

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2024

Approved November 12, 2024

Committee Members Present: Carl Watkins, Co-Chair; Preston Fuller (Via Zoom); Anais Olshan (Via Zoom); Maresa Miles (Via Zoom); Vikki La Rose (Via Zoom); Moira Jamieson-Brooks, Co-Chair (Via Zoom).

Committee Members Absent: Melyssa Bailey

City Staff present: Paul Olshan (Minute-taker); Chip Sawyer (Director of Planning and Development).

Members of the public present: Scott Bushey.

1. **1. C. Watkins began the meeting at 6:01 pm.**
 - No introductions.
 - No additions or deletions to agenda.
 - **M. Miles motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by M. Jamieson-Brooks. The motion passed with all but one abstention. V. La Rose abstained. No additional discussion.**
2. C. Watkins read the Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.
3. No public comment.
4. Continue discussion on equity funding and ideas for events and other programs.
 - M. Jamieson-Brooks continued the conversation from last month about the Pathways Training that V. La Rose wanted to attend. V. La Rose vocalized that she would not be able to attend and that it just wouldn't make sense for her to attend on her own, especially with the difficulty of travel.
 - M. Miles asked about upcoming events that the BEI could help with, whether funding or with support. A. Olshan mentioned Spooky Saturday (October 26) and the Witches Dance that could use support. She would let people know if support was required.
 - C. Watkins brought up the idea of a mixer or meet and greet for new residents. C.

Sawyer agreed that it could be a cool event and that Arleigh Young (City Employee) might have ideas, as well as the Young Professionals Group. There was a discussion about the scope of the event. P. Fuller brought up a large LGBTQ+ new residents group on Facebook that could join in the planning process. C. Watkins proposed doing this yearly as a kind of “welcome event.” A. Olshan, C. Watkins, V. La Rose, and M. Jamieson-Brooks volunteered to communicate outside of the meeting to plan for this event.

- **S. Bushey joined the meeting at 6:15.**
 - C. Watkins brought up asking questions and exploring the different lifestyles and financial situations of attendees, in terms of transportation, hours, planning, and more. M. Miles recommended a children’s room as well. M. Jamieson-Brooks brought up seeing if any high school students would want to volunteer to help.
5. C. Watkins started the discussion on Movies That Matter and the movie selection process.
- The committee discussed having a movie for kids, but P. Fuller mentioned that this might need to wait for a vacation week to make it possible for parents and kids to attend.
 - There was a conversation about a recently screened movie in Burlington.
 - M. Jamieson-Brooks also brought up screening a movie about addiction which is affecting the local community. C. Watkins wanted to make more efforts to advertise Movies That Matter.
 - M. Jamieson-Brooks asked if deciding each month collectively about the movie instead of leaving it to P. Fuller would be more helpful. The Committee generally agreed.
 - C. Sawyer recommended looking up lists of movies about substance abuse and homelessness. The committee decided to discuss a movie for November at the next meeting.
6. C. Watkins started a conversation on economic and social status biases and possible discussion with the Community Advisory Board of the Restorative Justice Center.
- He discussed experiences he’s had as a member of a minority group and comments that people have said recently. V. La Rose brought up her experiences with high taxes, landlords charging too much for rent, and the general conditions that make it difficult for the city’s most vulnerable. P. Fuller said he would send an email about a committee that addresses some of these things.
 - M. Miles brought up doing some kind of educational outreach about this topic. V. La Rose would like to help make this city enjoyable and livable for everyone. There was more discussion about this.

7. Updates on committees or subcommittees
 - S. Bushey updated the committee on Pride for 2025.

8. Other business.
 - P. Fuller was asked by a community member why the banner now says “welcome” as opposed to “all are welcome.” C. Sawyer mentioned that there was some pushback from the community about the “All Are Welcome” banner that needs to be handled before the banner can come back. There was a conversation about this sign change and how that feels to community members and committee members.
 - The committee would discuss it at the next meeting.
 - P. Olshan mentioned that it would also be helpful for BEI members to voice their support for the Police Advisory Board which is working hard having difficult discussions and trying to coordinate with police/local organizations. C. Watkins and Winnie Wilkinson discussed having a public access show to talk about these issues.

9. Discuss next BEI Cmte. meeting and agenda items.
 - S. Bushey would start presenting June Pride updates in November. C. Watkins would talk to Winnie about Juneteenth planning as well.
 - The next meeting would be November 12.

10. Plus/Delta (optional).
 - C. Watkins was grateful the committee could come together and discuss things that are important to a lot of people. He did believe the BEI should be included in the decisions for taking banners down.

11. **C. Watkins adjourned the meeting at 7:22 pm.**