

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET**  
**6:00 PM TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024**

*Approved April 2, 2024*

**Committee Members Present:** Carl Watkins (Via Zoom); Anais Olshan; Vikki La Rose; Melyssa Bailey; Moira Jamieson-Brooks (Via Zoom);

**Committee Members Absent:** Mareesa Miles, (Co-Chair); Preston Fuller;

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

**Members of the public present:** Winnie Wilkinson; Kurt Hersey; Scott Bushey;

**1. Begin recording and Open Meeting. C. Watkins began the meeting at 6:06 PM.**

- Each participant introduced themselves.
- No additions or deletions to the agenda.

**2. Approval of Minutes.**

- **M. Bailey motioned to approve the February Minutes, as presented. Seconded by A. Olshan. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.**

**3. Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.**

- C. Watkins Read the Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.

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

- **M. Jamieson-Brooks joined the meeting at 6:10.**

**5. Discuss BEI Cmte. Email Addresses.**

- C. Sawyer brought up how the committee was curious about having a BEI email address. V. La Rose brought up the benefits of having a central BEI email used by the chair or co-chair. C. Sawyer specified that the city usually sends information to individual members, and members might want to be careful about sharing official committee business using a central email.
- **K. Hersey and S. Bushey joined the meeting at 6:14**

- There was a discussion on how public suggestions can come to the committee and when it's appropriate for it to be brought up during a public meeting.
6. Discuss policy for equity initiative funding recommendations.
- C. Sawyer went over the memo that was sent about Funding for Equity Initiatives. C. Watkins advised that this topic and any resolutions wait for P. Fuller and M. Miles to be in attendance, since they are part of the banner subcommittee.
7. Discuss 2025 City Plan.
- C. Sawyer moved on to discuss the City Plan and how the BEI could contribute to it. V. La Rose mentioned some funding to be used in the future for training and seminars for diverse communities.
  - A. Olshan mentioned, as a social worker, the major differences between Chittenden County programs and Franklin County programs and how those resources can be available locally. V. La Rose mentioned that there are many available resources for minorities in these communities. C. Sawyer recommended leaving this on the agenda for next month for people to think about.
8. Discuss Juneteenth event/activities.
- W. Wilkinson introduced herself and began a discussion on the Juneteenth events/activities in Taylor Park. She wanted to make sure that Juneteenth was an authentic representation in the community and reinforce the importance of this holiday in St. Albans and Franklin County.
  - W. Wilkinson gave background on the history of Juneteenth and what it represents. She gave an extensive background on the racial history in St. Albans as well as some studies coming out that look at this issue in depth. She brought up working with the BEI Committee to show movies and have a dialogue about important historical events that influenced the Juneteenth holiday.
  - W. Wilkinson was alarmed at how little was being planned for Juneteenth. She's starting the groundwork for planning this holiday. V. La Rose mentioned having a "black experience" which could involve hosting black speakers, movies playing, artwork, etc.
  - There was a discussion on how to hold these kinds of events and how to get in touch with other organizations, community members, and key speakers/historians.
  - Contact information: [Vendersintaylorparko@outlook.com](mailto:Vendersintaylorparko@outlook.com) (802-556-4115)
  - There was a discussion on which day it should be held and some of the events that might attract community members.
  - C. Watkins asked about how involved committee members could be in planning Juneteenth celebrations without it being inappropriate. There would be an email correspondence to set up the preliminary information. This will be added to the

list of things to update the committee on regularly.

- **W. Wilkinson left the meeting at 7:26.**

9. Discuss CVOEO In Their Shoes Banner.

- C. Sawyer updated the committee on the CVOEO banner estimate (\$750).
- **A. Olshan motioned to support the banner creation. M. Bailey seconded the motion. V. La Rose voted against it, believing the money should be put toward something physical to help the problem. The motion passed with four in favor, one against.**

10. Updates on initiatives and subcommittees.

- **Movies That Matter.** Those that went to the event in February mentioned that it was well attended and well liked. M. Bailey had no updates, but suggested Nomadland (2020) as the next movie to show which focused on homelessness..
- **TATU2024 Hip Hop Showcase.** C. Watkins and V. La Rose talked about needs for decorations and booking certain rooms in city hall. She specifically requested funding for decorations and to have those rooms donated to the event.
- **V. La Rose motioned for \$530 of equity funds to pay for decorations and room bookings. \$200 of that amount would go to decorations. Seconded by M. Bailey. The motion passed with all in favor. V. La Rose gave background on the event and thanked the committee for supporting the event.**
- **Needs Assessment.** C. Watkins discussed the survey results and how they impact the BEI goals/values. He brought up his own experiences and how they might better accurately explain the details of the survey results. M. Jamieson-Brooks brought up using certifications for businesses that participate in diversity training. K. Hersey mentioned a program (Working Bridges provided by Northwest United Way) that specialized in this kind of work. A. Olshan brought up Vermont Legal Aid as a good resource as well. M. Bailey agreed with all of this and volunteered to help.
- **Benchmarking Subcommittee.** This subcommittee had not met yet. C. Watkins would email the subcommittee to meet outside of this meeting.
- **Pride 2024.** K. Hersey and S. Bushey gave an update on Pride 2024. There will be numbers for how many participants in the parade soon.
- **K. Hersey and S. Bushey left the meeting at 8:24.**

12. Discuss next BEI Cmte. meeting and agenda items.

- C. Watkins confirmed the next meeting for April 2nd, 2024.

13. C. Watkins Adjourned the meeting at 8:29 PM.