



**DEI Committee Minutes
City Hall Council Chambers
Thursday, September 21, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Council Chair Sean P. Malone
Council Member Anne Williams
Council Member Carmella Williams
Citizen Member Julie Kaufman
Citizen Member Danielle Acosta

Others Present: Chief Diversity Officer Colleen Jackson
Cindy Maxey, Shaker Library Adult Services Manager
Pamela Scott

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Sean P. Malone at 7:05 p.m.

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Approval of the August 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Ms. Carmella Williams and seconded by Ms. Kaufman to approve the August 17, 2023 meeting minutes.

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Welcome to new members of the DEI Committee

Council Chair Mr. Malone welcomed new member Danielle Acosta to the DEI Committee.

Ms. Acosta stated that she is a proud Shaker resident who has lived here for 13 years. One of the reasons she chose to start her family in Shaker Heights is because of the diversity and opportunities for her daughters here. She is a realtor, designer, property manager, rehabber, and a non-profit organization president. She is extremely busy, but this is super important to her. She will not complain about progress or a lack thereof without finding a way to contribute and add her voice.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated his appreciation for her joining and her interest in the DEI Committee, as well as her interest in housing. That is one of the things he would like to brainstorm with everyone about later this year when they talk about priorities for next year.

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CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS

Discuss takeaways and next steps related to the youth engagement meeting.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he would like to review the takeaways from the youth engagement meeting they had on August 30.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they had probably 25 to 30 attendees, even though they were rained out and had to come inside. It was a pass through event where kids weren't expected to stay, but could come through, give their comments and go. They got a lot of feedback from a diverse group of youth. She was grateful that kids showed up and they got enough feedback to start a conversation for round two. They can discuss the things they heard. They can now ask what people want to add to the conversation. What they heard was valuable.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they are thinking about having a meeting at the high school for round two.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson was thinking about having it at the library, but she just needs to know if it will be at the high school so she can reach out to them. They will get more students there. Her only issue if they do it at the high school, is they may also have to do it at the middle school.

Council Chair Mr. Malone agreed that over time they should do both. They are guaranteed to get a good number of people at the school. It's hard to get kids to take a detour to attend something like this.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she will contact the school and find out the best time. She doesn't know if an evening would work. Maybe they could set up in the cafeteria during lunch.

Ms. Carmella Williams asked if they are suggesting a meeting during the school day.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated he is talking about having something at 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. after their afterschool activities. They would miss out on the kids who don't have an afterschool activity, but it may be too chaotic during the 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. timeframe.

Ms. Scott stated that she sits on the DEI Committee for the high school athletic committee. That could be a strategic point of entry.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that would be terrific. The athletic director did a nice job posting the last event, but they didn't get a lot of the coaches promoting it. If they get coaches and teachers encouraging students to attend an event which'll only take 10 minutes of their time, they would get more participation.

Ms. Scott stated that she can work with her committee to do that. Students who have afterschool practice have study tables first.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she believes the first flex block is probably spoken for but the second flex block on Tuesdays and Thursdays aren't necessarily. That would mean that there'd still be a slew of people around, without the DEI Committee infringing upon necessarily the different activities. There are some kids who do two flex blocks, but if they're going to walk out the door anyway, then the DEI Committee will be there. This is basically from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that some of the practices may start at 3:30 p.m., so those kids may have migrated to get changed, and some of them have to go to a different field.

Ms. Kaufman stated that maybe they can arrange one day for the flex block to end early for those kids.

Ms. Acosta relayed how it only took her daughter at the last event six or seven minutes to walk around and look at the questions to add her comments and grab a snack. They were there longer talking to people, but to go through the actual stations took maybe six minutes.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that it is really about gathering the data. They could do it the same way but it doesn't have to be that method.

Ms. Acosta stated that her daughter liked that it was not a meeting. Other girls also mentioned they liked it was not a meeting and that there was food.

Ms. Carmella Williams asked if the event needs to be at either the high school or the library.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he wants to make this an institutional thing where they are not just doing this once a year. They need a contact at the high school or the middle school who can organize this on the school side. Part of this is to get ongoing information and feedback from kids, but he would also like to identify kids who are interested in doing this work in partnership with the City so we could have a youth council. They have tried to connect with SGORR, but it is really focused on the school. He thinks this can be an opportunity in the long run for kids to get government service hours, working with folks on City staff. Ideally in the long run, maybe it could be for career training or another opportunity.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that one of the pieces of feedback they received was how to involve people who aren't already involved. She envisions including people who have committed to SGORR who already have a time when they meet. Maybe the DEI Committee could go to one of their meetings and talk to them. A group that's already gathered who cares about this topic is a ready audience.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that for several years he has been asking SGORR to participate in this work.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they have a new person in charge. Dr. Burnley is scheduling a time for her to meet the new person. That could be a point of entry. She started to build a relationship with the choreographer for Sankofa. That's a group of students who are eager about participation. They sang for the MLK Day program last year. She has spoken with them about ways to interact and continue ongoing work. Someone also recommended talking to the MAC scholars. The harder reach would be kids not necessarily connected to anything organized, but if the DEI Committee is at the school during a flex block, they may be able to capture them.

Ms. Acosta stated that it would be good to capture the kids not already a part of those groups to get a broader mindset. Those particular groups might already have certain focuses. A drop-in opportunity for them where they literally just pass through as they're leaving on their way to practice will allow

them to get a much broader range of thought and opinion. Some kids don't want to join in school groups but may be willing to join the DEI Committee youth council.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it sounds like they could do an afterschool drop-in event at the high school, and maybe something at the library or middle school, with a direct outreach to SGORR, MAC scholars and Sankofa.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that Ms. Maxey suggested that dropping into the library after school will give them informal access to lots of teens who are not necessarily involved in other activities. They can do it in multiple places and rotate.

Ms. Scott suggested they could be brave and do it at the high school during lunch. There's a senior lounge where they can set up with an actual pass through.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that way they don't have to set up anything in terms of food. At the library they may need to invest dollars to be in the teen room after school to capture that audience.

Ms. Kaufman stated that there are some families who attended who may be interested in participating in this group if approached. That was a byproduct of the last event.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson noted that the MyCOM representative was there as well who said if she knew about the event ahead of time, she would have brought more kids. That let us know the information did not get everywhere we wanted it to get. We have to be more intentional next time. They already have a youth council formed.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she emailed that person to ask if Ms. Kaufman would be able to sit in on part or all of a youth council meeting.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that gives them a lot of knowledge about how to do the next youth event. At the end of the day, they are trying to gather information they can actually take action on. What they want to share is a lot of big picture items, but it gives them a lot of things to choose from to plan something for youth next summer. She will also look at grants and other opportunities for next summer as well.

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that another group of kids to consider are the ones who attend the Innovative Center for Personalized Learning and Family Engagement (IC) at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she dropped off flyers for them, but next time she will schedule a meeting with the principal so she may be able to talk to the kids for five minutes.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that another frustration is staying in touch with the kids somehow. They don't email. Ultimately they will want to identify a handful of kids so they can create the Instagram page.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she will start the Instagram page.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that not everyone here is going to want to manage the Instagram page or update it so they will want to recruit some kids.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the goal is once there is a committee established, the youth council will have their own page which they will manage.

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Plan and promote upcoming DEI Committee meetings

a. 9/28/23 – Community Conversation for Shaker Business

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they have an upcoming community conversation next week at East View Church on Avalon which starts at 5:30 p.m. with the business community.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that this one is a little different in that it's in partnership with the Economic Development Department who works directly with businesses. In earlier community conversations they specifically asked businesses how they want to be supported. This meeting will serve a dual purpose. Businesses will also be able to get information and feedback about resources from our Economic Development Department (ED) and let staff know how they want to be supported internally. She then hopes to have conversations around what that support looks like. It is not necessarily open to the public. They invited business owners and any employee they may want to bring. ED has an active newsletter that goes out to all Shaker businesses every month. Staff reached out that way and then we made personal invitations. They wanted to frame it like community conversations to hear from business owners and the business community to see what they want. The DEI Committee members are welcome to come to show support or help in any way.

Ms. Kaufman was planning to attend as a small business owner and also to pay attention for the other pieces.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson reiterated that anyone from the DEI Committee is welcome but they are specifically trying to get business owners to come. The event is on September 28.

b. 10/25/23 – “Cross-Neighborhood” meeting for association leaders

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the next DEI Committee is on October 21st. On October 25th at 7:00 p.m. at the library they will try another neighborhood engagement meeting bringing the different neighborhood association leaders together. They held one at the library several months ago which was well attended. They want that to be an ongoing aspect of their work to bring neighborhood association leaders together and to support them in their work in each individual neighborhood. They are also planning something bigger probably in March of next year.

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Update on spending of 2023 DEI Appropriation

Council Chair Mr. Malone asked if Ms. Jackson had the opportunity to do research on what they have spent to date. They had an appropriation of \$25,000 and he doubts they have spent more than \$5,000.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they still have a couple events to plan, like the MLK event. They received a request for reimbursement this week for a neighborhood gathering. She will submit it for approval with the details. They have had just two requests. They can advertise that more and figure out how to get that information out there. It may be that there are not a lot of meetings happening. That could be a conversation at the neighborhood association meetings, because those people do those events. They haven't spent much other than on food and childcare for events.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they may end the year spending about \$5,000. The requests they're getting are the kind they want. They received a request from the Ludlow Community Association twice. The Sussex Association is unique because Sussex is pretty well funded. People contribute yearly to be part of the association. Maybe the DEI Committee could kick start or support other neighborhoods that want to do similar things. The list of everybody that plans a block party this summer would be a nice thing to have with this contact information. Those are the people that tend to be inclined to take on a neighborhood leadership role. If they can get those folks on their lists that would be useful.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they want to encourage more neighborhood collaboration meetings. They might promote the fact that they have funds to help support these types of gatherings.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the parameters for reimbursement are broad. It is to reimburse expenses of holding a meeting that has the purpose of bringing people together consistent with the DEI Committee values and goals. They have discretion in deciding what to support. There are six members who can decide whether to approve an event like a book club.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the DEI Committee decided to support meetings and events that are held by Shaker residents and organizations that are consistent with the mission and goals. The goals are those which were set for this year. If a group can tie the event to a goal then they can submit a reimbursement for up to \$250 per event. People have to submit their receipts and then be reimbursed. They want to encourage more use of that. Right now there is no limit on how many times a group may be reimbursed.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated they would like to encourage each neighborhood to have a way to bring people together. Shaker has had nine traditional neighborhoods with associations, but some neighborhoods don't have associations now. If people take the time to fill out an application, and explain why an event fits with DEI values and goals, the DEI Committee may be persuaded to support something like a book club.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they may have to get creative and give examples to encourage folks. The money isn't wasted if they don't spend it, but they should try to use it. Once they have an active youth council that will eat up more of the budget.

Ms. Acosta asked if they would reimburse an individual for an event. She had considered doing an international event for her street because the Boulevard community does not have a neighborhood association, and her street is very diverse.

Ms. Scott stated that she knows someone who does an Easter party every year on Chelton and someone else is doing a Halloween gathering. It would be great for them to get reimbursed.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the question is really if they want to support nine separate neighborhoods or if they should promote the one Shaker mentality. She has not been pushing to reinvigorate the neighborhood associations that aren't active. She is leaning more in the direction of the October 25th event of cross neighborhoods. They did not put restrictions on individuals hosting events. If one resident wanted to host a teen talk event connected to DEI and submitted a request for reimbursement for having that in their community that is the type of event they would support. It is anything that helps to promote DEI which is such a broad thing.

Ms. Carmella Williams asked if they would want to require collaboration with others. She asked if a component should be collaboration with the library or SGORR, etc.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they could give more weight to that, but they may not necessarily want to require that they collaborate.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the more people know about it, the more quickly they will spend the funds. They have been talking about it for a while in the audiences they get. It was in the *Shaker Life* magazine. She likes the idea of collaborating. When they get to a place where they need to be more restrictive they may add those extra things. Once they encourage collaboration they may have to double the amount given which is fine if the events are bigger.

Ms. Anne Williams stated that she does not have anything unique to add. This is a great discussion.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she saw something on disability justice training that they could consider attending or perhaps sending others to attend.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she just finished the book *Dream Town - Shaker Heights and the Quest for Racial Equity*. She also went to hear the author in two different spaces. She wondered if maybe there could be an event surrounding that.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson asked if they hosted an event in November, would people be interested in coming to hear the author talk or come together to talk about the book.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated he has a sense that there's been a little bit of saturation by the author. She's been everywhere. The book is about lessons learned. There's also a lot of great history.

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that it sounds like it's not necessarily as important to talk about the points or the data collected in the book, but more of discussing what we do with that.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated he just heard the interview with the author and Dr. Burnley on Zoom at Cleveland State University.

Ms. Scott stated that she has not read the book, but a lot of people are seeing the author as the voice of DEI.

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Discussion on 2024 Strategic Planning

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the DEI Committee has a long list of goals posted on the website. It's clear they pivoted during this year. He would propose that next month they spend the majority of the meeting thinking about 2024 and what they want to do. Clearly they want to continue youth engagement, and cross neighborhood stuff. What they do to support everyday people with their housing maintenance is more a City-wide issue. He would like to have a strategic planning brainstorming session next time. The last meeting of the year could be in November. They could have a fun event where they formalize those priorities and have a social event at the library or somewhere else. They had a retreat last year, so maybe they extend the meeting to an hour and a half. He could circulate a list ahead of time of what he thinks would be a good idea. They can add or subtract to it and then they could finalize it at that meeting. The next meeting is October 19th. He likes the idea of continuing community meetings of some kind at least once a quarter.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they may have to pivot. They don't want to be in competition with the framework listening project. She is working on the request for proposals but once she finds out the details she will know more.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the listening project is related to police community relations and that's related to DEI work, but it's going to be overarching. It's not something the DEI Committee will tackle.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that it is a community engagement initiative where the goal is to get community feedback on several issues in our City like policing, the mental health response program, etc. They are bringing in someone to do an external community engagement survey. They don't want to duplicate efforts or make people have to choose between the DEI Committee meeting and the listening project. There might be sessions that make people want to continue talking so they can create space for that. They may need to do something completely different. She is counting on the DEI Committee to support the listening project.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they may have a different chair of this committee next year, but whoever is on the committee could suggest potential guest speakers. They should try to have a regular list of guests.

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Update on MLK Day Plans.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they need to vote on their contribution for the MLK Day celebration. Every entity has been asked to contribute. We agreed via email to contribute \$3,000. For the first time last year, it was a collaboration between the City, library and school district. This year they want to bring in a speaker and they are asking for a contribution from all the entities. \$3,000 was what was requested as the City contribution.

It was moved by Council Chair Mr. Malone and seconded by Ms. Acosta that the DEI Committee approve spending \$3,000 from the appropriated budget for the MLK Day celebration.

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Announcements.

Ms. Maxey stated that there are three programs coming up at the library that the DEI Committee might be interested in. This Saturday, Dr. Deborah Abbott, who's a genealogist, is going to talk about the family history of the Stokes Brothers at 2:00 p.m. She is a renowned genealogist, and it'll be a very interesting program about two men who are very important in Shaker history, Cleveland history, and national history. On the 30th Vijay Shah is going to talk about the book he helped create, *James Meredith - Man on a Mission and the Battle of Ole Miss*. James Meredith may actually participate by phone. On Monday, October 16th at 7:00 p.m. Wesley Lowry is going to speak at the library. These are all in person meetings at the library.

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

Colleen Jackson, Chief DEI Officer