



## Equity and Empowerment Commission Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2020

6:30 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting

### Minutes

**Present:** Chair Jane Grover, Alejandra Ibanez, Delores Holmes, Ald. Melissa Wynne, Kathy Lyons, Max Weinberg and Timothy Eberhart

**Staff Present:** Kimberly Richardson, Interim Assistant City Manager; Shenicka Hohenkirk, ICMA Management Fellow

**Others Present:** Paulina Martinez, Interim Deputy City Manager; and Sarah Vanderwicken

**1. Called to order/Declaration of Quorum:**

The meeting called to order by Chair Grover at 6:30 p.m. and a quorum declared.

**2. Approval of the February 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Kathy Lyons moved to approve the February 20, 2020 meeting minutes; Delores Holmes seconded; minutes approved.

**3. Public Comment**

No public comment

**4. For Discussion**

**a. Reflection on Racial Inequality**

The discussion centered on commission members along with staff sharing their concerns, emotions, ideas and thoughts around racial inequality taking place currently. Everyone shared their wellbeing about the racial injustice and the coronavirus pandemic and how all of it is impacting us as a commission, but also in our communities and families.

**5. For Consideration**

No Consideration

**6. Communications**

A Reminder was made, for those who can, to participate in Evanston's first virtual Juneteenth Celebration/Parade.

## 7. Reports

### a. **Language Access Guidelines Update**

Paulina Martinez provided an update on the Language Access Guidelines held in October 2019 at the Human Service Committee meeting. During the Human Service meeting there were discussions around implementing a written internal Citywide Access Guidelines document for staff to make decisions on services and programs available for residents.

Recently a new contract was signed with City Fronts/Voice, which is a technology company that offers over the phone interpretation services. This program has truly been beneficial for the Public Health department's engagement with the non-English speaking residents in Evanston during this pandemic.

The translation of vital documents is currently on hold due to the volume of work that it requires along with the budget that is necessary for the translations.

Some of the next steps for the Language Access Guidelines are to provide training to some City staff that will use the guidelines within their roles; and communicating to the community about this program and how they can access this service.

### b. **Operationalize Equity Update**

Interim Assistant City manager, Kimberly Richardson, discussed how to operationalize equity within Evanston by transforming city government. Looking at the internal structure of Evanston through our policies, but also having the training and the accountability are vital in making Evanston equitable.

Moving forward on the work to operationalize equity in Evanston, Kimberly will use three concepts from GARE: **Normalizing, Organizing and Operationalizing** to begin the work, as well as, community Indicators.

Equity focus for Evanston is that our policy making, service delivery and distribution of resources accounts for the different history, challenges and needs of the people we serve. In order to achieve this, Kimberly will create a Citywide Employee Equity Committee that will be an internal group that will accompany the external group (Equity and Empowerment Commission). The Employee Equity Committee will embark upon trainings, learning and understanding the history of Evanston and going through department assessment in creation action goals for that department.

### c. **Reparations Subcommittee Report**

The reparations subcommittee will present an update to City Council regarding their progress with community and what the futures steps will be for the subcommittee. Having the conversation about the racial repair for Evanston and those next steps will look like for the community.

### d. **Environmental Justice Resolution Update**

There will be a formalized update coming to the Equity and Empowerment Commission for the July 16, 2020 meeting. Staff is still making some progress and adjustments to the resolution and ordinance.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.