bigoted one. He explained that there is racism everywhere. The goal is to help the city become better.

Keith Longmore explained that he felt vilified and targeted by the committee, and that the things said about him were harmful and accusatory.

Eliana Castro explained that she drew conclusions on him based on his statements and public opinions.

Reese Kelly acknowledged that he can relate to Longmore's experience with being targeted in his community and that he wanted to better understand where he was coming from. Keith Longmore pointed out that wording presented by the committee is what was offensive to him and the community. He said that his opinion had changed somewhat and that he now believes some good can come from the committee.

Preston Fuller asked for the committee to be conscious of who they are claiming to represent. He emphasized his ties to the church and the role of said church in the community, and that he had seen people in the church enthusiastic about the creation of the committee and encouraging of its mission. He wanted to make sure there was nuance in the discussion about the community and its beliefs.

13. Adjourn

Leah Christopher Adjourned the meeting at 8:15.

Next meeting to be held on June 14th