

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

Approved January 2, 2024

Committee Members Present: Mareesa Miles, (Co-Chair); Eliana Castro (Co-Chair); Clark Sheldon; Carl Watkins; Preston Fuller; Melyssa Bailey;

Committee Members Absent: Moira Jamieson-Brooks,

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

Members of the public present: Anais Olshan; Vikki La Rose; Kurt Hersey; Scott Bushey

- 1. Begin recording and open meeting. E. Castro began the meeting at 6:01 PM.**
2. Reading of Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values
 - C. Sheldon read the Land Acknowledgement.
 - Everyone gave introductions.
 - No additions or changes to the agenda.
3. Approval of Minutes
 - **The November Minutes were approved as presented by the committee on a unanimous straw vote.**
4. E. Castro read the BEI Values.
5. Public Comment on Agenda/Non-Agenda Items (limit 2 minutes per person)
 - V. La Rose introduced herself and some reasons why she wants to join the BEI. She talked about her background, her podcast, and her local business. She shared some ideas that she has for St. Albans and the local artist/musician community.
6. Discuss “Movies That Matter”
 - E. Castro moved on to discuss updates on “Movies That Matter.” P. Fuller brought up the theme being “Why Is Art Important to Our Community.” He also mentioned that the Welden has been improved a lot since the city purchased it.

Mondays and Tuesdays have been reserved for film events. P. Fuller brought up the movie *Wasteland*. The Committee watched the trailer. P. Fuller specified that there would be a panel of local artists to lead a discussion.

- E. Castro asked if the committee could do anything to help. V. La Rose said she'd mention it on her podcast and that there should be a focused effort on advertising it. P. Fuller might need some sponsorship to pay for the movie itself.
- The committee brought up February 13th as a tentative date.
- M. Miles mentioned that she could reach out to the Climate and Energy Committee for collaboration.
- There was further discussion on who should be a part of the panel and how to include artists or local waste and recycling professionals to weigh in.
- E. Castro would create a promotional flier template for the event.

7. Discuss Informational Webpages for Special Occasions

- Example: stalbansvt.com/juneteenth
- There was a discussion on the Abenaki Week in May and how this would fit on the November banner as a reminder and addition to Indigenous People's Month. May is also Asian American month, which is something else that the Committee considered for banners or a webpage.
- M. Bailey brought up a BEI booth at the Maple Festival to raise awareness for these events. E. Castro firmly believed that a booth at the Maple Festival could be a good representation of safety and a way for the Committee to show up in support of people who are marginalized.
- C. Sawyer mentioned that there could be a space set up for this booth if the committee wants to do it. The committee agreed to this idea.
- C. Sheldon mentioned that this could also be an opportunity to collaborate with the Abenaki community, especially with the BEI's land acknowledgement at the forefront.

8. Request for any committee input on potential City Flag

- C. Sawyer presented the potential City Flag that was brought before the City Council. C. Sawyer will be checking to ensure that the "arrowhead" aspect of the design isn't accidentally appropriating the image.
- M. Bailey liked both designs and wanted to make sure they would be easy to put up on the light posts throughout the city. The timeline for this flag is still being created.
- There was a discussion on standards and conventions with adding colors (like pride colors) on the city flag.

9. Updates on Other Initiatives and Subcommittees

- Needs Assessment/Community Focus Groups
 - C. Watkins updated the committee on the survey results from the Planning Commission and how he intends to work with this data. He'd like to compare this data to other locations in Vermont as well.
 - C. Watkins also mentioned connecting to some moderators for a Focus Group once the data for questions/needs have been assessed.
- Benchmarking Subcommittee
 - E. Castro mentioned that they're in "moratorium" until they figure out what they're searching for. E. Castro presented a spreadsheet that compared local BEI initiatives throughout VT by county. C. Sheldon mentioned having a tab for state-wide initiatives.
 - There was a discussion on fundraising, how the money could be raised, and what it could be used for. M. Miles mentioned that it should be put on the agenda for the next meeting, since grants can be very specific depending on what we're looking for.
- Banner Subcommittee
 - There were no updates to discuss. There could be a conversation next meeting about a BEI sticker design.
- Pride 2024
 - K. Hersey and S. Bushey updated the committee on Pride 2024. It is officially going to be "Pride Weekend" since events will take place for the entire weekend.

10. Update on Committee Member Appointment Process and Possible Extensions

- C. Sawyer gave updates on the committee members and possible extensions due to the holidays, as new members join when E. Castro and C. Sheldon stepped down.

11. Discuss Next BEI Committee Meeting and Agenda Items

- There was a discussion on how to propose V. La Rose's project as a BEI initiative. C. Sawyer mentioned that it could be considered a conflict of interest if V. La Rose is a member of the committee and her personal project becomes a BEI initiative. It will need to be voted on by the BEI. This will need to be discussed at the next meeting, or at least in the future.

12. Plus/Delta (Optional)

- C. Watkins appreciated all of the voices and inputs. He mentioned that he always enjoys coming to BEI meetings for this reason. He emphasized that there should always still be acknowledgement of those who came before.
- E. Castro mentioned that this meeting was extremely productive and celebratory

of what the committee has worked on. But as the committee grows, there are still a lot of gray areas in discovering what the committee does and how it works.

- M. Bailey appreciated the input and also recognized that there's a lot to tackle going forward.

13. E. Castro adjourned the meeting at 7:52 PM.