

**ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
April 9, 2026**

4:30-6:00 PM - Otte-Peterson Conference Room at the Grove - 1195 East Main St.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 PM

In attendance were committee members Catherine Greenspan, John Tyler, Allison Mendel, and Sean Smith.

Also present was staff liaison Kerrick Gooden; guests Tamsin Taylor and Brandon Polanco, and Ashland.News representative Kayla Heffner

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.

Mendel read the labor acknowledgment

II. Approval of Minutes from 3.5.2026 Meeting

1. Approval of minutes from 3.5.2026 meeting

Tyler moved to approve the minutes. Greenspan seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

III. Public Forum

No speakers requested to speak during public forum

IV. Unfinished Business

1. Regional ICE activity: review of current resources posted on City of Ashland website (Update from Mendel on behalf of Simon)

Mendel updated the committee on behalf of Simon after having met with Mayor Graham regarding this issue. Graham indicated she would put some members of the public who had expressed concern during recent City Council meetings in touch with SERJAC.

- A. Current resources from City of Ashland website:

<https://ashlandoregon.gov/1168/Immigration-Resources>

A draft of suggested updates to this site from the working group is included in the agenda packet for SERJAC consideration.

The committee reviewed and discussed draft recommendations for updating this 'Resident Resources' page (see agenda packet). The committee noted it could be more accessible if it was referenced or linked on the home page.

2. Committee recruitment update (Gooden - 5min.)

- A. The news release post with recruitment language is live and included in newsletter, etc. <https://ashlandoregon.gov/m/newsflash/home/detail/462>

Gooden updated the committee regarding its request of the City Manager's Office to send out its vetted recruitment letter as a press release through the City's Communications Coordinator. The press release was issued on April 3, 2026 as drafted by the committee and was picked up by [Ashland.News in an article published on April 6, 2026](#).

V. Liaison Updates and Reports

1. Update from current liaison assignments:
Greenspan – Planning Commission
Tyler – Transportation Advisory Committee
Simon – Public Arts Advisory Committee
Mendel – Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee (10 min.)
Smith -- Parks
Mendel -- CoCoConvo (No meeting due to scheduling conflict)

Planning- Greenspan attended the last meeting - nothing of substance to report.

Transportation - Tyler attended the last meeting - discussion included traffic issues on Oak and A street, teen drivers, and '20 is enough' push for traffic calming.

Parks - Smith attended the last meeting - discussion was mostly about pickleball.

Housing and Human Services - Mendel went to the last meeting - discussion centered on review of grant applications.

2200 Ashland St. Ad Hoc - Tyler attended the meeting on the previous day - discussion centered on what can be done with regards to developing housing options on the site.

DuQuenne shared about Mike Green's book AMERICA 250 and offered to invite BASE to speak to SERJAC. The committee discussed how to make comments while attending committee liaison assignments instead of only during respective public forums - Mendel will bring up this topic with committee chairs at the next regular CoCoConvo meeting.

VI. New Business

1. Discussion: Decision to not fly the Cesar Chavez flag this year and how to continue support for farm workers. (Gooden 5 min.)

Gooden reported on and referenced the news release. The committee will consider what can be done to recognize labor rights and farm workers next year.

- A. News Release on 3.30.2026: <https://ashlandoregon.gov/m/newsflash/home/detail/458>

We have chosen not to fly the Cesar Chavez flag this year, as we reassess how to commemorate farm workers and the broader movement for labor rights, dignity and fair working conditions. Since 2022, the City of Ashland has flown a Cesar Chavez flag the week of March 31. Recent allegations surrounding Cesar Chavez, however, has led multiple organizations, including the United Farm Workers, to pause celebrations and tributes. The legacy of farm worker advocacy extends far beyond any one individual, and Ashland remains committed to honoring and uplifting the contributions of farm workers and supporting the efforts that advance equity, safety and justice.

- [Link to Statement from the UFW Foundation](#)

VII. Ongoing or Future Items for Consideration

1. ELEA Working Group (Simon and Smith)

This is on pause while Simon reviews each related ordinance.

2. Belonging Survey - Results, analysis, etc. (Smith - 30 min.)

Smith presented and summarized his work with the draft analysis of the Belonging Survey results. The committee discussed the breadth of the survey, themes emerging through analysis of responses, and the responsibility as an advisory committee to consolidate the report. It was clarified that SERJAC was not charged with solving any issues it uncovers, but rather to advise the Council 'on emerging issues and needs of the Ashland community as they relate to diversity, equity, inclusion, human rights and intergroup relations'.

Smith will send the draft summary to Gooden who will mark it as 'DRAFT' and distribute to the committee for further review and editing at the next meeting.

3. Equitable Housing Plan Working Group

This was discussed as on hold until HHSAC reaches out for support.

VIII. Announcements and Events

1. **Choosing Courage**

Wednesday, April 8, 2026 @ 6:30-8:00pm

SOU Recital Hall

450 S. Mountain Ave.

[Here is more information from Ashland Together](#)

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Immigration Resources

A Welcoming Community

Ashland is committed to being a welcoming and safe community for all, regardless of immigration status. We want community members to feel informed, understand their rights, and know where to access trusted resources.

Sanctuary and Inclusion

Ashland is committed to maintaining and defending its status as a sanctuary city—a safe and welcoming place for all residents. The City fully complies with Oregon’s Sanctuary Promise laws, which prohibit local law enforcement from using City resources to enforce federal immigration laws. If you have been a victim of or you have witnessed a crime, regardless of your immigration status, you are encouraged to contact the Ashland Police Department for help.

- Call 911 for help in emergencies.
 - For non-emergency situations, call police dispatch at 541-776-7206.
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Ashland’s Role in Immigration Enforcement

The Ashland Police Department does not ask about immigration status or assist with federal immigration enforcement unless legally required.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are not allowed access to non-public City spaces or documents without a federal judicial warrant. The Police Department does not act on ICE-issued administrative warrants.

To Report ICE Activity

Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition (PIRC) Hotline

HOTLINE: 1-888-622-1510

WEBSITE: <https://pircoregon.org/about/hotline>

PIRC works for immigrant justice in Oregon through rapid response, advocacy, and community organizing.

How to use the hotline:

Call for urgent situations:

- Suspected or confirmed ICE presence
- ICE detentions
- Missing loved ones

Text for non-urgent needs:

- Questions about resources (not needed within the next 24 hours)
- Photos of possible ICE activity (call first if urgent)

Email:

- Media inquiries: press@pircoregon.org
- Volunteer inquiries: volunteer@pircoregon.org
- General questions or donations: pircpdx@gmail.com
- Submit video footage (include date, time, and location): pircpdx@gmail.com

Stand with Our Neighbors

Northwest Seasonal Workers Association (NSWA)

A grassroots organization uniting seasonal and low-income workers—and their allies—to improve working and living conditions through collective action and self-help programs.

Website: <https://nswa-oregon.org>

Phone: 541-779-8144

Unete Oregon (NOWIA Unete)

A farmworker- and immigrant-led movement empowering communities through education, advocacy, and organizing to defend immigrant rights.

Website: <https://www.uneteoregon.org>

Phone: 541-841-8343

Coalición Fortaleza

A community-led movement born from the 2020 Almeda Fire, working to rebuild and empower Latinx and Indigenous communities in the Rogue Valley through housing justice, advocacy, and collective ownership.

Website: <https://coalicionfortaleza.org>

Phone: 541-292-1210

Report Violations of Oregon's Sanctuary Promise Laws

If you or someone you know may have been targeted in violation of Oregon's Sanctuary Promise laws, you can report it to the Oregon Department of Justice and receive support in the following ways:

Report Online:

- English: SanctuaryPromise.Oregon.gov
- Español: PromesaSantuario.Oregon.gov

Call the Sanctuary Promise Response Hotline:

- English: 1-844-924-STAY (1-844-924-7829)
- Español: 1-844-626-AMPARO (1-844-626-7276)

What to Expect:

- Report a suspected violation
- Receive support
- Get connected to helpful resources
- The Oregon Department of Justice may open an investigation

Hours:

Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Pacific Time)

After hours: Leave a message and your call will be returned

Additional Support:

- Interpreters available in over 240 languages
 - All relay calls accepted
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Additional Immigration Resources

Equity Corps of Oregon (ECO)

Phone: 1-888-274-7292

Provides universal legal representation against deportation and civic exclusion to eligible immigrants in Oregon.

SOAR Immigration Legal Services

Phone: 503-384-2482

Provides culturally competent legal representation and education to low-income immigrants and refugees in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Contact Federal Representatives

Congressman Cliff Bentz

541-776-4646

bentz.house.gov

Senator Ron Wyden

541-858-5122

wyden.senate.gov

Senator Jeff Merkley

541-608-9102

merkley.senate.gov

