

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024

Approved February 6, 2024

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

Committee Members Absent: Moira Jamieson-Brooks,

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

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

1. M. Miles started recording and called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

- Everyone gave introductions.
- No additions or deletions to the agenda.
- **Kurt and Scott joined the meeting at 6:03PM.**

2. Approval of Minutes

- **E. Castro motioned to approve the minutes from December, as presented. Seconded by C. Watkins. The motion passed with all in favor, no additional discussion.**

3. Reading of Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.

- E. Castro read the Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.

4. Public Comment on Agenda/Non-agenda items (limit 2 minutes per person).

- No public comment.

5. Updates on other initiatives and subcommittees.

- “Movies that Matter.”
 - P. Fuller gave the committee updates on the “Movies That Matter” project. He mentioned that this was scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th at

- 6:00PM. Everything is in order to show it at the Welden Theater.
- He would need help with getting in touch with BFA art teachers.
 - **Moira Jamieson joined the meeting at 6:08.**
 - A. Olshan mentioned that Susan Palmer was a great contact for this and said she would reach out. C. Sawyer also said Dee Christie was the main art teacher and would get contact information for P. Fuller.
 - V. La Rose also mentioned that the BEI could place a classified ad in certain locations as well.
 - C. Sawyer wanted to make sure that the city had permission to advertise the title of the movie and clarified what funds or if a licensing fee would be required. There was also a discussion about donations to be collected there.
- Needs Assessment.
 - C. Watkins gave the committee a short update. He is in the process of standardizing the survey data.
 - Community focus groups.
 - No updates.
 - Benchmarking Subcommittee.
 - No updates.
 - Banner Subcommittee.
 - C. Sawyer gave an update on the list of proposed banners as well as an update on the city flag.
 - Pride 2024.
 - K. Hersey and S. Bushey gave an update on Pride planning. This update included venues, attractions, timelines, performers for the Drag Show, and other developments.
 - There was a discussion on who in St. Albans Town should be contacted for Pride Events at the St. Albans Bay.
 - E. Castro specifically asked if there were any thoughts about safety for these events. S. Bushey said that St. Albans City Police would be on standby near the events. Their main concerns were about public safety and traffic management. There was a discussion on how visible the police should be at these events.
 - C. Sawyer asked about sponsorships. S. Bushey said they are currently working on gaining sponsorships and sending out letters to potential sponsors. They are also currently working on a budget which will be mentioned at a future date.
 - The committee thanked S. Bushey and K. Hersey for their hard work.
 - Annual Recognitions and Informational Web Pages.
 - C. Sawyer said that the City could host a page on events like Juneteenth,

but staff are requesting an expert to design the content. This could be a learning opportunity for the community in the future.

- A. Olshan volunteered to write a page on mental health awareness in the future, since she is a licensed clinical social worker. E. Castro weighed in on finding other sources and asking permission to borrow existing work.
- V. La Rose mentioned that she does have a platform which could be used for finding voices and blogging about events.
- There was a discussion on V. La Rose's platform, financial benefits, and conflicts of interest.
 - E. Castro wanted to give the committee time to read materials and examine her project for the next meeting before making any decisions. There is a deadline of February 28th for her project and she's looking for sponsorships.

6. Update on Committee member appointment process.

- C. Sawyer updated the committee on the vacancies and applicants.

7. Other business.

- M. Miles and other members shared their appreciation to E. Castro and C. Sheldon for their work as members of the BEI committee, with them stepping down as of February.
- On second Saturdays, C. Sheldon mentioned that he started an LGBTQ coffee day at Catalyst Coffee Bar as a continuation of expressing the BEI Committee Values.

8. Discuss next BEI Committee meeting and agenda items.

- M. Miles summarized the agenda items for next month. These included onboarding for new members, leadership discussions, banner updates, subcommittees, and more.

9. Plus/Delta (optional).

- E. Castro stated how excited she is for the future of the BEI. But her delta is that she is stepping down from the committee for family reasons.
- C. Watkins said he enjoys how much businesses and organizations want to input and provide spaces like these for the community. He's also sad to see C. Sheldon and E. Castro step down.
- P. Fuller loved the energy and discussions being had, but was also sad to see C. Sheldon and E. Castro step down.

10. M. Miles adjourned the meeting at 7:10 PM.