

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

These are DRAFT minutes until approved by the committee.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:33pm

Present were committee members John Tyler, Sean Smith, Catherine Greenspan, Emily Simon, Allison Mendel, and Brandon Polanco.

Also present were council liaison Gina DuQuenne and staff liaison Kerrick Gooden.

1. Land Acknowledgment - We acknowledge and honor the aboriginal people on whose ancestral homelands we work- the Iik'akutsum 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.

Polanco read the labor acknowledgment

II. Approval of Minutes from 6.4.2026 Meeting and 6.11.2026 Special Meetings

1. Approval of minutes from the meeting on 6.4.2026
2. Approval of minutes from the special meeting on 6.11.2026

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

III. Public Forum

None

IV. Unfinished Business

1. Belonging Survey - progress update on survey results (Smith and Polanco)

Polanco has received the preliminary draft report/document from Smith. They will be collaborating as a working group on a report to present to the committee at large.

2. Discussion: Regional ICE presence

The committee discussed its work in developing a draft proclamation for the Mayor's consideration opposing any development of an ICE detention center in the region due to overtaking local infrastructure. Discussion included the press release issued by the city of Coos Bay and what other cities have done. Simon shared her discussion with Graham that it should come to the city council for the study session of Monday, August 3. Members discussed inviting interested parties to provide testimony at that time. The committee discussed hope for subsequent adoption at the business

meeting of August 18, and discussed needing to provide a final draft by July 24th for inclusion on the agenda packet for the August 3 study session. The committee also discussed the efforts of the Rogue Valley Migrant Watch and how their testimony might be helpful to understand, and Mendel offered to inform the affinity groups that attended the previous SERJAC meetings on this issue.

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
Smith -- Parks
Polanco - (unassigned)
CoCoConvo - Mendel (5 min.)

Mendel shared that PAAC discussed the playwrights walk and its booth at the 4th of July events that included two finished playwrights plaques that are ready for installation. There will be 15 plaques installed in July, with three by women playwrights to be placed at OSF, Plaza, and the Chamber on July 17 during an exclusive event featuring Tim Bond. Mendel will help draft the narrative that will go on the website. The committee discussed importance of Railroad Park plaque and remembering Aidan Ellison in the narrative.

Smith shared that Parks discussed Hunter Park pool access – SERJAC may be interested in equitable access. Similar SERJAC interest may be warranted for East Main Park and ICE Rink, and there are open vacancies on it's Trails Committee.

Mendel shared that CoCoConvo discussed committee meeting frequency reduction for SERJAC and PAAC. Decided to draft letter to CM and have chairs meet with Cotta to discuss further.

Mendel shared that HHSAC is working on its community resource fair for Sept. 9 at the Bellview Grange, and that SERJAC will have a table like last year.

The committee also discussed the report of the release and retrial for the person responsible for the death of Aidan Ellison. Discussion included the potential for an annual memorial day proclamation honoring Aidan Ellison, and the committee was in support and agreed to discuss as an agenda item and about hosting this at the Ancestors Future: Crystallizing Our Call that will have been installed by the date of his memorial.

VI. New Business

1. Equitable Housing Plan Working Group (pending formation with HHSAC - update from Mendel)

Mendel and Greenspan attended this newly formed working group with HHSAC – they will meet with them and report back.

VII. Ongoing or Future Items for Consideration

1. ELEA Working Group

VIII. Announcements and Events

1. Playwright's Walk update

This was discussed under a previous agenda item

IX. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5.59pm