

**ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
May 7, 2026**

4:30 - 6:00 p.m. - Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm

Committee members present: Allison Mendel, Sean Smith, Catherine Greenspan, John Tyler and Emily Simon (by Zoom)

Council Liaison present: Gina DuQuenne (by Zoom)

Also present was staff liaison Kerrick Gooden; and guests Brandon Polanco, Teresa Brain, Laurie True, Doug Houston, and Ellen Craine

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
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.

**II. Approval of Minutes from 4.9.2026 Meeting**

1. Approval of minutes from 4.9.2026 meeting

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

**III. Public Forum**

None

**IV. Unfinished Business**

1. Regional ICE activity: review of updated resources posted on City of Ashland website (Gooden - 5 min.)

Crain, True, Brain, and Houston introduced themselves as members of affinity groups that Mayor Graham put in touch with SERJAC. Simon briefed guests that the committee had reviewed the City's immigration resources page, found it needed updating, recommended changes that were accepted by staff, and reported the website had been updated accordingly. Simon then briefed guests and the committee regarding a detention facility that was planned to be built near Newport and the status of related litigation.

The committee discussed concerns regarding the potential for expansion of Medford's facility if the one in Newport is prevented. Discussion included the need for education for those that are elected or will be running for office, and for cities (and counties) to make public statements against ICE facilities. Suggestions also included attendance at all public meetings to provide testimony against ICE facilities

citing negative economic impacts. DuQuenne thanked SERJAC for its work in updating the City's Immigration Resources page and reported the Ashland City Council authorized \$15K from Ashland's Mayor/Council budget (on May 5) to go to Newport, at the request of their City Manager, to offset some of the legal costs accrued through litigation. Gooden confirmed the City Manager's office is finalizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with Newport to that end. The committee then discussed how SERJAC could recommend to the Ashland City Council to adopt a public statement similar to the one made by [the City of Coos Bay](#).

**Tyler moved that SERJAC draft a proclamation against an ICE facility in the region for consideration by the Ashland City Council. Greenspan seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Simon, Tyler, Greenspan, Mendel, Smith – Yes. Motion passed.**

Mendel asked committee members to e-mail Gooden with notes/ideas for this effort within two weeks (by May 21). Gooden will compile and provide to Greenspan for drafting a proclamation for consideration by SERJAC's next meeting on June 4) for review, refinement, and subsequent referral to the City's legal department for consideration.

Polanco suggested that SERJAC could support or sponsor a public forum to discuss these issues as an effort towards community inclusion and education. Further discussion included: this as a regional issue due to the proximity of Medford's Airport, appealing to the Council as a sanctuary city to put this into action, an inquiry into how the Ashland Police Department and public citizens would respond in these scenarios, and the importance of community education. Considerations assumed Ashland's Police Chief would be in favor of de-escalation over escalation and how various municipalities have passed similar initiatives.

- A. Here is a link to the updated [Immigration Resources Page](#) on the City of Ashland website (Discussion - 10 minutes)

## 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 (5-10 min.)
  - Smith -- Parks
  - Greenspan -- CoCoConvo (5 min.)

Greenspan reported that Planning Commission discussion centered on new mobile home park zoning that is now updated and more inclusive.

Tyler reported the TAC reviewed the City Code regarding sidewalks, bicycle safety, and is considering a stop sign at the intersection of Oak and Van Ness.

Mendel reported that HHSAC also discussed the updated mobile home park zoning as it supports low-income housing, and will host a Community Resource Fair at the Bellview Grange from 3-5pm on September 9th or 10th - SERJAC has previously tabled the event.

Greenspan reported that CoCoConvo discussion included TAC's work towards traffic calming (especially at the intersections of 4th and B, and 8th and B), taxes regarding second and third residences, anticipation of Parks and Council's joint meeting, HHSAC's Community Resource Fair, and community engagement efforts related to the City's strategic plan that is underway. Gooden encouraged members to take the survey.

The committee discussed the liaison role in cultivating relationships with members of other committees so they can understand the purpose and increase the effectiveness of SERJAC member attendance.

Simon and DuQuenne reported that Public Arts Committee is moving forward with many plaques, and

that SOU will fly its Juneteenth flag with an even on campus on June 18, 2026.

## VI. New Business

1. Committee Organization

## VII. Ongoing or Future Items for Consideration

1. ELEA Working Group (Simon and Smith)
2. Belonging Survey - Results, analysis, etc. (Smith - 30 min.)

Committee discussion included the goal to develop a result to report to the City Council, a suggestion to invite an SOU student to compile results, and that a theme of 'need for better communication' was identified as a recurring issue. The committee discussed how to provide digestible materials for the council and decided to focus a working group to focus on one topic: Communication.

3. Equitable Housing Plan Working Group

## VIII. Announcements and Events

1. May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
2. **Say Their Names Vigil at Wesley Hall**  
Saturday May 23, 2026  
7:00 pm at Wesley Hall (behind Methodist Church)  
175 North Main at Laurel  
RSVP by 5/19/26 at [info@ashland.sunriseproject.com](mailto:info@ashland.sunriseproject.com)

### **SAY THEIR NAMES CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

First in a series of candlelight vigils leading up to the unveiling of

**Micah  
Blacklight's  
sculpture**

**Ancestor's  
Future:  
Crystallizing  
Our Call**



which stores the names from the Say Their Names Tee-Shirts previously adorning Railroad Park.

Each vigil will honor a portion of the names while creating space for their stories.

**7 pm Saturday 23 May 2026  
Wesley Hall (behind Methodist Church)  
175 North Main at Laurel, Ashland**

*All Are Welcome*

*Event features stories of harm that may trigger or not be suitable for all ages.*



**Hosts: Ashland Sunrise Project**  
RSVP by 5/19/26 at [info@ashland.sunriseproject.com](mailto:info@ashland.sunriseproject.com)

Partners: Oregon Remembrance Project,  
Micah Blacklight, Black Alliance & Social  
Empowerment (BASE Southern Oregon)

## IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.