

ASHLAND SOCIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
November 7, 2024

Note: Minutes approved with amendment as noted at the 12.5.2024 regular meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32pm

Present: Tara Houston, Allison Mendel, Emily Simon, John Tyler, Victoria Sage, Kerrick Gooden

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

Mendel 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 people 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 (5min)

1. Minutes from regular meeting held 10.3.2024

Mendel/Tyler m/s to approve minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

none

IV. IMPORTANT EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS (5 min)

1. In November, we celebrate the following (not an exhaustive list):
American Indian & Alaska Native Heritage Month
Epilepsy Awareness month, Pancreatic and Prostate Cancer Month
Diwali, 10/31-11/1
Dia de los Muertos, 11/1
Veterans/Armistice Day, 11/11
National Diabetes Day, 11/14
Transgender Day of Remembrance, 11/20
Great American Smokeout, 11/21
Thanksgiving, National Day of Mourning 11/28

Committee discussed having this as a regular agenda item to recognize diverse cultural holidays moving forward. Sage suggested better wording for the first item as Native American Heritage Month.

V. UPDATE FROM MEMBERS (20 min)

Committee discussed the importance of SERJAC's existence, its work, and people knowing about it.

Simon suggested looking at how similar committees/commissions in other municipalities are doing their work and will take on looking at Medford's Commission on Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CAEDI)

Staff liaison will identify similar committees in Portland, Eugene, Bend, Redmond.

Discussion occurred regarding National Alliance on Mental Illness. Annual Rogue Community Health annual luncheon, well-being and belonging as well as building civic muscle.

1. Report from Tara about Indigenous People's Day (5 min)

Tara reported regarding the great turnout at SOU's Indigenous Peoples Day celebration. Committee discussed continuing to build the relationship with the Native American Student Union (NASU) and SOU's Native Nation's Liaison Kenwani Kravitz and other local Native-led organizations such as Red Earth Descendants.

2. Report from Allison regarding Housing and Human Services Committee (10 min)

Mendel reported on her attendance at the Housing and Human Services Committee meeting. Committee discussed the positive potential for ongoing collaboration with this committee with its related goals and values.

3. Updates from members regarding connections with assigned committees (5 min)

Simon reported SO Pride Parade turnout was low this year. Committee discussed community engagement strategies.

Tyler and Sage will attend the next CEPAC (Climate and Energy Policy Advisory Committee) meeting and report at next meeting. Tyler offered to go to also go to next APRC (Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission) meeting, and Sage offered to go to next Planning Commission meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS (60 min)

1. Strategic Planning: short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. (30 min)

Houston suggested a short-term goal of developing DEI assessment for the community to address the committee charge to survey the community every two years. Houston suggested a launch in the first quarter of next year and clarified it would not be for demographics, but rather 'climate' survey about their experiences in businesses, etc. Committee discussed approaching SOU for help.

Mendel suggested a short term goal to provide better visibility of the State of Oregon's postings for reporting discrimination and harassment. Committee discussed requesting funds for printing.

Committee discussed committee communications, public meeting law, and considerations for a Google working document. Staff liaison will explore how other committee's work with this and if other platforms exist. Committee suggested short-term goal for creating better internal communications platform. To remain in compliance with public meeting law, all communications currently go through staff liaison who distributes to voting members to prevent violation of public meeting law.

Simon suggested the short-term goal of recruitment for committee with people who care and show up for the work at and between meetings. Committee discussed

collaborating with SOU's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Office, other groups, and benefits for involvement from SOU.

Houston suggested developing SERJAC visibility as a mid-term goal. Mendel suggested mid-term goal of networking with other committees and organizations doing similar work. Committee discussed.

Note Ashland Together Events: Mike and Emily Green putting on common ground conversations Nov 12.

2. Where do we go next? Drafting a strategic plan (30 min)
Committee discussed next steps.

Minutes amended at the regular meeting on 12.5.2024 by formal motion to include: the Committee discussed 2024 accomplishments and 2025 work plan..

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Everyone moved to adjourn at 6:08pm. All in favor.