

MINUTES
ST ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST., ST. ALBANS, VT 05478
6:30 PM, TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023

Approved September 12, 2023.

Board Members Present: Zoom: Eliana Castro (Co-Chair), Maressa Miles (Co-Chair), Moira Jamieson-Brooks (Alternate), Preston Fuller, Melyssa Bailey

Board Members Absent: Carl Watkins, Clark Sheldon

City Staff Present: In Person: Chip Sawyer (Director of Planning and Development), Quinnlan Steele (Minute-Taker)

Members of Public Present: In Person: Kurt Cursey, Scott Bushey Zoom: Jackie DiBartolomeo

Begin recording and Open meeting

Meeting began at 6:33pm

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

There were no additions or deletions.

Approval of Minutes

- **All were in favor of approving July's minutes as presented.**

M Jamieson-Brooks then read the land acknowledgement and M Miles read the BEI committee values.

There was no public comment on agenda items.

Discuss community forum / listening session

M Jamieson-Brooks introduced the idea of smaller groups to hear from the community instead of a larger committee setting to make members of the public feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

E Castro proposed the idea of compiling the ideas presented in these smaller interviews and bringing a larger report into a larger group forum setting.

M Jamieson-Brooks agreed with this idea, suggesting that a larger group focus on solutions to the issues revealed in the smaller interviews.

A subcommittee was established to carry out this task

- M Jamieson-Brooks volunteered to lead this committee once the school year starts. M Bailey and E Castro also agreed to volunteer with the subcommittee. M Miles also volunteered to assist as needed but in a less involved role.

Discuss plans for 2024 Pride event

K Cursey and S Bushey presented their ideas for the 2024 pride event. There would be three days of events in the last weekend of May, the headlining event being a parade that leads to Taylor park. Not only would this event have a focus on LGBTQ+ pride but local community pride as well.

E Castro asked how the BEI committee could support these plans.

- K Cursey explained that this is still in the early stages of development so it's difficult to say.

M Bailey noted that the last weekend of May will fall on memorial day weekend. The presenters hadn't considered this conflict yet but were willing to consider different dates. Different VT pride organizations were mentioned as potential resources to coordinate a St Albans pride celebration that wouldn't conflict with other cities' events.

P Fuller invited K Cursey and S Bushey to consider that by even doing a simple parade instead of a three day event it'd be monumental for the city, planting the seed for future pride events. They disagreed with this idea though, stating that the bigger they plan, the bigger the event can be even if it's not their original vision.

M Jamieson-Brooks and E Castro emphasized that there are resources in the community that would definitely want to support this event and that the presenters should reach out to take some pressure off themselves.

Organizational Items (Discuss which to address immediately and which in future):

C Sawyer suggested waiting to fill the board's vacant seat until the end of the year when other terms are expiring and there are several seats to fill. Members generally agreed that this was a good idea and the logistics of this transition were discussed.

E Castro introduced the next item: filling the role of Co-Chair or Vice Chair. She mentioned that M Miles had been brought up as a candidate in the last meeting and asked to hear her thoughts on the matter.

- M Miles asked E Castro about her feelings on the Co-Chair vs Vice Chair model. She also asked C Sawyer if it would be a good decision to take on this role if her term ended in December.
 - C Sawyer said that there probably wouldn't be any issues with re-appointment if M Miles decided to take on the role and that it would be smart for the board to have a Co-Chair or Vice Chair
 - E Castro explained that she liked the Co-Chair model because it allows members to share responsibility, allows more voices to be heard, and she'll be stepping down when her term is done so appointing M Miles now could allow for some continuity when Castro's term is done.

P Fuller made a motion to appoint M Miles Co-Chair of the committee

- **M Bailey seconded**
- **All were in favor**

It was decided that a more informal meeting procedure could suffice for the committee's needs for the time being but should there be more complex situations they could adopt a more formal policy. E Castro and M Miles agreed to figure out how this could work for the committee.

The timing of meetings was brought up.

- E Castro explained that normally meeting after city council meets isn't ideal for presenting ideas but was curious if others felt the same way.
- M Miles then proposed meeting the first Tuesday of the month or later in the month if there weren't scheduling conflicts.
- C Sawyer said that first Tuesdays are possible although they'd have a quarterly conflict with the Historic Preservation Committee but third Tuesdays definitely work.
- E Castro said she or M Miles would send out a form asking members if the first or they'd prefer first or third Tuesdays.

Subcommittee Reports and Discussion

There were updates from the Banner Committee

- C Sawyer shared that the "Movies that Matter" project seems plausible but they'd need to work out a day with The Welden as well as advertisement and funding.
- E Castro introduced the idea of a BEI book club run through the library.
- P Fuller proposed putting up a banner for Native American Heritage Month in November. He talked about discussing the idea with the local Abenaki tribe, verifying terms and symbols. This was well received.

Public Comment on Agenda Items (limit 2 minutes per person)

There was no public comment

Other business.

P Fuller encouraged members to support the group Sister Speak at an upcoming show.

Discuss next BEI Cmte. meeting and agenda items

It was decided that the discussion about focus groups and decision making process would be revisited in next meeting

Plus/Delta

Members shared their plus and delta for the committee. The plus was a positive thing they're happy about, the delta a change they're excited for.

The meeting ended at 7:48pm