



Approved March 4.2019

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday February 4, 2019

6:00 p.m.

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston IL, Council Chambers

Members Present: Alderman Fleming, Alderman Revelle, Alderman Rue Simmons, Alderman Fiske, Alderman Braithwaite

Members not Present:

Staff Present: Kimberly Richardson, Kumar Jensen, Evonda Thomas-Smith, Victoria Benson, Mark Verner, Wally Bobkiewicz, Karen Danczak-Lyons, Paulina Martinez

Presiding Member: Alderman Rue Simmons

CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Ald. Rue Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF January 7, 2019

The meeting minutes were moved by Alderman Revelle; Alderman Braithwaite seconded; approved 5-0

Citizen Comments

Alderman Fleming read the following from Kathleen Flaherty who is homebound.

I am a 67 year old disabled woman, largely but not totally housebound. I am also a longtime Evanston resident and retired civil rights lawyer. City venues are frequently inaccessible to me, due to poor indoor air quality. I've reported one aspect of this problem--noxious cleaning products—to the Levy Center and to my 9th ward alderwoman. Nothing has come of those reports, probably because cleaners/disinfectants are purchased in bulk by the City for all its venues. At least that's the impression I got from the Levy Center folks and from running into the same sickening fumes in the basement of the Civic Center.

Converting to effective less-toxic cleaning products should be a no-brainer for this progressive City! And yet....habits die hard. I'd like to suggest that the Human Services Committee take responsibility for removing these completely unnecessary access barriers, perhaps working with the Environment Board and Age-Friendly Evanston Task Force. This is the City's opportunity for easy/cheap/voluntary compliance with the ADA. I am sharing these comments with the city manager, in case my request for accommodation would be better addressed to the corporation counsel or some other City department, committee, etc.

My illness and disabilities are profoundly isolating. The Levy Center, in particular, should be a meaningful resource for me. But the bathroom and floor cleaning products lock me out. If it's more cost efficient for the city to start with a small trial of product replacement, the Levy Center would be a good place to start. Even seniors without respiratory and immune disabilities are more vulnerable to physical harm from noxious cleaners.

The recent brutal cold brings to mind another strong —*potentially life and death!*— reason for City facilities and City services to eliminate indoor air pollution as an access barrier. A number of Evanston residents lost power during this arctic blast. City warming centers were opened, including the Levy Center. If I need a warming center or a cooling center or temporary shelter in the event of some other natural or man-made disaster, should I not have access to the same venues as other citizens?

It is past time for the City to recognize that access to physical facilities must include— *but must not be limited to*—removal of architectural barriers. Poor indoor air quality blocks access for many, including those with respiratory disabilities. The federal Access Board has recognized this for many years. It is long past time for Evanston to catch up!

Limited English Language Access Policy Update

Paulina Martinez Assistant to the City Manager stated a 9-18 month timeframe was observed by other communities that came up with a similar policy. Staff is recommending 12 month to follow the steps outlined in order to properly access the needs of Evanston.

Alderman Fleming voiced concerns of the 12 month process.

Kimberly Richardson Deputy City Manager said staff will assist and translate for those in need. There is a language barrier because there isn't a consistent policy. A language line is available and 311 assists.

Update on Services Provided during Recent Severe Cold Weather

Health and Human Services Director Evonda Thomas-Smith thanked Betty Bogg of Connection for the Homeless for providing 24 hour services during the cold weather and Sue Murphy at Interfaith Action for extended services at the Hospitality Center. The overflow of residents from the overnight shelter at Interfaith Action was taken in by Hilda's Place.

The City contributed a total of twelve cots; six to Interfaith Action and six to Hilda's Place.

Mrs. Smith also thanked 311, Patrick Deignan, Levy Center and Fleetwood Jourdan for being responsive.

Social Service Review Status Report

Deputy City Manager Kimberly Richardson reported the following services/programs will be reviewed; Emergency and General Assistance, Senior Services, Youth and Young Adult, Ombudsmen, Mental Health Board, Victim Advocate and Work Force programs.

The intended core group will consist of staff that provides the service and management.

Alderman Braithwaite "we are fixing a problem that does not exist". He would like to have the names of staff and departments of the core group when the next update is presented. He wants to make sure those delivering and supervising the services are directly involved.

Alderman Fleming felt a manager from each program might provide a challenge because they will be fighting for their programs. She is glad to see the community will be involved in the process and that the research and work will be done using a lens of racial equity.

Alderman Rue Simmons would like the nonprofit and faith community to have an active role in the process.

Map of City by Income, Education, and Language from 1990-present Report

Alderman Fleming thanked Mark Verner for the information. The map showed a decrease of median family income for African Americans and there was an increase to the non-English speaking population.

Equity and Empowerment Commission

Member of the Equity and Empowerment Commission reported on their progress. They have adopted the NEKC Foundation Race Equity Guide as a framework; completed a race equity training facilitated by the YMCA; adopted key equity concepts to guide and shape the development of the framework and developed a community engagement policy tool which was given to staff for review.

A next step is to complete the equity framework and submit to the committee for review.

Alderman Fleming said it would be beneficial for the Council to go through training to understand racial equity and how decision making impacts it.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Unanimously approved, meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicola Whyte
Administrative Lead