

**ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
August 7, 2025**

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 4:30pm

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 4:32pm

Members Present: John Tyler, Victoria Sage, Cassie Preskenis, Sean Smith, Catherine Greenspan, Allison Mendel, and Emily Simon (via Zoom)

Guests Present: Echo Fields, Tamsin Taylor, and Allyson Phelps

Staff Liaison Present: Kerrick Gooden

1. Land Acknowledgment - We acknowledge and honor the aboriginal people on whose ancestral homelands we work -the Ikirakutsum Band of the Shasta Nation, as well as the diverse and vibrant Native communities who make their home here today. We denounce the egregious acts of the colonizers and government and recognize the horrific impacts that still exist today. We honor the first stewards in the Rogue Valley and the lands we love and depend on: Tribes with ancestral lands in and surrounding the geography of the Ashland Watershed include the original past, present and future indigenous inhabitants of the Shasta, Takelma and Athabaskan people. We also recognize and acknowledge the Shasta village of K'wakhakha - "Where the Crow Lights" - that is now the Ashland City Plaza

Tyler read the land acknowledgment

2. Labor Acknowledgment - We also pause to recognize and acknowledge the labor upon which our country, state, and institutions are built. We remember that our country is built on the labor of enslaved people who were kidnapped and brought to the U.S. from the African continent and recognize the continued contribution of their survivors. We also acknowledge all immigrant labor, including voluntary, involuntary, trafficked, forced, and undocumented peoples who contributed to the building of the country and continue to serve within our labor force. We acknowledge all unpaid care-giving labor. To the people who contributed this immeasurable work and their descendants, we acknowledge their indelible mark on the space in which we gather today. It is our collective responsibility to critically examine these histories, to repair harm, and to honor, protect, and sustain their contribution to our society.

Preskenis read the labor acknowledgment

II. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the 7.10.2025 regular meeting

Tyler moved to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2025 meeting. Preskenis seconded the motion. All Ayes. Motion passed.

III. Public Forum

none

IV. Announcements and Events

1. Presentation regarding an upcoming event: Ashland Sunrise Project's *Get Into Action* - September 8, 2025

Taylor, Phelps, and Preskenis presented about an upcoming event of the Ashland Sunrise Project: *Get Into Action* on September 8 at 6:30. Presenters spoke of this as a community engagement event intended to initiate discussion on how to support local social justice issues. Presenters spoke of not requesting funds, but for support in the form of formal support through collaboration and publicity on the City's events page. Preskenis spoke that she would abstain from voting (out of an abundance of caution) as a member of the Ashland Sunrise Project.

Simon moved that the Social Equity and Racial Justice Advisory Committee endorse and support the Ashland Sunrise Project in any way possible as a committee and to ask the City Council to support other actions of the Ashland Sunrise Project. The motion was seconded by Tyler. Roll Call Vote: Simon, Mendel, Smith, Greenspan, Sage, Tyler - YES. Preskenis - ABSTAIN. Motion Passed.

2. **From SO Pride:
Guided Support Group for the Families of Trans Individuals**

Aug 13, 2025, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

383 E Main St, Ashland, OR 97520, USA

Calling all loved ones of transgender folks! Join Ruth for an educational experience, with the opportunity to ask questions and receive support in a judgment-free environment. Every 2nd Wednesday beginning July 9th, 2025. 6-8pm - \$20. (sliding scale only as needed)

V. Liaison Updates and Reports

1. Update from current liaison assignments:
Greenspan – Planning Commission
Tyler – Climate and Energy Policy Advisory Committee
Sage – Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
Preskenis – Transportation Advisory Committee
Simon – Public Arts Advisory Committee
Mendel – Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee
Smith -- Parks

Greenspan: the last Planning Commission meeting was canceled - the previous special meeting focused on the SOU Master Plan.

Tyler: was not able to attend CEPAC's last meeting due to conflict with SERJAC's moved meeting.

Sage: the Historic Preservation Committee's meeting focused on a Granite Street location with nothing standing out for discussion.

Preskenis: TAC included the announcement of Pride Month and Disability Pride Month. Discussion included how budget cuts might affect disability and mobility issues and progress with work on the A Street sidewalk to make it more ADA-compatible. Discussion also included new reporting software and public interest in maintaining TID ditch access.

Simon (and Preskenis): PAAC celebrated Juneteenth by viewing the Guanajuato Heart, Mural Fest art, and looking for placement around town for the second Guanajuato heart. Traffic Boxes are proposed for painting in South Ashland. PAAC was approached with allegations of misrepresentation by a local artist - the committee responded it was not in its purview to investigate. The committee is considering a request to relocate City-owned artwork that no longer represents Ashland, and replace it with other art such as the second Guanajuato Heart.

Mendel (and Fields): HHSAC: HUD rejected a required City report of a homeless point-in-time count because it included transgender people.

Smith: spoke of Parks having both study sessions and business meetings and was advised that business meetings are where decisions are made and hot topics for consideration are expected to include the Pioneer Hall and Community Center Fees proposal as well as the East Main Park project.

Mendel: CoCoConvo went well and included discussion about Pioneer Hall fees proposal - to be discussed later in the agenda.

VI. Unfinished Business

1. Belonging Survey - Update from subcommittee and committee discussion on use

Sage suggested clarification on where services are provided in Section 7, and the committee discussed whether the Housing section could be bolstered to include what the HHSAC is going to collaborate with SERJAC on with its Equitable Housing Plan. Committee concluded these are different enough to stand alone. The subcommittee will come up with final version of the Belonging Survey to send to Council through its Council Liaisons for direction on how to administer and process it.

VII. New Business

1. Vice Chair nomination and election

Mendel nominated Smith for Vice-Chair who agreed to the nomination - all members were in favor. Smith accepted. .

2. Discussion regarding proposed fees for Pioneer Hall and Community Center being considered by Ashland Parks and Recreation

Mendel brought forward this discussion from the meeting of committee chairs for SERJAC to consider if there are any social equity issues in these fee considerations. The committee discussed that the intent for these fees is to cover costs associated with the use of the building, but discussed how to be equitable towards nonprofits and/or folks trying to put together events such as community meals. The committee considered a two-tiered structure to subsidize events such as community meals while not subsidizing events such as weddings. The committee noted that the Chamber of Commerce offers a non-profit rate and charges businesses based on the number of employees. Discussion included offering non-profits a rate based on income and/or offering to waive fees with certain qualifiers. The committee considered the importance of reviewing the original intent and subsequent use of the buildings over time, such as a record of the building being used for 25 years for community feeds.

3. Request for collaboration from the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee for development of the Equitable Housing Plan

Fields (HHSAC Chair) requested help to collaborate with the HHSAC on two public engagement events as part of the Equitable Housing Plan and spoke to the primary tasks listed in the Memo (included in packet). Fields suggested forming a working group with a few members of each committee to work on this. The committee discussed the difference between an Equitable Housing Study and the Belonging Survey that SERJAC has been working on.

VIII. Adjournment

The committee discussed that the Sneak Preview published an article including SERJAC's involvement with the Playwrights Walk Plaque unveiling. It was suggested that someone from the committee write a letter of thanks to the editor. Greenspan offered to create a draft for review and Preskenis offered to submit.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm