



Equity and Empowerment Commission
Thursday, November 17, 2022 @ 6:30 .M.
Virtual

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT:

Devon Reid, Councilmember, Omar Salem, Commissioner, Darlene Cannon, Commissioner, and Karla Thomas, Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

LaShandra Rayfield, Commissioner, Kady McFadden, Commissioner Jane Grover, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to the City Manager, Darrell King, Water Production Bureau Chief, and Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. It was moved by Commissioner Salem and seconded by Commissioner Cannon to approve the October 20, 2022 Equity and Empowerment Commission Meeting Minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Eileen Heineman noted the YWCA is interested in the role of the Equity and Empowerment Commission and other organizations like the YWCA in advocating for a response to the Black City of Evanston's employee report.

Doug Sharp of the Environmental Justice Group noted members of the group are tracking happenings in other Boards, Committees, and Commissions. He said he supports the affordable housing initiatives proposed by the Equity and Empowerment Commission.

4. DISCUSSION

A. New Equity Manager Job Description and Bigger Picture Equity goals

Chair Thomas provided feedback on the Equity Manager job description. She noted that the City should make clear to the potential hiree what is taking place in the City. She also shared that the position should facilitate conversations, not be held to solve all the City's equity problems .

B. Presentation by Evanston REDI Committee

Chair Thomas introduced Kathleen Yang-Clayton, Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Mrs. Yang-Clayton works with the City on developing the City's internal Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (REDI). Mrs. Yang-Clayton shared that the REDI Committee is entering its 3rd and final year of learning. Mrs. Yang-Clayton introduced City Staff Darrell King, Water Production Bureau Chief, and Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner. Mr. King and Ms. Jones provided the Commission with an update on REDI's activities.

Discussion ensued regarding REDI and the Black Employee Letter and Action Plan for Change. Chair Thomas inquired how the Commission and REDI could work together to support each other's work. Councilmember Reid shared that the City Council is interested in listening to and supporting any marginalized employee to ensure the workplace is welcoming and safe. Commissioner Cannon noted she is interested in seeing outcomes that would improve the quality of life for employees.

C. Discussion of Letter from BIPOC City employees

Chair Thomas inquired about the Commission's role regarding the letter from the Black City employees. Commissioner Cannon suggested the Commission submit a letter to the City Council indicating the Commission's support and offer to help. Eileen Heineman noted the YWCA had past conversations with the City around DEI training. Commissioner Salem recommended that the Commission advocates for the City to implement the action plan as laid out by staff.

D. Letter to Garner Support for Affordable Housing Ordinances

Chair Thomas shared that she drafted a letter to acquire support for the Commission's three Affordable Housing Ordinances initiatives. Councilmember Reid advised that the ordinance requests must come through the referral process.

E. New Applications for EEC

Members of the Commission inquired about the number of applicants received for the EEC vacant position.

5. CONSIDERATION

A. Approval of the Equity and Empowerment 2023 Meeting Calendar

Members of the Commission discussed the calendar. It was recommended that December 22, 2023, be moved to December 14, 2023.

6. COMMUNICATION

7. REPORTS

8. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Reid moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.