

**ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
December 4, 2025**

4:30 PM - Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Present were committee members Allison Mendel, Emily Simon, John Tyler, Sean Smith, Catherine Greenspan, and Cassie Preskenis

Also present was staff liaison Kerrick Gooden and guest Echo Fields

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

Smith 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.

Simon read the labor acknowledgment

**II. Approval of Minutes from 11.6.2025 Meeting**

1. Approval of minutes from the 11.6.2025 regular meeting

**Tyler moved to approve the minutes. Preskenis seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.**

**III. Public Forum**

none

**IV. Unfinished Business**

1. 2025 Accomplishments and 2026 Workplan - for review and discussion prior to scheduled presentation to City Council on December 15, 2025.

The committee discussed additions to the draft 2025 accomplishments and the 2026 work plan.

Suggestions to add to the draft 2025 accomplishments included:

- More thorough representation of SERJAC's ongoing support of Ashland Together
- Sneak Preview coverage of the Railroad Plaque unveiling and subsequent published Letter to the Editor
- Micah BlackLight's presentation to SERJAC about his project Ancestors Future: Crystallizing Our Call
- Add to the Railroad Plaque unveiling the level of attendance and that the permanent plaque includes Aiden Ellison's name.
- Add details of the committee's collaboration with SOU Native Nations Liaison Kenwani Kravitz including her presentation regarding Indigenous Peoples Day (IPD), Native Heritage Month, and her vision for a more citywide IPD 2026 including a downtown parade
- SERJAC as a model for cross-committee collaboration
- Add specific reference to over 235 surveys have been received so far for the Belonging Survey

Suggestions to add to the 2026 work plan included:

- Add ongoing support for Ashland Together
- Add going support for BlackLight's project Ancestor's Future: Crystallizing Our Call
- Add the exploration of the Enhanced Law Enforcement Area (ELEA) ordinance to #3: Policy Guidance
- Add the committee's intent to collaborate with Kravitz and SOU to support a citywide IPD 2026
- Add goal to work with OSF to promote visitor understanding of Ashland's commitment to inclusion

Mendel will work with Smith to compile additions and send a final version to Gooden for inclusion in the report to council.

## 2. SERJAC Social Event - ideas for discussion and planning

The committee discussed ideas for locations, timing, and potential formats for a SERJAC social event for members to gather socially. Smith will compile ideas for committee discussion at next regular meeting.

## 3. Belonging Survey - Status update, discussion, and next steps

The committee discussed how and when to distribute / promote the Belonging Survey with Holidays and MLK Jr. Day approaching. The committee formed a working group to post flyers with QR code links to the survey on various bulletin boards downtown on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

### A. The Belonging Survey is Live - [Here is the link](#)

## 4. Volunteers for ELEA subcommittee and Housing Equity working group

The committee discussed the recent formation of the ELEA subcommittee. Simon and Smith will serve on the subcommittee to review the history and status of the ordinance.

The committee discussed the Housing Equity Plan working group in collaboration with the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee (HHSAC). Greenspan and Mendel will serve as the two SERJAC members that will partner with two HHSAC members on this working group.

## V. Liaison Updates and Reports

### 1. Update from current liaison assignments:

Greenspan – Planning Commission

Tyler – Climate and Energy Policy Advisory Committee

Preskenis – Transportation Advisory Committee

Simon – Public Arts Advisory Committee

Mendel – Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee

Smith -- Parks

Tyler and Greenspan attended the Aiden Ellison memorial and reported limited attendance — the committee discussed that last year there were only 5 in attendance and considered how to better promote this memorial in future years.

Mendel reported that HHSAC had its annual planning retreat to discuss priorities for its work plan. Discussion included federal and state funding issues, the ELEA ordinance, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that were redirected to the rehabilitation of 2200 Ashland Street for a severe weather shelter. Discussion also included a potential request from council for refined instructions from HHSAC about what projects should be funded when it receives Requests For Proposals (RFP's) from eligible non-profits for affordable housing capacity building. A potential trend towards approving RV and tiny house/ADU occupancy was discussed which may be included in the affordable housing strategic plan. The need for permanent supportive housing options was also discussed, as well as a potential trend towards funding affordable housing initiatives over shelters and homelessness issues. SERJAC discussed the importance that an equity lens be continually applied when considering these issues.

Tyler reported that CEPAC held a three-hour work plan meeting where it discussed various franchise agreements, changing meeting times, collaborating with Rogue Climate, the Electrify Ashland initiative, expanding collaboration and prioritizing plans with options for low-income households in the forefront.

Smith reported having attended the 2200 Ashland Street Severe Weather Shelter open-house tour earlier in the day. Turnout was robust and the inside of the shelter was described as having sufficient access, a bunk area that is crowded but warm, clean, and safe, and includes lockers and storage. A clothing closet was also suggested for the site during the tour.

## VI. New Business

### 1. Next regular meeting falls on January 1, 2026 - discussion and decision regarding alternatives

Mendel proposed moving SERJAC's regular meeting in January to Thursday, January 8 from 4:30-6:00PM in the Otte-Peterson Conference Room at the Grove - 1195 East Main Street. All members were in agreement.

## **VII. Announcements and Events**

1. **Exploring Middle Eastern Culture & Food with Dr. Shireen Abu-Khader**  
December 5, 2025 7:00-8:30PM  
Wesley Hall, Ashland Methodist Church  
175 N Main St.  
[Here is more information from Ashland Together](#)
2. **Dr. Shireen Abu-Khader World Premiere Concert Film**  
December 7, 2025 3:00-5:00PM  
SOU Music Recital Hall  
450 S. Mountain St.  
[Here is more information from Ashland Together](#)
3. **Guided Support Group for the Families of Trans Individuals — Ashland**  
December 10, 2026 6:00-8:00pm  
383 E Main St.  
[Here is more information from SOPride](#)
4. **Committee End-of-Year Appreciation Reception**  
December 15, 2025 - Council Chambers - 1175 East Main Street  
5:30-6:30 - 2025 Achievements & Workplan Presentation for 2026  
6:30-7:30 Appreciation Event

## **VIII. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm