



SHAKER HEIGHTS

**DEI Committee Minutes
City Hall Council Chambers
Thursday, June 15, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Council Chair Sean P. Malone
Mayor David E. Weiss
Council Member Anne Williams
Citizen Member Julie Kaufman

Others Present: Chief Diversity Officer Colleen Jackson

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Sean P. Malone at 7:00 p.m.

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Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that this is the first time the DEI Committee has held a hybrid meeting in Council Chambers. He appreciates everybody who is present in person as well as the handful who are online as well. They are trying to figure out what works best. They have all missed the in-person meetings, and they had a nice meeting at the library with the community conversation. He is seeing a lot of familiar faces and hoping to get some regulars who would be willing to help with this work.

Approval of the March, 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they will not be able to approve these minutes this evening because there is not a quorum, so they will be held until next time.

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Approval of the May 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they will not be able to approve these minutes this evening because there is not a quorum, so they will be held until next time.

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Overview of the Committee’s annual goals and progress to date.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he will briefly recap what the Committee is doing for the benefit of those who joined them for the first time at the community conversation. The DEI Committee is only a year and a half old. They started shortly after Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson was hired. At the Committee retreat they decided to eliminate the subcommittees hoping at the time that each subcommittee chair would take ownership of a particular project. They have had a little difficulty keeping resident members engaged on the Committee. He is open to feedback on ways they may

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attract and retain committed residents to this work. At the Committee retreat, they eliminated subcommittees and decided to focus on specific goals for 2023. He will read them aloud and they may also be found on the City's website. The first goal is to understand and alleviate concerns about the fairness of the point-of-sale inspection program in Shaker. They had a great meeting a few months ago on that topic. There may be some tweaks to that program as a result of that. The second goal is to generate a list of minority-owned businesses to start promoting them a little more. That is still a work in progress. They will be meeting next month with some small business owners in general in the City.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the subject of the first community conversation was what people wanted to talk about related to DEI. One of the things that was discussed was to find a way to provide support for Shaker Heights small businesses. However, they didn't want to do that without first asking how businesses wanted to be supported. She will be meeting with the Economic Development Director to plan a DEI community conversation specifically for the Shaker Heights business community, including brick and mortar, and home-based businesses. They may ask Committee members to join the discussion to have diversity of thought around actualizing the way businesses request support.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it is difficult to make business lists if people aren't reporting their home-based business. That's a work in progress as well. The third goal is to build awareness of and alignment around key City-wide priorities. This is a way of keeping people educated about these initiatives. One example is the Forward Together process, which the City and the schools are planning collaboratively with recreation. He has been meeting monthly about recreation, but as the schools start to roll out their plan in the next couple months, there will be more opportunities to have meetings around the school issues. The fourth goal is holding quarterly community meetings including community organizations. They have had three so far. They would like to follow up on the last one regarding neighborhood associations. The fifth goal is to revitalize neighborhood and community engagement work. The seventh goal is to establish authentic connections and relationships with individuals and organizations in the community. That is a long term project that a couple of prior resident members were really interested in doing. The eighth goal is collecting on an ongoing basis, critical, high quality, quantitative and qualitative data as a way of gathering feedback and information from residents to inform DEI work. The ninth goal is continuing the welcoming projects in conjunction with the library and Shaker Heights neighborhood ambassadors. These were the goals the Committee set for this year and they are listed on the website. They have made some progress but they haven't gotten where they were hoping partly because they lost some Committee members. He is hoping some of those present would be interested in joining the Committee.

Discussion on recruiting candidates for appointment by the Mayor to the two vacant citizen positions on the Committee.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson has been in preliminary conversations with the Mayor about this as Council committee members are a Mayoral appointment. Council members provided input in creating the DEI Committee and he worked initially with Council members Carmella Williams and Anne Williams as well as the Mayor.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that because of the nature of this committee, coming from the Human Relations Task Force which was resident led, the Mayor is open to residents interested in doing the work. The Committee has been in flux as they try to figure out the best way to do this work.

They looked at the Sustainability Committee model as well as others. They started with subcommittees and got rid of those, but they wanted to set goals with people who are fired up about those particular goals. They hope to fill the vacancies but the Mayor is open to supporting the way the Committee wants to do it.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the DEI Committee had three resident members to begin with, and now they have one.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that because they had so many people interested in participating, they had three resident members who serve as voting members and chairs of each subcommittee, with three more residents serving as vice chairs of those subcommittees. They are looking for three community members to work in conjunction with the three Council members. They need two more residents to fill the vacancies. They have been in conversations with people who have shown interest. They hope to have the vacancies filled by the end of the month. She asked for anyone with an interest to email her.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the structure of a committee is more formal than a task force. The Human Relations Task Force had benefits and drawbacks. The hope by creating this formal DEI Committee is to have more support from the City. They have an appropriation of \$25,000 with a good portion set aside to allow residents to hold meetings. There is a form on the website people can fill out for reimbursement for expenses related to meetings about DEI to cover expenses like a meeting room, snacks, childcare, speaker fees and things of that nature.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the pool of money may be used to help support meetings that fall in line with DEI initiatives and DEI goals to support bringing together community members. If anyone is having a meeting that falls under that category they may complete the form and the Committee will review it.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they hope to find people who have a passion for a particular project or goal. He listed the goals for this year, but they may change for next year. There is flexibility in how they do it but the goal is to have people report back to the DEI Committee. The only criteria is that the project is consistent with the City's DEI goals. The DEI mission is to be diverse, equitable, and inclusive in everything we do as a city in terms of providing service and also working with the community.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they held community conversations to inform people of these goals. Some of them will be ongoing. She feels that if some don't work they may shift or ask whether people are still passionate about those goals. If not, they may remove it and replace it with something that is urgent. There will still be some goals that remain.

Ms. Kaufman suggested interview questions to find out why people are not available including whether it was a time commitment, or the pace of things, to have a better understanding of what works. Over 90 people originally submitted applications with interest in DEI work. Although she was not initially selected as a Committee member she realized she could attend meetings online the same way as those who are present. The key is having your heart and mind in this work.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that Committee members serve terms of two years.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she believes new members will start in January with a two-year term.

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Discussion on next steps for neighborhood engagement, including facilitating regular meetings of neighborhood leaders.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he would love to facilitate ongoing meetings of neighborhood engagement. The timing and method of meetings may be important. They are talking about revisiting the timing of the 8:00 a.m. meeting. He feels like the in-person meetings are more productive.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson felt like this work would lend itself better to in-person meetings. The 8:00 a.m. time precluded some people from joining which is why they are trying evening meetings. As they expand the Committee and expand the work, they will be talking about the best time to meet. The typical structure for a Council Committee is that there is no public comment and they follow the agenda. However, the DEI Committee reads the comments because they want the diversity of thought. They are trying to figure out how to take this important work and fit it into the formal structure without the constraints of the Council Committee structure.

Council Chair Mr. Malone asked people to provide their email address so he may follow up with them.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they will pass along feedback to the Communications and Marketing Department about any challenges for viewers to find the meeting listing. The meeting is published in the eNews, and on the City's DEI web page. They are considering sending a specific DEI communication for the meetings. The DEI Committee does not have a Facebook page. You would need to be a resident to access it and someone would have to maintain the page, but they are working on ways to expand.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the City should be thinking about DEI in everything they do, but it is going to take some time for the City's mindset to change. One person can't do it all. The City hasn't been doing a good job of meeting with neighborhood association leaders, or cultivating neighborhood association leaders and that may lead to a breakdown which could lead to mistrust. They are trying to strengthen the communication within the City and across neighborhood boundaries. There are nine neighborhoods and people describe themselves as being from one of them, but they should think more of themselves as part of the bigger community. He would love to meet with associations regularly. If the right people are talking to each other about the right issues that they care about it could be really productive. So many local groups are doing this kind of work. One of the challenges has been to publicize and make connections with people doing the work. On the City's website is a list of neighborhood associations and at least four or five are defunct or not meeting very often. A few are very active like Sussex, Lomond, and Moreland which has been a great success story. The City has supported Moreland pretty extensively, but we no longer have the outside consultant that the City was using. Part of what's motivating us is to make sure the Moreland work is sustainable and also making connections between Moreland and the rest of the community.

Chief DEI officer Ms. Jackson stated that the work that was going on in Moreland was more around networking. It was a reinvestment in a neighborhood that had not been invested in as it should have been. When she was hired people were excited by what was going on in Moreland and were craving it

in their neighborhood. The goal is not to resurrect every neighborhood association. In the polls of the community, they heard people wanted cross neighborhood engagement to know people from outside of their neighborhood and come together as a larger Shaker community. There is no plan to take what was happening in Moreland and spread it across other neighborhoods, but those principles ignited the desire for people to come together. They hope that before the year is over they can plan something as a Committee or collaborate and provide support for other events.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that some residents asked why there was not a Juneteenth celebration in Shaker Heights.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that there is always a challenge as to whether the City should do something as the City, or support different groups within the City. The City would have to know those cultural celebrations are happening and if there was a DEI Facebook page that could be added.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that a lot of great stuff is happening but we have to spread the word.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson responded to a comment about neighbors of border cities. The DEI Committee is focused on the Lee Road Action Plan because some residents don't visit that part of Shaker. We don't have established relationships in the way we should with shared stakeholders so that is an interest.

Council Chair Mr. Malone asked if there are times or places people feel would work well to meet with neighborhood associations periodically.

One suggestion was that meeting monthly would be too often and quarterly too infrequent so bi-monthly might work.

Ms. Anne Williams stated that people who organize block parties are by nature engaged. She would like to see them invited to these meetings to represent the neighborhoods who do not have active associations.

Ms. Kaufman stated that people look to someone in authority and she understands that leaders are need to plan events, but the Committee needs to get better about saying to everyone they are part of it. To gather people from neighborhood association leaders is great, but there were also people posting about events who invited others which was an opportunity for her to in turn invite them to the DEI Committee and share information.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he referenced the term leader as those persons who are posted on the City's website who are technically in charge of the neighborhood associations. That is just a starting point. If the meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis, everyone would be invited. The library is probably an ideal spot. In the summer they could also host something outside depending on the weather. The Human Relation Task Force experimented by having block parties inviting people from all over the City. It doesn't have to cost the City a lot of money.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the idea of a floating meeting that requires people to visit a neighborhood that's not their own is a great idea. She will begin circulating information for July.

Council Chair Mr. Malone asked those present to let others know who are not present. He asked if they can please get their emails and forward to Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she will make sure people get an email invite for whatever event is coming up. She will figure out a location outdoors for a July gathering for those interested in this neighborhood engagement.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they will identify opportunities. Potentially they could persuade the City to support this effort through better communication.

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Planning for the August 31, 2023 Community Conversation.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they were banding around a couple ideas involving youth issues. He continues to get interest from people in the Committee about either mentorship or tutoring opportunities with the Shaker Heights School District. There are a lot of residents who are empty nesters who don't feel connected to the schools or to the City and a lot of kids who are looking for opportunities in an uncertain economic future. That is another area of opportunity. One of the three subcommittees in the beginning was youth engagement. They haven't been able to make as much progress on that as they'd like. He hopes to have something youth centric.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she will be circulating something in July for a community conversation to get youth to participate so they can say how they are impacted and how the City can help. She will also reach out to the DEI Committee members, but it will be mostly a youth conversation. Some of the issues that came up at the Van Aken district are issues that come up at other places. Some people feel like youth are a problem. She wants to support the youth to see how the Committee may help. She does not want an over policing of young people. She is in agreement with the Chief of Police that is not what will be happening. They are in a relationship building phase between youth and the City and will not be taking steps backwards. They will have a conversation to figure out what is needed and wanted by young people. This is different from the August community conversation, which could also be youth engagement focused. It could be a follow up of something that comes out of that conversation. There was an age restriction in place at the Van Aken district but it had not been enforced. If you are under 17 you must be accompanied by an adult. We don't have a recreation center. We don't have a teen center, but all of our spaces are supposed to be inclusive. She does not pretend issues don't exist. The Van Aken district is such an integral part of our City so we want youth to be welcome there. Nobody wants to feel excluded. That was not their intention, so we need to have a conversation.

Police Chief Wayne Hudson stated that he has been traveling around the City having conversations with youth. He went to the library, Van Aken district and Thornton Park. He asked them if they would go to one of the schools if it was open during the summer and they said yes. He envisions grant money like the Stop the Violence grant from the Department of Justice where we can collaborate and schools can apply for money to pay teachers, cleaning staff, cafeteria staff, and get volunteers from law enforcement and recreation to provide fun activities for youth all at one location. They have to find something for youth to do. Where he grew up a bus picked up kids and took them to the local university where they had structured activities and fun.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson explained this is the Van Aken district is the youth's version of the mall in their neighborhood. She will reach out to Mitchell's and other places to have a conversation about this. A grant is the long term plan, but they need to be able to have conversations so youth don't feel it is us against them.

Someone commented about pizza and brownies at the library where there was someone who was very open who respected kids. They had marvelous conversations. Youth have expressed what they want but the space doesn't exist for them to hang out.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the City will be doing a recreation study and asked for those who are concerned to please participate in the study. Hopefully it's a precursor to some improvements in our recreational facilities and the way we share our space.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that there will also be a forum involving the business community from a DEI perspective once we find out what they need. There will be a meeting on August 31st that would be youth focused around mentorship and tutoring and things of that nature. The tentative time would be 7:00 p.m.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she will speak to Dr. Glasner and Dr. Burnley about a collaboration where mentorship is concerned and maybe they can tell us about existing resources. One of the tricky parts is that we have a lot of non-parents in our community. The DEI Committee has really been trying to focus on people who are not directly connected to the schools. A lot of residents want to provide some collaboration but mostly resident led. They took a poll at the last meeting of how many people have students in the school and it was less than 30%.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the overall statistics are much lower.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that teachers are the best resource to pull from, but she wants the DEI Committee to support the work they do so when the kids show up in the classroom they feel more welcome.

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New ideas/feedback.

Someone commented that Eastview Church got a grant for teen drop in time during the summer.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that if she gets the flyer she will provide it to the Communications and Marketing Department for disseminating.

Police Chief Wayne Hudson stated that on August 1st from 6 – 8 p.m. the Police Department will host their first National Night out, which is done all across the United States. It is a time for neighbors to get to know other neighbors. They are going to have one big event outside the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building at the Colonnade. They are asking all the neighborhoods to come out and enjoy free food and a DJ with all the law enforcement resources like the canine dogs so the kids can get to know the local law enforcement officers and remove any mystery. There will be conversations on how to keep the community, businesses and their homes safe. It is a collaboration with the Police Department, schools and library.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated they are still in the planning stage but there will be more information to come.

Police Chief Wayne Hudson stated that there is already an adult Citizen Police Academy, but from August 14th through 18th there will be a youth Citizen Police Academy to indoctrinate youth on what law enforcement does to make connections with youth in the community. It is for ages 14 to 18. The youth will be taking their place one day so they want to make connections.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the next DEI Committee meeting is on July 20th in City Hall Council Chambers in person at 7:00 p.m.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Colleen Jackson, Chief DEI Officer