

**ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

August 13, 2026

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

These are DRAFT minutes until approved by the committee.

I. Call to Order

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

Also present were council liaison Gina DuQuenne, staff liaison Kerrick Gooden, and guest Megan Webb. The committee and guest exchanged introductions.

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.

Polanco 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.

Tyler read the labor acknowledgment

II. Approval of Minutes from 7.9.2026 Meeting

1. Approval of minutes from the meeting on 7.9.2026

Tyler moved to approve the minutes. Polanco seconded the motion. All Ayes. Motion passed.

III. Public Forum

None

IV. Unfinished Business

Mendel spoke that she received notice from the City Manager reinstating monthly meetings and an official memo was forthcoming. Accordingly, SERJAC's next meeting will be Sept. 3, 2026.

Mendel reordered the agenda to talk about the ICE proclamation before the Belonging Survey.

2. Discussion: ICE proclamation, issuance, and next steps

Mendel reported that the presentation of the proposed ICE proclamation at the recent City Council Study Session went well and was well received. Graham committed to issuing the proclamation at the City Council Business Meeting on August 18. The committee reviewed its work in assembling the proclamation and reflected that Rogue Valley Migra Watch was crucial in testifying as to its relevance to Ashland. The committee discussed how to issue a thank you to Graham for issuing the proclamation, including inviting those that spoke to SERJAC on this issue, as well as the media, to the reading and to speak in support during the public forum.

The committee discussed recently expressed community concern regarding an alleged Flock or other kind of license plate reader on Walker Ave. Simon spoke of having already asked Ashland Police Chief O'Meara who responded there are no Flock cameras in Ashland. Simon agreed to ask O'Meara for clarify whether it is some other similar technology.

The committee discussed whether a training should be organized for the Ashland citizenry regarding what to do if ICE shows up. Discussion included organizations that provide the training, that this could be an appropriate follow up from the ICE proclamation, and agreed to discuss it at it's September meeting.

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

Smith and Polanco presented and summarized essential takeaways from their working group analysis of the Belonging Survey:

Communication was top of the list, indicated mostly through open-ended responses, in two issues:

1) reach and 2) trust

Smith will send through the staff liaison to committee at large for review and input.

Mendel suggested working on any responses brought out through the Belonging Survey related to housing as the next topic for focus, as the HHSAC has requested SERJAC input towards their Equitable Housing Plan working group.

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.)

Tyler reported that TAC discussion centered on mountain bike trails in Lithia Park. Opinions were mixed, but nothing of apparent concern for SERJAC.

Simon had nothing to report from PAAC other than the playwrights walk. DuQuenne spoke that she and Polanco attended OSF's recent Playwrights Plaques unveiling.

Mendel reported that HHSAC discussion, pertinent for SERJAC, is its upcoming Resource Fair event and upcoming work on its equitable housing plan.

Smith reported on the joint Parks meeting with Council with nothing of apparent concern for SERJAC.

Polanco will go to CEPAC meetings moving forward as he is able, depending on his work schedule.

The committee discussed that since all advisory meetings will be recorded moving forward, this will be a tool to remain tuned as liaisons when unable to attend in person.

Mendel reported that CoCoConvo (regular meeting of committee chairs) was organized around recent changes to advisory committee scheduling. The CoCoConvo group, as well as HHSAC, expressed interest in hearing about SERJAC's perspective on the ELEA (Enhanced Law Enforcement Area) once it is reviewed.

Greenspan reported from the Planning Commission that State law has changed with planning

decisions in that only owners can appeal planning decisions. Greenspan will research further and report back at the September meeting.

VI. New Business

1. Invitation to participate in OSF 9/11 event

The committee discussed OSF's invitation for SERJAC to table at its event on 9.11.26, in conjunction with the musical 'Come from Away', and that OSF is collecting stories about neighbors helping neighbors. Simon reported having submitted her story about the T-shirt memorial and subsequent plaque installation at Railroad Park.

Discussion included that the set-up for those tabling the event will be from 2-2:30 p.m., that the event goes until 4:15 p.m, the potential to pass out the ICE proclamation, and the possibility of having note cards to collect written stories along the same lines as OSF's story collection.

Simon agreed to pick up communication with OSF as Mendel will be unavailable.

2. A new Playwright's Walk project

Mendel reported she had been working on a new Playwright's Walk project inspired by wanting to promote a Native American Playwright, such as Larissa FastHorse, with a Playwrights Walk plaque somewhere near the Ashland Plaza. Mendel reported having been in contact with Kenwani Kravitz, Native Nations Liaison for SOU, for consultation and that PAAC has been supportive. PAAC offered an already-approved location in front of City Hall for such a plaque.

Discussion included how to ask Kravitz for help in contacting tribes with ancestral ties to Ashland, namely The Confederated Tribes of Siletz and The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, for ideas, suggestions, and buy-in up front. Emphasis was placed on tribal inclusion at the onset rather than informing the Tribes of something done on their behalf.

VII. Ongoing or Future Items for Consideration

1. ELEA Working Group
2. Equitable Housing Plan Working Group

VIII. Announcements and Events

1. Playwright's Walk update
2. **Back to School Community Resource Fair**
3:30-5:30pm
Wednesday, September 9, 2026
Bellview Grange - 1050 Tolman Creek Road
[More information here](#)

Mendel announced this event. Discussion included this as an important networking opportunity for SERJAC to connect and hear from those in the room - both service providers and members of the community. Coordination for the banner and who will attend can happen at the next meeting on September 3, 2026.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59pm