



Racial Equity Committee

July 26, 2022; 7 – 8:30 pm

Attendance:

Xavier Comeaux
Haile Sims, Chair
Emily Cramer
Carrie Paulette
Ellie Seeman (guest)

Kate Raglow
Diane Mora, Secretary
Monica Espinoza
Erin Winn
Jan Bomback (guest)

Committee Goals:

1. Develop economic and workforce opportunities for businesses and employees of color and identify any obstacles that exists
2. Establish that Roeland Park is an open and welcoming community to people of all races and backgrounds, where acting on racist beliefs is not tolerated.
3. Develop racial bias and equity education and outreach for city staff, elected/appointed officials and residents.
4. Create more community engagement activities that involve our Police Department to facilitate stronger relationships with the community.

● Approve May and June minutes

- The Minutes were approved unanimously, as presented.
- Carrie Paulette made the Motion to approve.
- Emily Cramer, Seconded
- Motion carried unanimously.

● Notes from the Chair – H. Sims

- Haile Sims commented on the fine job everyone is doing to create and deliver the monthly community education series sessions.
- He was especially complimentary of the session hosted by Carrie Paulet on July 20, "Talking to Kids about Being Anti-Racist". Slides and materials from her presentation are available.

● Racial Equity Committee Education Series – H. Sims

Goal 3: Develop racial bias and equity education and outreach for city staff, elected/appointed officials, and residents.

August 2022

- Haile indicated we do not have a topic or presenter for the August education program.
- Diane suggested (and offered) to locate a short video or podcast that could be linked to an reflective questionnaire in Google Forms. Residents could watch or listen on their own schedule during the month and submit answers to the reflective questions, which could then be reviewed by the Committee or a point person on the committee.
- Diane also offered to send recommendations for videos and podcasts to Haile before August 5 for him to vet. Once chosen, she will design the questions.

- The link to the video and questions will then be posted on the Community Events Calendar with an invitation to participate.
- Haile suggested that it might be possible to show a recording from one of the previous DEI Education Sessions that have already been held.

- **National Night Out/Public Safety event – 15 minutes, H. Sims**

Goal 2: Establish that Roeland Park is an open and welcoming community to people of all races and backgrounds, where acting on racist beliefs is not tolerated.

- The date of the event was originally set for October 8 because it aligned with National Night Out. However, due to a majority of committee members who are unable to attend on October 8, it was suggested that the event be moved to October 15.
- Haile will communicate with the City of RP Chief of Police to see if October 15 is possible for the RPPD.
- Kate suggested that the Community Events Committee might be able to offer support for organizing and hosting the National Night Out.
- A discussion ensued about whether it is appropriate for a percentage of profits from alcohol sold at the event to be donated by Dix Liquors to a Native American support organization. Given the historical health issues surrounding the introduction of alcohol to native peoples, might this make a donation problematic?
- Kate suggested a general ticket sale that could be used for food or beverage, and still having profits donated to an indigenous support organization. Which raised the question of whether it was still our intention that the food be free of charge for all residents at the event.
- Diane suggested that someone from the committee ask the indigenous organization how they would feel before we move forward with the donation, being sure to explain to them where the money would be coming from. This way, if they find it inappropriate we can consider other possibilities.
- A general discussion ensued about the various types of activities and vendors we are seeking for the event, who needs to be contacted, and who might be the point person for some of these tasks. Diane suggested to Erin that a Project Planner for the event with timeline would be helpful to create and share with everyone on the DEI Committee (perhaps created in Google Docs). That way all Committee members could see what needs to be done, and easily find and commit to specific tasks they can assume responsibility for. Erin agreed and indicated she has a model for the event planner based on a previous city event.
- Erin will send a link to the Night Out planner document to all DEI Committee members once it has been determined if the event will take place on October 15 or not.

- **Mid-America Black Archives Project – 15 minutes, D. Mora**

Goal 3: Develop racial bias and equity education and outreach for city staff, elected/appointed officials and residents.

- **Roeland Park Reads**

- Diane presented a request for the Roeland Park DEI Committee recognize a project for the January or February 2023 education series called "Roeland Park Reads". She is also seeking the support of the JoCo Library with the hopes they will provide in-kind support through the purchase of 30 copies of the book to give to residents who sign up to read the book.
- Diane showed a (4 minute) video describing the project and how it applies to the committee's ongoing efforts to develop racial bias and equity education for city staff, elected/appointed officials and resident.
- Monica Espinoza made the Motion to approve the Roeland Park Reads project for the January / February 2023 community education series.
- Carrie Paulette, Seconded
- Motion carried unanimously.

- **Starting with Stories**

Goal 2: Establish that Roeland Park is an open and welcoming community to people of all races and backgrounds, where acting on racist beliefs is not tolerated.

- Ellie Seeman and Jan Bomack attended the meeting as invited guests of Haile Sims. Ellie and Jan are partners in a local organization called, "Starting With Stories". Their mission is to "use stories to talk about identity, diversity, justice and activism with children ages zero - 9 years old and their parents."
- Their work is connected to the work of Dr. Louise Derman Sparks "Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves."
- Their work with families of young children is generally geared toward white families wanting to instill anti-racist values in a sensitive way. Although they are open to persons and families of color joining a cohort.
- It was briefly discussed whether there would be an opportunity for Ellie and Jan to provide a "book fair" featuring books for families of young children at the National Night out event on the topic of race and antiracism that parents and children could peruse. Ellie and Jan are open to the idea, however, a decision was not reached since the date of the event is still under discussion with the RPPD Chief.

- **General Discussion items – H. Sims and all**

- Carrie asked for an update about the vote on Safe and Welcoming Roeland Park. Kate responded (paraphrased): We voted to amend the ordinance but it is still in place. It was amended with hope we can change it to at least keep it on the books rather than remove it all together.
- Carrie asked for an update about the removal of Restrictive Covenants. Erin responded (paraphrased): We are still going back and forth with the City Attorney and the County Registrar of deeds with hopes of getting the removal process into a session in the near future. Carrie indicated that Missouri had recently passed a process for removal of restrictive covenants, and suggested that could be a model for Johnson County that would speed up the timeline. Carrie provided links to the committee to the news from Missouri, and Erin indicated she would follow up with the City Attorney.
- Carrie asked about the status of the Historical Signs project. Erin indicated (paraphrased) that the project had stalled due to an inability to locate a qualified individual or entity who could do the work of vetting the information to be placed on the markers. Diane suggested this might be the perfect project for Dr. David Trowbridge, a professor of History at UMKC, his graduate students, and a digital app he has created called The Clío which enables anyone with a phone to locate historical sites and structures to find out its history. Kate asked for verification that the information would be vetted. Diane was unable to speak to the entire vetting process, but was able to clarify that The Clío is not like Wikipedia where anyone can write anything at any time. Diane offered to connect Erin and Dr. Trowbridge to see if it would be possible to create a City of Roeland Park Historical Tour through The Clío app. This could also be a more cost-effective way to create the markers rather than through signs that have to be made and installed.

- **Meeting adjourned – H. Sims and all**

- Haile Sims asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
- Carrie Poullette made the Motion to adjourn.
- Xavier Comeaux, Seconded.
- Motion carried unanimously.

