

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

Thursday, November 10, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.

Presiding: Committee Co-Chair Sarah Schwartz

Recording Secretary: Noelle Amaya, Communications & Engagement

Manager

Committee Members: Present

Larry Miller
Tony Lai
Abby Thomas
Christine Bader
Karina Alcantara
Myrna Khoury
Sarah Schwartz
Efrain Arrendando

Absence

Zack Geary
David Cano

Others in attendance: Vicki Hedges, Human Resources Manager and Heather Richards, Community Development Director

- 1) CALL TO ORDER: Committee Co-Chair Larry called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Tony Lai MOVED to approve the October 13th, 2022 minutes. Sarah SECONDS. Motion PASSES unanimously.
- 3) PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.
- 4) HR MANAGER MEET & GREET (Vicki Hedges, Human Resources Manager): Larry Calls for Vicki Hedges to introduce herself and to explain any expectations that HR might have for the committee meeting. Vicki begins by introducing herself, she comes to the City after working with Clackamas Community College for the past 14 years. Worked herself from a payroll position to the HR Director. Had a small stint in public service early in her career. Everything in HR integrates with DEI, and every departments work at the City should integrate in some way to DEI. In her first few months at the City, Vicki has begun making a list of things she will be working on over the next several months primarily with recruitment at the forefront. Vicki would like to expand our efforts to more diverse populations – and carefully consider our interview questions and where we’re losing diverse candidates. She is interested in learning the thoughts or opinions of the group.

Christine asks if there is any practices that Clackamas Community College had considering

DEI that she felt like sharing. Vicki states that the university was behind in DEI work, but they had just recently hired a DEI Officer. They had started to do a lot of work before she left and were completely changing the way they were recruiting employees there.

Christine asks what she might want to know about the DEI committee? Vicki is interested in learning more about what the committee is working on and if there was any work that was left behind after the previous HR manager had left.

Efrain asks if we could look at sample interview questions but is unsure if that information could be shared with this group before they were put into action. Vicki says that she would be sure to share the questions and process once she gets them in place.

Tony asks what the current process is in terms of advertising/recruiting for diverse candidates. Vicki doesn't know of any specific platforms that the City uses for advertising except for indeed.com or governmentjobs.com. She believes were missing a standard set of places that were advertising jobs across the board.

Larry asks about what "governmentjobs.com" is. Vicki explains that is the standard website we use for recruitment in the public sector. Larry thanks Vicki for her time and attendance.

- 5) RECRUITMENT FOR PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEES (Heather Richards, Community Development Director) Committee Co-Chair Larry introduces Heather Richards who is here to provide some context from last meetings topic on recruiting for the project advisory committee.

Heather states that she read last month's meetings minutes and was a little shocked on how that was perceived so she is happy to be here to explain that her intention wasn't to simply "check the box".

The Community Development Department is the civic engagement arm in many ways at the City in terms and that they're often tasked with creating project advisory committees made up of community members. Heather states that effort is put towards getting the word out to solicit interest for committee volunteers but it's difficult to recruit for and so we are left with working with only those who apply.

It is pretty standard practice throughout the City to bring committee members from other groups to advise on City different projects, or at key interest points or milestones. Heather's interest is to be familiar with thinking about Planning initiatives, but from the lens of DEI. Heather wants to know what planning does and what it doesn't do well. The Planning industry is beginning to understand that many decisions that have historically been made have added to some of the systemic injustice that has permeated throughout public policies. She wants to challenge our assumptions and figure out how to better embed DEI into the committee work we do and overall public engagement sphere.

This is why she would like someone from the DEIAC to liaise with these PAC's to help us keep our eyes on these process and remind these groups to apply the DEI lens. Heather has real concerns that we truly "get what we plan for" and therefore want to make sure our future projects, which is building on projects that will be completed in the coming 15 to 20 years, are

including the voices that need to be heard from.

Sarah asks about the current people that are applying to committees. What demographic do we see the most interaction from. Heather says we have recently been getting more diverse age groups – it used to be older white males, but we are starting to see a more college students, parents, etc. applying.

We typically miss out on the accessibility piece, we seldom don't see a whole lot of participation from the wheelchair bound or those with visual impairments.

Sarah asks when PAC meetings typically happen. Heather said there is some variability but for the most part in the evenings. Christine also thinks meeting times might have an impact on how people choose to participate and wonders what other barriers we could reduce to help encourage participation like food, childcare, travel vouchers,

Heather states that she had spoken to Noelle Amaya about the project dollars and budget surrounding these very things and that we're interested in doing something similar. Christine understands there are barriers and would like to know what opportunities there might be to have conversations about what committee service entails. Christine fears that the public doesn't fully understand that they have anything to offer. Heather agrees that we need to find ways to bring budget in and find ways to have that conversation.

Efrain asks about how we might create a structure for everyone to participate more fully and empower those to participate more freely. Heather refers to the terms of the structure, PAC's have a beginning and an end, versus a committee that has a standing 4-year positions etc. There is some difference in commitment level. Heather believes that what we do at the City is impactful, and has seen evidence that the testimony that we hear regularly informs public decisions. She would like to see more equitable influence in our policy decisions than what we're seeing right now. Those who do feel comfortable to participate do so and its often in a negative way, she would love to equalize the playing field.

Christine asks how can we help create focus groups that are different from the groups we normally hear from. She asks Heather to keep us apprised of their needs so that we can help form focus groups from our groups, or people who we don't normally hear from.

Sarah asks about current recruitments. The Fox Ridge Area Plan, Transportation System update which is a 2 year commitment beginning in March, and a Housing Needs Analysis which begins in January. PAC's meet once a month and review the data that will ultimately guide the plans recommendations.

Larry apologizes for his mis-understanding from last meeting. He has had time to attend a city council meeting and hear about some of the issues that are affecting the City and that helped him understand the need for and importance of seeing that we need to bring more voices into the crowd. If City Council doesn't hear other voices, than you can't blame them for the decisions they make. Larry congratulates Heather on her work and how professional she always is. He thanks for her time and everything she does.

6) EQUITY LENS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CHARTER UPDATE (Staff Liaison Noelle

Amaya) Noelle reviews the process of how the engagement charter and lens are being reviewed with each member of the executive individually. Noelle has met with two members, and spend the next several weeks working through this review process to understand the needs of each department and how it applies to this body of work.

- 7) CITY COUNCIL UPDATE (City Councilor, Zack Geary) Zack Geary was absent so no City Council update today.
- 8) SUB-COMMITTEE REVIEW & TERM LENGTHS (Noelle Amaya, Staff Liaison): Noelle provides updates on the term lengths and the 30 day recruitment period that will begin the following week. Sarah reminds folks about the sub-committees that the group previously formed. Larry pulls up the most recent list of committees.

Christine asks for clarification and if we are asking about whether or not the sub-committees should even exist. She feels like this is a separate conversation than the one we're trying to have.

Larry refers to the conversation Sarah and him had previously discussed concerning prior momentum compared to now and wants to think about this in goal setting for 2023. Christine reminds the group about the workplan that was originally created and then fizzled out because of a misunderstanding about the role/intention of the DEIAC.

Larry feels that we should focus on putting more of a lens on the things that occur in the City. He'd like to hear feedback from the group on the overall direction for the committee. He understands that there is a lot of information that is provided and wants to make sure that when members receive information in their packets if they're taking the time to review it. He reiterates that he thinks the purpose of the committee is to help the city become a more inclusive place and we need to reciprocate that in our work.

Tony Lai says that he's like to see us not use 'sub-committees' anymore because they felt isolating. Tony joined the committee because he wanted to hear from everyone and when big tasks are divided, we miss out on the collective voice of the group. Going forward, he feels like subcommittees should be project based. Tony hopes to see department heads come to the table and have conversations about their projects. His biggest issue is that the City is waiting for the DEI committee to come to them instead of them coming to the committee. He loved that Heather came here today and asked the committee to advise on how a process could work better. Tony feels strongly that as a rule, we need to go to the people, and not wait for them to decide to serve on a committee. We keep asking ourselves why we're not hearing from the public – it's because we're not going to them in their own space. He feels that this is the intended purpose of this committee and was the vision the City had for their work.

Heather Richards thanks Tony for his powerful comments. Christine Bader agrees.

Efrain feels like we're representing a diverse crowd as a group, and as individuals there is a weight associated with being alone or isolated. Karina says she often doesn't comment because there isn't any question that is being asked of her. It's hard to comment on what's happening when it's a presentation or introduction to a person or topic. Nobody has come to them to ask anything, so how can they provide direction?

Larry says a lot of the opinions he brings to the table are coming from his group conversations in his own neighborhood. Christine asks if we want to decide on getting rid of subcommittees and make them only project based.

Larry asks about the structure of the meetings and if we have the liberty to use the group time as a work session. Heather states that work sessions have more informal dialogue with no formal actions at the end of it. Public meetings by law, have to be in this hybrid structure where the public can attend.

Efrain asks about if we have to have business meetings every month, or if we can structure it differently to have work sessions more often and less structured agendas. Tony agrees that he would like to use more of our time together to discuss things freely and come up with work plans.

- 9) OTHER BUSINESS: Sarah reminds the group about the Lunar New Year celebration at the MacMkt and wondered if the DEI committee was interested in having a presence there on January 21st.

Christine asks if anyone attended the BIPOC block party – Larry did but it was cold and not well attended he thinks due to the weather. He is also unsure about how well it was advertised.

Larry asks if there is another DEIAC group that's out there and if we'd be interested in meeting another group. He has had a hard time finding out if other City's have committees out there and if there is value looking for them and asking for advice. Christine would like to invite someone from the Beaverton committee to present and share their work with how they got off the ground.

Larry likes the idea of inviting someone and will attempt to do that.

December meeting structure: everyone agrees that they would like to do the meeting at an alternative location in an informal style for December as a holiday get together. Sarah asks if we are required to meet in McMinnville as was suggested last month, Noelle needs to verify.

Friday December 2nd is a working lunch with Susan Muir and everyone else is invited to come, but you're not required to do so.

- 10) ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned by Larry at 5:56 pm.

s/s Noelle Amaya
Noelle Amaya, Communications & Engagement
Manager
Recorder