

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY BELONGING, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:30 PM TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023

Approved May 9, 2023

Commission Members Present: Reese Kelly, (Co-Chair); Eliana Castro (Co-Chair); Maresa Miles; Clark Sheldon; Preston Fuller (All remote via Zoom)

Commission Members Absent: None

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

Members of the public present: Jeffrey Nelson

- 1. Begin recording and Open Meeting.** R. Kelly began the meeting at 6:33.
 - Introductions.
 - Discuss agenda order, additions and deletions. No additions needed.

- 2. Approval of Minutes.**
 - **Motion by R. Kelly to approve the 2/14/23 BEI Minutes as presented. Seconded by E. Castro. No discussion. Motion passed with all in favor.**
 - **Motion by R. Kelly to approve the 3/21/23 BEI Minutes as presented. Seconded by M. Miles. No discussion. Motion passed with all in favor.**

- 3. Grounding (Clark Sheldon)**
 - C. Sheldon began the reading of Land Acknowledgement and BEI Committee Values.
 - C. Sheldon then moved onto the Grounding portion of his presentation.
 - He read a series of quotes from an interview podcast. They focused on the term “listening” and ways to better listen to the community.
 - J. Nelson joined the call at 6:44.

- 4. Public Comment on Agenda/Non-agenda items (limit 2 minutes per person).**
 - J. Nelson asked (as a member of the public) about whether the committee had started discussing Juneteenth event details yet.
 - P. Fuller mentioned that a Juneteenth celebration had to come from the black community in order for it to be authentic. But he reinforced that the committee supports and stands behind the community when they say that something should be done.

- 5. Updates on appointment of new members.**
 - R. Kelly appreciated the discussion last month focused on the date and time of the regular BEI meetings.

- There are additional options: **The first thursday starting at 6:30, the second thursday starting 6:30** (The current meeting time), **or the third Tuesday starting 6:30 PM.** There's a brief discussion about how members feel about these times.
- C. Sawyer mentioned that he will post on Facebook again that there are several openings and once two candidates have applied, then the city will take action.
- R. Kelly asked for who on the City Council would be vetting the candidates. C. Sawyer mentioned that it's by volunteer, so it didn't come up at the City Council meeting. R. Kelly asked C. Sawyer for an update. C. Sawyer agreed to that.
- J. Nelson left the meeting at 6:54. (Then reconnected at 6:56)
- C. Sawyer also mentioned to the board that any of the current BEI members can be a board member of other groups at the same time.

6. Discussion of next steps for working toward goals.

- R. Kelly started by reading off the goals.
- E. Castro volunteered an idea for **Goal D.** E. Castro would like to do some reconnaissance on what other communities and municipalities are doing and what their goals might be. This might be an opportunity to share with other communities and to find tasks that align with these goals. She also asked to put a conversation about term lengths on a future agenda as well. This can impact goals that are being worked on.
- C. Sawyer clarified that there are no term limits, so any terms that end can be continued again and members can be reappointed by the City Council.
- M. Miles didn't know which specific goal she'd like to work on, but she is excited to use these goals and find out what the community wants or needs.
- P. Fuller didn't want to work on a goal alone. He'd rather listen to people and take a direction that the community wants.
- C. Sheldon resonated with **Goals E and F.** He wanted to gather information but also wanted to make sure that there's a plan to use the information gathered.
- R. Kelly reminded the committee that these goals might be intimidating, but they're also what they set out to do as committee members.
- C. Sawyer discussed the idea of opening a forum to local organizations and employers to understand what DEI practices they enforce to gain helpful information.
- R. Kelly named that, as a white person, it is normal to feel stuck in your head and not make any movement because of how intimidating these goals can be.
- C. Sawyer mentioned continuing the discussion of banners, since that could be a part of those goals. P. Fuller asked C. Sawyer to specify where the banners are.
- There was a discussion about how the banners can celebrate both pride and Juneteenth, since there are two places for banners. R. Kelly moved this to "Other Business" on the agenda.
- The committee discussed focusing on two goals in teams. E. Castro brought up **Goals D and E** as good starting places. R. Kelly thought **E** would take longer than others. C. Sheldon agreed with R. Kelly that **Goal C** is a good one to start with too.
- The committee decided to start with **Goals D and E.** M. Miles volunteered to head a team that worked on **Goal E.** C. Sheldon would like to start as a team leader for **Goal D** but pass it off in the future.

- P. Fuller had reservations about the size of these goals and was afraid that they would “spin their wheels” and run into problems in the future. R. Kelly mentioned that getting no input from reaching out is also an answer in and of itself, and they can ask the city to help them find more information (providing a needs assessment, etc.). M. Miles brought up asking the City Council for ways they assess the needs of the community.
- **R. Kelly, P. Fuller, and M. Miles will be on team E.**
- **E. Castro and C. Sheldon will be on team D.**

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

- R. Kelly moved on and asked any members of the public for input.
- J. Nelson mentioned that the school will be addressing some of the goals that were discussed earlier, so there can be some overlap or cooperation. J. Nelson also mentioned that there should be other ways to send input to the committee aside from waiting for monthly meetings.

8. Other business.

- R. Kelly started by returning to the banner discussion. June is a busy month, February is Black History Month, and there are other months that center on awareness of marginalized groups. C. Sawyer asked that if there’s more the city could be doing (like a schedule) that makes this process easier. The BEI could have an impact.
- P. Fuller mentioned that it’s superficial but it also matters a lot at the same time. The committee can take a look at the calendar to see how these banners can better reflect support for marginalized groups.
- R. Kelly also mentioned that C. Sawyer can come up with a calendar for banners and the BEI can approve the results or give feedback.
- **R. Kelly left the meeting at 7:46.**
- E. Castro led the meeting once R. Kelly left.

9. Public Comment on Agenda/Non-Agenda Items (limit 2 minutes per person).

- No additional public comment.

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

- E. Castro mentioned there will be follow-up on the goals-related work next month. E. Castro would like to update how the “Public Comment” items work on the agendas in the future.
- E. Castro would also like to discuss Juneteenth next month as well.
- C. Sawyer officially shared the open committee position on Facebook.

11. Plus/Delta closing.

- M. Miles appreciated the public comment and also the quote from C. Sheldon earlier in the meeting.
- E. Castro liked that the committee really addressed how they will work on the goals. She wants the committee members to feel comfortable stepping into leading roles.
- P. Fuller appreciated E. Castro bringing up how the committee will support Juneteenth.

- C. Sheldon appreciated how the committee meetings are open to sharing and is excited to see how future meetings work.

12. E. Castro adjourned the meeting at 7:57 PM.