



## **Equity and Empowerment Commission**

**Thursday, February 15, 2024 @ 6:30 AM**

Hybrid; Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, Room 2404

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
PRESENT:**

Present: Darlene Cannon, Chair; Molly Malone, Commissioner; Josephine Bostic, Commissioner; Christine Escobar, Commissioner; Parielle Davis (Online), Devon Reid, Councilmember; Shana Sexton, Commissioner and Devon Reid, Councilmember

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
ABSENT:**

Kady McFadden, Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to the City Manager

**1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

Chair Darlene Cannon called the meeting to order. Commissioner Cannon shared that the Commission did not have a quorum of members. Commissioners Davis, Escobar, and Councilmember Reid joined the meeting virtually.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Approval of the January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes.**

Commissioner Malone shared that she had provided Ms. Kerr with her amendments to the minutes. It was moved by Councilmember Reid and seconded by Commissioner Malone to approve the January 2, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. The motion was approved unanimously (8-0).

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Trisha Connolly, a Second Ward resident, shared that she is concerned that the City does not have a DEI director and is also concerned about the circumstances of why the person is no longer an employee of the City. Trisha announced that she favors the PILOT option, which will be discussed at the meeting.

**4. DISCUSSION**

**A. Evanston's Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) Program Task Force - Presentation by Councilmember Clare Kelly**

Councilmember Clare Kelly announced she is at the meeting to explain her proposal for a Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) Program Task Force. She shared that Evanston is an expensive place to live because the City and the school district have large budgets per capita, and very large tracts of land are not on the tax roll; about 1/3 of properties are tax exempt. Residents, therefore, are left to bear the financial burden. PILOT has been discussed in Evanston. In 2000, a Fairshare referendum was passed for Northwestern University to contribute a fair share of payments for the City's services. The proposed voluntary taskforce would be formed to examine the relationship between major educational and medical institutions in Evanston and assess the impact and reduction of revenue. Councilmember Kelly referenced the City of Boston's PILOT Program and demonstrated how Boston's PILOT is structured.

Councilmember Reid is present in person. A quorum was present.

Councilmember Clare Kelly mentioned that the City Council would consider the request for a PILOT Program at the February 26 City Council meeting. It was moved by Councilmember Reid, and seconded Commissioner Cannon to submit a letter of support for establishing the PILOT task force that includes the school board.

**B. Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE) Presentation**

Janet Alexander Davis, EJE's co-chair, provided an overview of environmental justice. It was shared that the environment and climate equity are basic human rights and that environmental justice is necessary to protect those rights. Ms. Davis shared a map of increased temperatures based on the presence of tree canopy across Evanston. Ms. Davis also shared that EJE is an affiliated program under Climate Action Evanston. EJE is committed to highlighting environmental and climate-related inequities and reducing their disproportionate impacts on the health and quality of life of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and all people of color in Evanston.

EJE members shared its goals with the Commission, including fully implementing the 2020 Environmental Justice resolution. Of note was the implementation of the public engagement policy. Other goals include monitoring the City's supervision of facilities with histories of pollution, updating and maintaining the EJ Playbook, conducting listening sessions and community forums, and engaging additional members and affiliated organizations.

Jerry Hearst, board member of EJE, provided an overview of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Environmental Equity Investigation (EEI). For 2024, the City Council approved an increase to \$150,000.

Ms Hearst also shared that EJE requests the EEC to consider finalizing the public engagement policy ASAP, spread the word for the Environmental Equity Investigation (EEI) RFP, and issue a statement of support to expedite the EEI so the results can be factored into the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update (Envision Evanston 2025).

Councilmember Reid motioned to request staff bring the Public Engagement Plan back at the next EEC meeting. Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Councilmember Reid motioned to move the remaining items on the agenda to the March 21, 2024 meeting.

C. **Status Update on EEC email ( eec@cityofevanston.org)**

- **Process for responding to residents**

Commission Cannon shared that an email has been created for the Commission. Ms. Kerr mentioned that if a resident raises an issue through email, the issue will be placed on the agenda for discussion. Ms. Kerr will then draft a response summarizing the EEC's response to the resident.

D. **Working Groups**

This item will be included on the April Meeting agenda.

E. **Approval of the 2024 Meeting Calendar**

Councilmember Reid motioned to amend the 2024 EEC meeting time to 6 p.m. Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (8-0). Councilmember Reid suggested holding the meeting at various locations around the City. Ms. Kerr will return a list of possible locations to the Commission.

**Staff recommends approval of the Equity and Empowerment Commission's proposed 2024 meeting schedule.**

Councilmember Reid motioned to amend the 2024 EEC meeting time to 6 p.m. Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (8-0). Councilmember Reid suggested holding the meeting at various locations around the City. Ms. Kerr will return a list of possible locations to the Commission.

5. **CONSIDERATION**

A. **Equity and Empowerment Commission Retreat**

This item will be included in the March EEC meeting agenda.

6. **COMMUNICATION**

Councilmember Reid shared that more migrants would be arriving in Evanston. He proposed that the EEC think about how the city could equitably address the migrant issue and how to bridge the divide in the community. He suggested that the EEC can put together a list of resources.

7. **REPORTS**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned.