



EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May, 16, 2019, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Room 2402

Present: M. Wynne, A. Ibañez, J. Grover T. Eberhart, M. Dillard

Absent: K. Lyons, J. Corbier de Lara, D. Holmes

Staff: P. Efiom

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jane Grover at 6:38 without a quorum. Comm. A; Ibañez and Dillard arrived at 6:40 and a quorum was declared. The minutes were approved by Alderman Wynne and seconded by Comm. Dillard.

There was no public comment

Library Director Karen Danczak Lyons reported on the Library's equity progress. All staff has received basic equity training. There is an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee which continues to push the equity agenda. The Library is currently seeking applications for their Racial Equity Task Force. The Task Force will be a combination of Board, staff, and community members. It will be chaired by first term Library Trustee Denia Hester. In an attempt to diversify their staff, the Library is reviewing job descriptions that may exclude qualified candidates. In addition, staff is expanding their outreach to bring in a larger diversity of candidates.

Draft Equity Framework

Work on the Equity Framework has been tabled until the social service review is completed by Asst. City Manager Richardson. Comm. Ibañez asked how the work of the Commission ties into the Ms. Richardson's work. Dr. Efiom will invite Ms. Richardson to the June 20th Commission meeting for an update.

The Commission continues to acknowledge and grapple with the reality that the work of the commission is made more challenging by the fact that talking about race is difficult. Ald. Wynne recommended that commissioners (and others) should watch "Race – The Power of an Illusion" a PBS special. Dr. Efiom also recommended

Truth and Reconciliation Initiative

Staff Reports

- a. P. Efiom reported that the City is currently seeking applicants to fill the vacancy left by Mario Vela.

Items for communication

Comm. Grover is currently working to bring the Undesign the Redline exhibit to Evanston. The exhibit uses powerful narratives of people and communities, maps and other documentation to trace the enormous role that race played in determining where people were allowed to live. At the heart of the exhibit is an examination of how government policy from the 1930s, which became known as “redlining,” created segregation and disinvestment in communities, the impacts of which persist to this day. Comm. Grover will give an update the June 20th Commission meeting.

As a follow up to the discussion at the April Equity & Empowerment Commission meeting where Alderman Rue Simmons discussed a reparations ordinance and Alderman shared a draft of her proposed City Council resolution that “recognizes all the historic wrong the City has done, as a way to start the healing process.” Comm. Dillard suggested that we revisit the idea of a truth and reconciliation initiative. Staff reminded the Commissioners that Ald. Holmes has long expressed interest in working on such an initiative. A subcommittee to work on a long term inclusive initiative to include Ald. Wynne, Comm. Holmes, Dillard, and Grover was established.

Meeting adjourned by Comm. Grover at 8:17 p.m.