



**Equity and Empowerment Commission
Thursday, March 18, 2021
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, Virtual
6:30 PM**

As the result of an executive order issued by Governor J.B. Pritzker suspending in-person attendance requirements for public meetings, City Council members and City staff will be participating in this meeting remotely. Due to public health concerns, residents may provide public comment virtually at the meeting or in writing.

To view: <https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/equity-empowerment/equity-and-empowerment-commission>

AGENDA

	Page
1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM	
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
A. February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes	3 - 5
3. PUBLIC COMMENT	
4. DISCUSSION	
A. Equity in the Arts Working Group Update Arts Council Equity Working Group Presentation	6 - 14
B. Update on Boards, Commissions and Committee Project Questionnaires for Commissions on Equity (Responses)	15 - 18

C. Language Access Community Efforts Update

5. FOR ACTION

A. Confirmation of the new Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission

B. Goal Setting and City Council Relationship Realignment 2021-2023

6. COMMUNICATION

7. REPORTS

A. Staff Equity Update and Presentation

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mission Statement

The Equity and Empowerment Commission's (EEC) mission is to develop shared recognition, and language of the history and impact of structural racism in Evanston, and develop tools and practices to achieve racial equity for all residents.



Equity and Empowerment Commission Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Present: Vice Chair Alejandra Ibáñez, Commissioner Delores Holmes, Ald. Melissa Wynne, Commissioner Kathy Lyons, Commissioner Karla Thomas, and Commissioner Max Weinberg

Absent: Chair Jane Grover and Commissioner Kymberly Walton

Staff Present: Kimberly Richardson, Interim Assistant City Manager, Shenicka Hohenkirk, ICMA Management Fellow, Paulina Martinez, Acting Deputy City Manager

1. Called to order/Declaration of Quorum:

Vice Chair Alejandra Ibanez called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and declared a quorum.

2. Approval of the January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ald. Melissa Wynne moved to approve the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes; Vice Chair Ibanez made a change to the Language Access section by adding the word "Guidelines" to the update. Commissioner Delores Holmes seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

No Public Comment

4. For Discussion

a. Strategies for Community Engagement

- Catalina Langen and Julie Rusk from the City of Santa Monica, California, provided an overview and presentation of their equity work, along with a run through of their Community Engagement Playbook.
- Commissioner Thomas raised a question about the changes of leadership and the budget as it related to the equity work that the City of Santa Monica presented. While there are some minor changes that have taken place in the City of Santa Monica in regards to their equity project, there are still major changes that are needed such as resources and a stronger budget process.
- Guest speaker Julie Rusk highlighted the idea that the trust in government between citizens and elected officials is a process that must take place in order to rebuild trust. A city/municipality should have an engagement

model/playbook is essential in order to reestablish trust and bridge community involvement.

- Who benefits? Who burdens? Who decides? How the equity funding is allocated are three powerful questions cities and municipalities must think through in order to adequately begin this work.
- Commissioner Holmes brought up the discussion around the system changes that will be necessary in order to bring about the real equity changes in communities. Catalina Langen responded with the idea of staff intentionally beginning to incorporate racial equity within their work to establish a new norm of cultivating the work of racial equity.

b. Boards, Committees and Commissions Staff Survey Responses

- Vice Chair Ibanez reviewed the responses of the BCC survey results for feedback and next steps. There were some new responses to the survey of some BCCs who we contacted and encouraged to fill out the survey.
- Commissioner Weinberg provided an update on what the responses of the survey is showing in regards to how the EEC can help incorporate equity within all BCCs. There seems to be concerns/ideas around local support, trainings, housing, etc. through the different boards, committees and commissions.
- Vice Chair Ibanez discussed that the next steps for the Equity and Empowerment Commission is to present to City Council and make recommendations that the formal leadership should take part in this racial equity journey, and develop a shared language.
- Commissioner Holmes suggested that one of the next steps for the EEC is to form an orientation that will include some specific things for all BCCs to be exposed to.
- Interim Assistant City Manager, Kimberly Richardson discussed the importance of all BCCs going through trainings, possibly with YWCA, to get the understanding of what the racial equity work will look like for their boards, committees and commissions.

c. Language Accessibility Review

- Interim Deputy City Manager, Paulina Martinez provided a second update on the Language Accessibility guidelines for questions and discussion.
- Vice Chair Ibanez biggest concern is in regards to ways the language access guidelines can be formed into a policy or ordinance for best practices. The guidelines should be codified into an ordinance or policy in order to hold the City accountable for implementing those guidelines.
- Interim Assistant City Manager, Kimberly Richardson provided feedback on other ways the Commission can address the accountability piece of implementing the Language Access guidelines throughout the City. The commission should strongly think through types resources that will be beneficial to this work and then consider what are some outcomes the commission is expecting to get out of it.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.



Evanston Arts Council Equity Working Group
Report to Equity & Empowerment Commission

March 18th, 2021

Agenda



- Why we are here
- Who we are
- What we do
- What has changed
- Next steps

Why we are here



- Equity Working Group formed in August 2019.
- To lead the work of bringing an equity lens to everything the Arts Council does.
- The goal is to make support of the arts in Evanston more equitable, both in terms of funding and of soft support, e.g. training, convening and recognition.

Who we are



Indira Johnson*



Angela Williams*



Kimberley Richardson**



Krista Fabian DeCastro



Jevoid Simmons



Shenicka Hohenkirk**



Mariana Bojorquez



Toby Sachs*

* Arts Council

** Staff

What we do



- Meet every month
- Took anti-racism training together, specifically for arts organizers
 - Put on by Enrich Chicago
 - Paid for by grant from Evanston Community Foundation
- Focused on re-imagining the Cultural Fund Grant, the Arts Council's annual grant program, to reflect:
 - the ongoing impact of the pandemic on organizations
 - our heightened focus on racial equity
- Used Equity Working Group and others to spread the word

Changes to the Cultural Fund guidelines



- Eligibility
 - Now open to Community Arts Groups as well as 501(c)3
- Simpler, shorter application
 - Just 3 narrative questions
- Individual coaching on applications offered, as well as workshops
- Judges to be mostly BIPOC
- Criteria
 - Reflect uncertainties of pandemic
 - BIPOC organizations and programs serving BIPOC and underserved demographics and communities will be favored
 - Collaborations that bring the community together are encouraged

Outcomes



- The number of applications went up **65%**.
- **60%** of them had never applied for this grant before.
- The same total budget of \$30,000 was distributed among **21** grantees, compared to 12 the previous year.
- **43%** of the grantees awarded this year had never applied for this grant before.
- **71%** of the grants went to BIPOC organizations or projects primarily serving BIPOC or underserved populations
 - that is 15 out of 21 grants, compared to 3 out of 12 the previous year.

Cultural Fund grants awarded



Applicant	Grant	Description	Applicant	Grant	Description
Mitchell Museum of the American Indian	\$2,000	Hiring indigenous local artists to give free online workshops and demonstrations that are open to all.	Youth Job Center	\$1,500	Group improvisation project enabling social and emotional learning for court-served youth 18-24; 95% BIPOC and 94% low income.
Open Studio Project	\$2,000	A series of community partnerships that eliminate barriers to making art; participants are 56% BIPOC and 25% receive scholarships.	Mudlark Theater	\$1,500	Increasing access to children's theater programs among a population that is 70% students of color and 53% qualifying for free lunch.
Search	\$2,000	Providing meaningful opportunities for self-expression and creativity for adults with developmental disabilities.	Kitchen Table Stories	\$1,500	A participatory visual and culinary arts program creating community narratives for the Asian and Pacific Islander community.
Art Encounter	\$2,000	After-school art programs for underserved youth.	Literature For All Of Us	\$1,500	Creation of graphics and poetry speaking out against racism, among 20 -25 book groups for diverse and low-income individuals.
Kids Create Change	\$2,000	Distributing over 1,000 art kits, backed up with online arts resources, to families of color and individuals experiencing homelessness.	Haitian Community Festival	\$1,000	A virtual re-imagining of the annual music, food and dance program for the Haitian and general community.
Crossing Borders Music	\$1,500	Sharing music and culture of Haitian and Black origins with Evanston's large Haitian-American community and others.	Evanston Made	\$1,000	A professional development program to mentor, support, celebrate and elevate local BIPOC visual artists.
Evanston Symphony Orchestra	\$1,500	Free virtual music classes for K and Pre-K children in families identified as vulnerable by the school district.	Evanston Present & Future	\$1,000	To commission several Black artists to work on the first Evanston Juneteenth digital exhibition and virtual parade.
Northlight Theatre	\$1,500	Migration of in-school theater programs to remote learning, primarily for BIPOC and under-resourced communities.	Evanston History Center	\$1,000	A Community History Project, to record digitally people's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in and around Evanston.
Family Focus of Evanston	\$1,500	A self-published book of poetry by and celebrating intergenerational members of the Black community.	Kids Global Network	\$1,000	A photographic narrative project to bring out identity and address the challenges of COVID-19, primarily for BIPOC students.
Evanston Art Center	\$1,500	Establishing two curatorial fellowships for BIPOC individuals to mount exhibitions of work by people of color.	Year of Kindness & Nonviolent Action	\$800	Part of the 100 Offerings of Peace Project, where artists around the world are creating art works on what peace means to them.
			Evanston Young Artists	\$550	Music teaching and performance opportunities for BIPOC and underserved students.

Next steps



- Bringing the equity work into the body of the full Arts Council
- Working Group continuing to meet to input on public art to honor the Black experience in Evanston

Timestamp	What is your board/committee's working definition of racial equity?	How does racial equity appear (if at all) in your board/committee meetings and conversations?	What action items are rooted in and connected to racial equity work on your board/committee?	Where and how does racial equity typically appear on your agendas?	How does racial equity work show up in your decision-making process?	How does racial equity appear in onboarding of new board/committee members?	How could racial equity training support the work of your board/committee?	Your name:	The name of the board/committee on which you sit:	Are you a chair on the board/committee?	Committee/board name:	Number of members on this board/committee:
1/11/2021 0:30:28	To identify and assess the needs and barriers of the M/W/EBE community on a regular basis in conjunction with the Economic Development Committee. To provide local M/W/EBEs opportunity for participation in all aspects of the City's contracting and procurement programs, including but not limited to construction projects, supplies, material purchases, professional and personal service contracts	Monthly committee review of M/W/EBE participation on City capital improvement projects, discussion of potential barriers and cross collaboration with internal and external community partners to address concerns	1) Collaboration with local partners focusing on apprentice trade opportunities for under served residents interested in the construction trade industry 2) Micro loan assistance to local and minority businesses using LEP penalty funds 3) Discussion of discriminatory patterns by trade unions for people of color 4) Addressing barriers to potential employment (i.e. returning citizens, tutoring, stipends for union re-entry, redressing local ordinance language to assist participation)	As CIP projects are discussed in committee sessions, inequities are addressed if there is a pattern of a nonresponsive Contractor. Industry articles are distributed among members to read about best practices and accomplishments regarding racial equity. Not really an agenda item	Committee discussions have addressed legislative change to workforce penalties and created a fund for training residents who do not have access to specific trade course work and enhance their living wage.	The current Staff Lead has one-on-one discussions with new committee members to explain the primary work of the committee, goals and vision. The Staff Lead has taken Beyond Diversity Training and SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) training. The purpose of the training was to create individual awareness around bias recognition and develop organizational leadership that will advocate for a stronger more equitable community - the goal should benefit the City of Evanston as a whole to address areas of improvement for minority/women owned businesses (training for both programs were initiated by the City's former Chief Racial Equity Officer)	Racial equity training would support the work of the M/W/EBE committee by providing tools for participants to recognize and address patterns of business exclusion, barriers to support, and individual biases, that prevent qualified minority/women and local businesses from equal and robust participation in the local economy	Sharon A. Johnson	M/WEBE-Minority/Women/Evanston Based Enterprise	n/a	M/WEBE-Minority/Women/Evanston Based Enterprise	9
1/13/2021 10:42:41	They have never defined racial equity and I am the first black chair	Many of the members, staff or former members are remembered by me through their microaggressions	None and none are 'acceptable'	Does not	Although I don't live in the 5th ward, I always represent Evanston's black community	There is no attempt to recruit members of color. I personally have recruited all current members of color	It would greatly support my work with equity but my fellow members would be insulted by that training	Violetta Cullen	Evanston Zoning board of appeals	Im the current Chair	Evanston zoning board of appeals	7
1/13/2021 11:26:08	Opportunity for all persons to have equal input and influence in all Board matters. (That is my off-the-top-of-my-head personal definition.)	We fully acknowledge and often discuss the importance of social and racial equity in discussions, actions and policies around environmental issues.	We have consistently discussed and supported implementation of the 2018 Climate Action and Resilience Plan (which has 'equity-focused' as one of its guiding principles) and the Environmental Justice resolution developed and put forth by Evanston residents in 2020. We often talk about equity as it pertains not just to race but other factors like income and neighborhood.	Discussion of the Environmental Justice resolution (passed by City Council in September 2020); discussion of the Climate Action and Resilience Plan and its emphasis on equity and inclusion; discussion of the uneven distribution of tree canopy across the city, in part because of a history of racist housing policies; discussion of need for more non-white Board members.	We have worked collaboratively with the Equity and Empowerment Commission and as part of a large group of local organizations and other Boards and Commissions on various issues related to environmental justice and implementation of the Climate Action and Resilience Plan.	Not sure about this one. Our onboarding process is informal.	I think we would all like to be more effective at soliciting input and inviting participation from a broader range of residents. Our Board is mostly white and has historically been so and we would like it to be more representative of the community in terms of race and other factors.	Cherie Fisher	Environment Board	Yes	Environment Board	11
1/14/2021 15:02:15	We haven't made a definition of racial equity explicit, but work within the broader framework of a commitment to Environmental Justice as reflected in the resolution adopted last year.	Advocating for and supporting implementation of the Climate Action & Resilience Plan is a main focus of our work, and CARP has at its core a commitment to equity. As we comment on and recommend changes in public policy and implementation, we consider impact on all segments of the community.	The most concrete example in the last 12 months was the Board's participation in advancing the Environmental Justice resolution. Going forward, we intend to support and advocate for encoding the principles outlined in the resolution in City policy and practice (including mapping of environment assets and deficits).	Example of areas of concern include: equitable distribution of assets that protect public health and quality of life such as healthy tree canopy, open green space, sidewalks and bike lanes, access to public transit; impact on small businesses and low-wage workers of policies such as strengthened leaf blower ordinance, polystyrene ban.	There is no formal process for addressing racial equity as we make decisions, beyond what I've outlined above.	The process is informal and individual, but we encourage new members to become familiar with the CARP report and could also routinely include the EJ resolution in an introductory packet.	That would likely depend on the nature of the training. I suspect periodic less formal feedback around specific issues we're working on might be most effective in keeping this top of mind. Having more members with diverse life experiences would also be helpful; moving to zoom meetings may have made it easier for prospective new members to participate (e.g., because child care is less of an issue).	Wendy Pollock	Environment Board	Yes, co-chair	Environment Board	11

Timestamp	What is your board/committee's working definition of racial equity?	How does racial equity appear (if at all) in your board/committee meetings and conversations?	What action items are rooted in and connected to racial equity work on your board/committee?	Where and how does racial equity typically appear on your agendas?	How does racial equity work show up in your decision-making process?	How does racial equity appear in onboarding of new board/committee members?	How could racial equity training support the work of your board/committee?	Your name:	The name of the board/committee on which you sit:	Are you a chair on the board/committee?	Committee/board name:	Number of members on this board/committee:
1/23/2021 12:22:58	NA	When an applicant applies for approval of a site with a racial equity aspect, we go out of our way to find a way to accommodate. The historic districts we have jurisdiction over are only about 15% of the city and are not diverse.	During 2020 we assisted Alderman Simmons in drafting the African American historical site ordinance. We also landmarked the former Foster School building in the Fifth Ward.	Our agenda consists of applications by owners of historic properties who are seeking a building permit. Our powers are mostly just to approve or disapprove	Most properties owned by diverse owners are not subject to preservation restrictions (and when we met with Alderman Simmons and Dino Robinson last year they did not wish African American sites to be subject to restrictions). But we have sought to honor and preserve sites of Black Evanston history whenever applications have come before us.	Our one Black member felt he did not have sufficient time and resigned. We have 3 board openings and have stated to the mayor that we would prefer to have some diverse members.	I don't think it would help. The subject matter of our commission, approving modification of structures which are in historic districts or landmarked, primarily affects east Evanston. Although we would prefer to add diverse board members, I am not surprised that our commission is not of much interest to the majority of persons of color. The tasks our commission performs affect architectural features of buildings rather than people. But to repeat, we would be delighted to add diverse members and hope to continue the work we started last year to help preserve Evanston's wealth of African America history. And we welcome creative suggestions for how we can expand the role we play i supporting racial equity.	Mark Simon	Historic Preservation Commission	Yes	Historic Preservation Commission	8
1/28/2021 17:43:02	Although we've never specifically discussed racial equity in commission meetings, we deal continually with programs and issues that heavily impact our lower-income residents, a high percentage of who are Black. These programs include, e.g., rent subsidies, homelessness prevention, and tenant counseling about issues with landlords and leases and evictions. Our focus is ensuring that the grant proposals that we review best meet the needs of our lower-income residents.	Racial equity would come up in our discussions of individual grant proposals. We try to be as fair and impartial as possible, and to ensure that our most vulnerable residents' needs are incorporated into our decisions	One example was our strong support for an affordable housing initiative that would have funded a pilot program for coach houses. Coach houses have huge potential in Evanston for creating a large increase in new affordable housing and in all nine wards. This would allow affordable housing is currently too concentrated, an opportunity to live in any ward in Evanston they desired to live in.	Racial equity doesn't specifically appear in our agendas. It shows up in our discussions about each proposal brought before our commission.	We consider the needs of our most vulnerable residents in our decisions and we try to be as fair and impartial as possible in our decisions.	I meet with new commission members one-on-one to welcome them to the commission, to bring them up to speed on key issues, and to listen to their concerns and their priorities	As much as we try, I feel we could always learn more and do better with respect to racial equity	Larry Donoghue	Housing & Homelessness Commission	Yes	Housing & Homelessness Commission	9 member slots in total (2 vacancies currently)

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1/29/2021 16:18:04	Racial equity will be achieved only when race is no longer a determinant of outcomes or success. This is just as true in the arts as in our broader society.	In August 2019 we formed an Equity Working Group, made up of three Arts Council members and three outside members of the arts community, to help the Arts Council bring an equity lens to everything we do. That group has been enthusiastic and energetic, and has met every month since. The Equity Working Group has two Black, one Latina, one Asian and two white members, one of whom has a Black partner and mixed-race children. The Equity Working Group and three City staff members, plus two other Arts Council members, all attended robust anti-racism training specifically tailored to arts organizations, run by Enrich Chicago. Some attended a one-day workshop, many of us attended the two and a half day workshop. This was fully funded by a grant we wrote to The Evanston Community Foundation. The Equity Working Group advise the full Arts Council on grant program policy and help reach out across the whole arts community. The Arts Council members of the Equity Working Group - as well as other Arts Council members - raise questions of equity and inclusion in the discussion and deliberation of most of the items that come before at Arts Council. At the height of the reaction to the killing of George Floyd, the Arts Council convened a virtual meeting to share views across the arts community of how to advance equity in the arts in Evanston. Around fifty people participated actively in a powerful conversation, including most of the Arts Council and around thirty arts organizations. One outcome of this meeting was the genesis of a new collaboration, the Evanston Performing Arts Collective.	Recommendations from the Equity Working Group led the work of revising the Guidelines for the Arts Council's annual Cultural Grant Program (our main Grants program) last year, to reflect both the impact of the pandemic and our heightened focus on racial equity. Major changes included making the application more approachable (3 narrative questions vs. the previous 7), removing the requirement to hold 501 (c)3 status (to open up to more loosely-formed organizations), lowering the amount that could be requested (to spread the wealth further), specifying that the panel judging the grant applications would be mostly BIPOC, and, most importantly, specifying that organizations and programs serving BIPOC and underserved demographics and communities would be favored in grant allocation. We also made a conscious effort to invite applications from arts groups who the Arts Council has not interacted with previously and who had not applied before.	A report from the Equity Working Group is a standing item on every Arts Council agenda.	Issues of equity and inclusion are now brought up in the discussion of pretty much every significant Arts Council decision and there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality and coherence of those conversations, not least because many of us have shared training and are now using common terminology and concepts. The changes to the Cultural Fund Guidelines led by the Equity Working Group profoundly influenced a very different allocation of the Cultural Fund Grant in 2020 vs. previous year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The number of applications went up 65% •60% of them had never applied for this grant before •The same total budget of \$30,000 was distributed among 21 grantees, vs. 12 in the previous year •43% of the grantees awarded in 2020 had never applied for this grant before •71% of the grants went to BIPOC organizations or projects primarily serving BIPOC or underserved populations -- that is 15 out of 21 grants, vs. 3 out of 12 the prior year. The same Guidelines are being used in this year's Grant program. In addition, we are launching a coaching program to mentor less-experienced grant writers through the process.	It starts before we get to onboarding. We have sought out and encouraged individuals with a developed interest in equity in the arts to apply for the Arts Council, which is changing the complexion of the Arts Council over time. The Arts Council is currently 50% BIPOC. The Board Chair and Vice-Chair have one-on-one onboarding conversations with new members and stress the commitment of the Arts Council to working towards equity, explain the role of the Equity Working Group and assess interest in joining the Equity Working Group.	Shared training specifically tailored to arts organizations has been central to the success of the Equity Working Group. It helped the group form, function and build trust. We are discussing making that training available to the rest of the Arts Council, and whether it should be mandatory.	Toby Sachs	Evanston Arts Council	Yes	Evanston Arts Council	12

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1/29/2021 17:05:21	Don't know	The Plan Commission works with the Zoning Ordinance (mostly planned developments, text/map amendments). I've only been on the Plan Commission for a few months and racial equity hasn't been part of any of the cases that I've been involved with so far. However, the Commission has been asked to consider a text amendment with respect to the definition of "family" in the Zoning Ordinance that I am concerned has implications for cultural rather than racial inequity. That matter is currently back with staff for additional research.	I don't think that anything is specifically related to racial equity, but I do think that cultural equity issues may arise related to the Zoning Ordinance.	I haven't seen it come up since I've been on the Plan Commission.	Just understanding Evanston's development history is helpful in considering matters brought to the Commission for consideration.	Don't know.	Not sure.	Jeanne Lindwall	Plan Commission	No	Plan Commission	9
1/29/2021 19:23:28	As a recent addition to the Commission, I'm unable to answer this	Discussions have stressed the importance of expanding affordable housing in the Evanston community, and greater transparency on decision-making that impacts neighborhoods	See above	Through the type of building and development projects submitted for approval	See above	Unknown	Greater familiarity with issues is always helpful	Kristine Westerberg	Evanston Plan Commission	No	Evanston Plan Commission	7
<p>From Mary Erickson: Hi Jen, I am sorry for taking so long to get back to you on this questionnaire. I've been back and forth about filling out and have decided that I am not comfortable with completing it. The questionnaire is essentially asking for the person completing it to define certain terms, which really amounts to one person's opinion rather than the viewpoint of the whole committee. Also, I have no insight to answer certain questions, for example, how appointments to the commission are made by the mayor's office. Frankly, I think an umbrella statement from the Mayor's office or the City's Human Resources Department concerning non-discrimination policies, practices, training opportunities etc. would be the most objective answer to the questionnaire. I realize that the people who sent the questionnaire may be looking for some other kind of information, but I don't think I have right to answer for the commission, particularly since my second term ends 1/22/21. BTW, I really enjoyed working with you and your staff. You are all first rate professionals.</p> <p>Mary Erickson</p>												