

CITY OF McMinnville
MINUTES OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Kent Taylor Civic Hall and online via Zoom,
McMinnville, Oregon

Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

Presiding: Committee Co-Chair Larry Miller

Recording Secretary: Noelle Amaya, Communications & Engagement

Manager

Committee Members: Present	Absence
Larry Miller	Efrain
Abby Thomas	Arrendando
Christine Bader	
Zack Geary	
Caitlin Nemeth	
Dianne Rhee	
Katherine Martin	
Tony Lai	
Myrna Khoury	

Others in attendance: Anais Mathez, Senior Planner, 3J Consulting

- 1) CALL TO ORDER: Committee Co-Chair Larry called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Zack Geary MOVED to approve the February 9th, 2023 minutes with suggested edits. Christine Bader SECONDS. Motion PASSES unanimously.
- 3) PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.
- 4) NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER INTRODUCTION: Larry thanks everyone for being involved in the committee and states that achievements aren't always seen right away. Instead, they are often seen in a series of small steps that result in progress. Larry recently completed a course on DEI and believes that the work in DEI is a journey and may not always be as smooth as folks want it to be, but if we stick with it, it will be fulfilling at the end.

Larry introduces the new committee members. Larry states that he enjoyed the interview process, the passion and experience the new members had and believes they'll be valuable additions to this group. He asks the new members to introduce themselves.

Caitlin Nemeth states that she recently moved here from Virginia. She has a background in public health and community engagement. Equity, Inclusion and Belonging are all part of her journey and process in learning anti-racism. She is working towards the idea of institutionalizing equity from the bottom up and is excited to work with the City since she

already works with the County.

Katherine Martin states that she has lived in McMinnville for over 30 years. Myrna Khoury, who is also a member, was once a student of hers many years ago. She's worked in the education field for a long time focused on those who struggle with traditional learning or who are on academic-probation, or educational accommodations because of a disability. She is semi-retired which is a good time to give back to the community where she once raised her own children. She is excited to doing something more than just a the one-off volunteer gigs and is excited to be a part of something that will have a lasting effect.

Diane Rhee was unable to unmute herself but put her introduction into the Zoom chat.

- 5) DLCD PUBLIC FACILITY GRANT: Anais Mathez, Senior Planner from 3J consulting begins the a presentation on the DLCD Planning for Equity in our Public Facilities Project. Anais explains the initial ideas behind the community engagement portion of this project and the goal of exploring what the public's perception of these deficiencies are and how the City may overlay the publics needs with technology, infrastructure, or process.

She goes through each of the slides beginning explaining the public involvement plan and what that means in terms of key messaging, schedule, and stakeholders.

A question is posed about where the demographic information from the public involvement plan came from. Staff Liaison Noelle Amaya confirms that this information came from the most recent Census and is not sure why Hispanic, Asian, and multi-race are specifically called out. Larry asks about what is considered 'multi-race' – Noelle explains this is an identifier on the Census as well for those who check two or more races.

Anais goes over the proposed engagement activities, communication tools, the rounds of outreach, process for reporting out on what we hear from public engagement, and the steps on how we may prioritize deficiencies and implementation.

Christine Bader asks if the meetings and data sharing will fold into our existing meetings times. Anais confirms that we will try to do so, but based on timing there may be some instances where we will need to schedule alternative meeting times.

Larry asks about clarification on the committee's role. Anais explains that this group has a rich amount of established relationships and networks in the community and part of equitable planning is to continue relationship building. The hope is that the group can provide information about upcoming events or opportunities and can act as a liaison between the people they know in their individual networks and the information the City is trying to get out.

Anais further goes on to explain that maybe committee members are part of neighborhood organizations and where they feel comfortable having a community conversation – the City and consulting group are open to all sorts of ideas.

The group brainstorms on locations that might have a lot of foot traffic. Locations like First Baptist Church, St. James Church, the Downtown Farmers Market, Mini Hidalgo, and El

Ranchito are suggested.

Zack mentions the Summer Fun program has a vetted list of stakeholders.

Katherine mentions that Campfire runs an afterschool program and may have flyers or something that families can take home.

Anais states that the main goal for the community conversations is to identify the community groups or places that we can join in or would be willing to host.

Tony Lai suggests Terra Tempo Apartments, Deer Crossing Apartments, Lutheran Community Services. Mango Loco is a business that supports the Hispanic community.

Anais will add these stakeholders to the finalized public involvement plan and looks forward to working with this group during our next meeting where we talk about how to host a community conversation.

- 6) ARPA: Larry wanted to revisit this topic up to review after the work session from the month prior. Larry solicits the groups thoughts on the ideas that were brought to the table about the possibility of a mentorship program for City employees, DEI lecture courses, DEI scholarships for high school students, or to promote yearly sports activities in McMinnville or folks with ADA disabilities.

Diane asks for more information on the mentorship Larry mentioned. Larry explains that the idea is that someone in the workplace can guide an employee through their career. Mentors can help provide guidance or help employees maneuver through their role as a City employee.

Larry shares his screen and provides a framework to think about some of these ideas.

Christine explains to the new committee members that the City received 225k from the American Rescue Plan Act and has been tasked with making recommendations to the City in how these funds are spent in relation to supporting DEI activities. Larry states that there has been a lack of clarity surrounding ARPA related spending.

Noelle confirms that the DEI committee's role is to make recommendations for the programming that will go along with the ARPA funds allocated to the DEI Implementation Project. Zack reminds the group that there may be guidelines that we have to adhere to as they relate to ARPA rules.

Noelle states that the committee's job is to identify the main goals for spending and tie those back to the goals from the strategic plan. Noelle reminds the group that Vicki Hedges presented alongside herself during the January work session which included the mention of an online platform for employee training.

Larry asks how online training supports DEI initiatives. Noelle explains how a platform supports the strategic goal of providing consistent and ongoing DEI training to City employees and the necessity to allocate these funds towards a platform that can provide flexibility in its format – which has not been offered to City employees before and can be found in Mactown

2032.

Christine asks how much the online training is going to cost. Noelle states that City staff is still working through the analysis and contract negotiations and a dollar amount is not yet known. Noelle estimates around 50k is close to realistic spend throughout the life of the project.

Larry is concerned that the City will use the platform for compliance training instead of DEI training. Noelle confirms that the primary focus of having the platform is so that the City can provide training on various DEI topics. If the opportunity to provide other forms of professional development or compliance become available, the City would also utilize those benefits. Part of the strategic plan requires us to have an internal training mechanism for employees, so this fulfills that goal.

Zack expresses that he feels “procedurally uncomfortable” that the group may not have the opportunity to “buy in” when deciding on how the funds are spent, but expresses that perhaps he doesn’t understand the process for how projects get underway and money is allocated or spent. Noelle states that approving the project or spending isn’t the role of the committee and that the role is to recommend projects, not approve them. It is the job of the project managers to approve. Some of the funds have been earmarked for internal training – but the bulk of the money allocated from ARPA has not yet been earmarked.

Christine and Zack both state that they don’t recall there being a decision about some of the monies needing to be spent on employee training. Abby asks to have more clarity around exactly how much money is left after spending some on the internal training.

Christine states that she was under the impression that the prior work session was just a “draft” of some proposed ideas. Zack agrees that it was not clear that there were solid plans for actual investment or that decisions would be made without being brought back to this group to decide on. Noelle states that while there are certain pieces that the City needs to do to fulfil certain aspects of the strategic plan, this is a joint conversation and staff needs help in deciding how to spend the rest of the money.

Abby clarifies that they (the committee) should provide the final *recommendations* for projects and the City provides final *approval* of the projects. Noelle confirms that is the process.

Christine is concerned that there is already money spent without clarity around how it is being spent. Noelle confirms that no final decisions have been made in regards to the training and that staff is currently exploring the best way to undertake this.

Zack asks again about confirming the process for approval on spending and wonders if this group will have the opportunity to approve of this piece once more information on the cost of the internal training platform becomes available. Noelle states that she does not feel comfortable answering that question without talking to Vicki Hedges since it was Jeff Towery who directed them both to make the decision and work together on moving it forward.

Diane Rhee asks for context around ARPA via the Zoom chat. Councilor Geary explains to the new members what ARPA is.

Tony asks that the constraints of ARPA are shared so that the parameters are clear to the group if there are any.

Noelle explains how project accounting and a project outline work - and how it ties to this process and governmental reporting requirements. The outline for the project has yet to be written and that's why ARPA has been brought to the table to have the conversation. City staff needs the committee's help in writing the full project outline, with the acknowledgement that staff has must focus some of the funds internally.

Christine voices concern about "someone else" spending the money before they've had a chance to make recommendations. Noelle states that no other entity can spend the money since it's put in a specific bucket and no one else has access to that bucket aside from her and Vicki. The only danger the group faces is by not earmarking the funds and not making decisions or a finalized plan for spending before the December 31, 2024 deadline.

Christine asks for a work session because this needs to be worked through and make sure the group is on the same page. Larry believes this should be our number one priority right now.

Group discussion follows on how the strategic plan and ARPA funds fit together and how the initial project priority list gets made. Zack explains this process and that not all projects get funded. Goals from our strategic plan guide that prioritization. The group struggles with the idea that the strategic plan is a set of goals that was put together without a defined funding source.

Zack asks what the historical HR budget is for training and how HR has prioritized those funds. The group agrees that this would be good to understand.

Larry will send out a notification for a work session and suggests we move the proclamation agenda item to the next meeting.

7) ADJOURNMENT at 6:04 pm.

s/s Noelle Amaya
Noelle Amaya, Communications & Engagement