

Belonging, Equity & Inclusion Cmte. Meeting
Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 6:30 pm
VIA ZOOM

Board members present (via zoom): Leah Christopher (chair); Reier Erickson (vice chair); Clark Sheldon; Maresa Miles; Reese Kelly; Eliana Castro

Board members absent: Preston Fuller

Members of the public present (via zoom): Deborah Billado; Josh Ellerbrock

1. Call to Order

Leah Christopher called meeting to order at 6:32 pm

2. Land Acknowledgement – Reier Erickson

Reier Erickson delivered the Land Acknowledgement

3. Agenda Introduction & Review

Reier Erickson requested to open the floor for public comment on agenda items. Reese Kelly suggested allowing public comment on both agenda and non agenda items at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Reese Kelly motioned to make public comment available for general topics, as opposed to agenda vs non agenda items.

Reier Erickson seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Leah Christopher opened the floor to general public comments. No comments were given.

5. Consider approval of June 14, 2022 Minutes (D&V)

Reier Erickson moved to approve June 14 minutes.

Reese Kelly seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. Committee statements on future current events (D&V)

a. Expectations and processes

The board discussed their confusion towards the city's way of utilizing the board, especially when it comes to publishing requested statements.

Reier Erickson discussed his concerns regarding tokenism from the city.

Reese Kelly said he thought it would be a good idea to avoid decision making in this area until the committee is sure of its goals.

Reier Erickson agreed and said that this is a great thing for the city to have a process for. He expressed his concern with tokenism from the city in future statements on current events.

Leah Christopher agreed and said that the lack of a process regarding statements could cause responses to be made inefficiently in times of crisis. She emphasized the importance of having a plan in place to avoid this.

Reese Kelly said it may behoove the city to utilize professionals to handle issues they're unfamiliar with. He said that it would be wise to determine whether the city is going to approach the board for advice or if the board was going to provide opinions to the city.

Clark Sheldon expressed his concern that the city would publish statements from the committee without credit in the future. He asked how much ability the board has to directly publish statements and opinions, to make sure they're handled how the committee would like them to be.

Reier Erickson suggested that the city speak with contracted professionals to write future pieces and statements as opposed to approaching the board, since the city and the board has had issues regarding statements in the future.

Leah Christopher suggested tabling the conversation and prompting the city to approach contracted professionals.

Reese Kelly suggested putting together a report for the city to provide feedback and discuss the committee's issues regarding previous statements. He proposed writing a structured report reviewed by all board members in order to make the most effective and efficient changes.

Leah Christopher provided clarification on her role in the confusion surrounding Eliana Castro's statement. She explained that she had reached out to Dominic Cloud suggesting that a statement be made. She discussed how it was from this point that miscommunication and a lack of communication contributed to the situation.

Eliana Castro and Leah Christopher both discussed the need for clarity among group members regarding future statements. Eliana Castro reiterated her issue with how her statement was handled, specifically the removal of terms like anti-black racism and white supremacy, which were vital to the points she made.

Reese's hope from this conversation was to not miss the opportunity to produce clear communication from the board to the city in the future.

Leah Christopher asked Eliana Castro if she would like to be a part of the communication process given that it was her lived experience; Eliana declined.

Reier Erickson suggested going through all of the meeting's agenda items and then coming up with a plan of action at the end of item 8. He suggested listening to all perspectives and then making a recommendation for the board.

7. BEI as a valued resource to the City (Discussion)

a. Genuine input and perspective vs. tokenism

Reier Erickson said he felt that the city's approach to Eliana Castro's statement was problematic and needed to be adjusted. He mentioned that it should be the city's job to protect citizens, which wasn't demonstrated in their treatment of Eliana's statement and could be better shown through more city involvement in social issues.

Reese Kelly said that growing antisemitism and hate in the community was dangerous and needed to be addressed, regardless of whether or not the board would be taken seriously by the city. He said that he wants the committee to focus on what they can actively do rather than trying to get the city to see them another way.

Reier suggested having one action item in each agenda to help this, and Reese suggested having concrete long term goals in order to stay focused and on track.

Leah asked for clarification on what exactly an action item should look like. Reier provided the example of the Main Street banner. He said that action around that would look like a monthly

discussion on what should be put up and a request being reviewed by the board and sent to the city. This way, concrete progress will be made each month and trust between the city and the BEI committee can grow. Reese Kelly added that this can also apply to long-term goals and their completion. Clark Sheldon and Leah Christopher agreed that this would be a very helpful approach for the committee.

8. Communication between the Committee and the City

a. Committee expectations and processes; City expectations and processes

Eliana Castro said that any communication between the city and committee should happen more formally. She suggested committee-related conversations be held via email, as opposed to texting and phone calls. Her hope with this is for emails to provide clearer communication to any board members needing clarification.

Reese Kelly asked if there has been more communication between the city and committee. He revisited a topic from the June meeting, which was the fact that the city hadn't communicated with anyone on the board about the removal of a committee member. He asked if Reier and Leah had been receiving any information the rest of the board may not be. The committee clarified that there hasn't been, aside from occasional communication to Leah. Reese Kelly requested to revisit the topic of city communication at a later time.

Reier Erickson mentioned that he hadn't received communication either, and that he also hopes for more formal communication.

Leah Christopher suggested putting in a request to the city for a potential liaison. She mentioned it could be beneficial to have someone specifically leading communication between the board and the city.

Clark Sheldon said that he is excited to have the committee become more clear with their communication and model what they are looking for, regardless of how it's received or adopted. Mareesa Miles expressed her appreciation for Clark's sentiment.

Reese Kelly asked Leah if she had received communication about the city voting off a member of the committee. She said she had been told. Reese suggested future communication between committee members and the city be distributed to the rest of the group, instead of putting it all on Leah. He also reiterated the importance of communication taking place via email as opposed to calling and texting.

Leah asked how the board would like to start the conversation.

Clark Sheldon said that he believes this will require more time. He said that he had two suggestions, one of which being a formal document/notice/letter to the city communicating the board's feedback, and a quick summary of potential communications from and to the city.

Reier Erickson mentioned that he had been present for a discussion during the last city hall meeting around growing antisemitism and speaking with the committee, but that he hasn't seen any city members reach out to the committee. Reier suggested having someone agree to type up a document for the city, as Clark Sheldon recommended. He said the committee could edit it together during the August meeting. He suggested Reese. Reese agreed to write a draft and Eliana asked to edit it.

Eliana Castro suggested communicating to the city that the committee would love to meet them halfway, but that they can only do so much.

Clark Sheldon requested prior notice to the creation of the document, in order to make sure everyone who wanted to participate in its creation would have enough time. Leah Christopher

left the drafting of the letter to Reese and Eliana, to be shared with the committee prior to the August meeting.

Reese suggested looking at the goals of the committee and action items. His first suggestion was making communication between Leah Christopher and the city public to the group. Reier Erickson said that he agreed with what Reese was saying but that it would be a good idea to allow some communication to remain private.

Reese Kelly explained that his thought was that Leah shouldn't have to represent the entire board single-handedly. Him and Reier discussed the importance of making sure all board members were included in discussion regarding the BEI committee's advice. Eliana Castro proposed that, in future communications, Leah ask for clarification when approached and mention that she will be speaking to the rest of the committee and making it clear that she doesn't represent the committee.

Leah explained that she had done this but that her opinions had still been taken as the opinion of the entire board.

Reese Kelly mentioned that he had had similar experiences, and that he had found directly asking to bring the question to the board to be an effective way of managing this issue. Clark Sheldon brought up the idea of delegation. He reiterated that he believed clarity would be key in future events and decisions.

9. Public Comment

Leah Christopher opened the floor for public comment. No comments were given.

10. August 9, 2022 BEI Committee Agenda Items

Future potential agenda items:

- Statement to city
- Communication between individual BEI members and outside parties looking for advice
- Short and long term goals- priority list, action items
- Action items- antisemitism in community, Main Street banner

11. Other Business

No other business.

12. Adjourn

Leah Christopher adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.