

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

Approved March 5, 2024

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

Committee Members Absent:

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

Members of the public present: Kurt Hersey; Scott Bushey

- 1. Begin recording and Open Meeting. M. Miles began the meeting at 6:01 PM.**
 - C. Watkins mentioned that he wanted to talk about subcommittee participants when the topic came up.
- 2. P. Fuller motioned to approve the minutes from 1/2/24, as presented. Seconded by M. Miles. The motion passes with all in favor. No additional discussion.**
3. A. Olshan read the Land Acknowledgement and the BEI Committee Values.
4. No Public Comment
5. Review Guidelines for BEI Committee
 - C. Sawyer began the discussion on the BEI Committee rules and guidelines. He specified that while Robert's Rules are commonly followed in Vermont, they're not currently in the statute. Anything was fine, as long as the Committee had a system in place to fairly make decisions.
 - **V. La Rose joined the meeting at 6:11 and introduced herself.**
 - **M. Bailey joined the meeting at 6:11 and introduced herself.**
6. Election of Co-Chairs or Chair and Vice Chair.
 - M. Miles inquired about whether a Co-chair model or a Chair/Vice Chair model

would be most appropriate. The committee agreed on the Co-Chair model going forward. C. Sawyer explained the difference between the two models.

- P. Fuller nominated M. Miles and C. Watkins to be Co-Chairs. C. Watkins accepted the nomination and also nominated M. Miles for Co-Chair.
- **The Committee approved by unanimous vote for M. Miles and C. Watkins to become Co-Chairs of the Belonging Equity and Inclusion Committee.** M. Miles thanked the committee for their eagerness and participation.

7. Discuss funding and proposals for equity initiatives

- C. Sawyer began the discussion on funding and proposals for events and materials like banners and events. This amounts to \$5,000 each year with \$4,100 left, but sometimes these can be used up by the City at the end of the year. M. Miles specified that the fiscal year of the City is July 1st to June 30th.
- A. Olshan mentioned having guidelines for funding requests, with a discussion on who the committee can propose them to and how they get processed.

8. Discuss 2025 City Plan

- C. Sawyer updated the committee on the 2025 City Plan. He specifically asked about what important input the BEI could add to the plan. He recommended setting up a future conversation about the survey results and the BEI's reaction.
- V. La Rose had thoughts about how the committee could be more active and supportive of many parts of the committee--specifically with events related to Juneteenth.
- This discussion would be tabled until next month's meeting.

9. Updates on initiatives and subcommittees

- "Movies That Matter"
 - P. Fuller updated the committee on the progress and how ready the theater is. He listed the potential artists on the panel and how that's going to work out. M. Bailey enthusiastically joined the Movies That Matter subcommittee. The committee clarified that sponsors can fund an event like Movies That Matter.
- **K. Hersey and S. Bushey joined the meeting at 6:39.**
- TATU2024 Hip Hop Showcase
 - V. La Rose gave an introduction on TATU2024 Hip Hop Showcase and how a subcommittee could be helpful. It's held twice a year (April and October), V. La Rose is currently planning the October event. She welcomed business owners who could operate as vendors for the April 20th event. There will also be a Paint and Sip event and other activities.
 - This will be taking place at City Hall.

- **M. Jamieson-Brooks left the meeting at 6:52 PM.**
 - V. La Rose, C. Watkins, and M. Bailey both offered to join a subcommittee for TATU2024 Hip Hop Showcase.
- There are no updates for the Need Assessment subcommittee. C. Watkins mentioned that they couldn't meet due to scheduling conflicts.
- C. Watkins wanted to bring up the data he collected from the survey next month. He also mentioned that the Community Focus Groups subcommittee was the same as the Needs Assessment subcommittee. M. Miles proposed tabling the Needs Assessment project for later on in the year when the group is able to handle it.
- M. Miles gave an introduction to the Benchmarking Subcommittee. This was designed to look at other communities around Vermont and to make sure that St. Albans was ahead of the curve. A. Olshan and V. La Rose volunteered for the benchmarking subcommittee.
- C. Watkins mentioned that throughout the country a lot of initiatives are being sidelined and essentially outlawed, so he'd like to represent these ideas in the best possible light so as not to become a target. He emphasized focusing on togetherness and unity as a community.
- P. Fuller updated the committee on the Banner Subcommittee. He mentioned "A Walk in Their Shoes" event where a banner has been requested. This event focuses support on Tims House, Martha's Kitchen, Samaritan House, and other organizations helping to reduce poverty. P. Fuller will get the wording for the banner and a design, C. Sawyer would try to get a quote for the March meeting. **The committee voted unanimously to support this initiative.**
- K. Hersey and S. Bushey gave updates on Pride 2024. They might try to play a movie that week which could fit in with Movies That Matter. The proposal was Love Simon, which is family friendly. The Library will be hosting a Drag Queen Story Hour and a few other events will be taking place. P. Fuller agreed that this film could fit in with Movies That Matter.
 - P. Fuller offered to help run an Open Board Game Night that Thursday.
 - A. Olshan mentioned coordinating with Awaken Yoga, and Big Heavy World.
 - There was a discussion with local artists, hip hop artists, and talent to perform, as well as media to record.

10. Discuss next BEI Committee Meeting and Agenda Items

- M. Miles briefly went over the objectives for the next meeting.

11. Plus/Delta

- The committee shared their plus/deltas. There was a general feeling of belonging

and enthusiasm, while also highlighting the hard work required to make these events successful.

12. M. Miles adjourned the meeting at 7:41 PM.