



Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee

July 25, 2023

7 – 8:00 pm

Attendees: Miel Castagna-Herrera, Haile Sims (Chair), Carrie Paulette (notetaker), Juliana Garcia (guest speaker-reporter for Shawnee Mission Post)

Committee Goals:

1. Develop economic and workforce opportunities for businesses and employees of color and identify any obstacles that exist.
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.

A. Haile Sims called meeting to order and introduced attendees.

B. SM Post Guest Speaker – 15 minutes, Juliana Garcia

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.

- a. Shawnee Indian Mission Update
- b. Juliana Garcia shared that she has been following the story since October 2021 and can share a timeline of events:
 - i. Ground penetrating study (May 2021) on the Shawnee Indian Mission cemetery off of Shawnee Mission Parkway in Fairway, near the Fairway shops, where Reverend Johnson and family are buried. At the time, the study was reported to be looking for unmarked graves of native children. At this time, Chief Barnes said that no children would be found there because that is where Reverend Johnson and his children are buried.
 - ii. In Oct 2021, the Shawnee Tribe and City of Fairway entered a partnership to find unmarked graves and tell the whole truth of the mission. The mission is operated by the Kansas Historical Society but sits in Fairway and is owned by the state of Kansas.
 - iii. April 2022: Shawnee Tribe received federal grant for study of viability of structures at the mission.
 - iv. October 2022: announcement of moving forward with the ground penetration at the actual mission site. Mid-late October: this was put on hold indefinitely because, per the city and Kansas Historical Society (KHS), the Shawnee tribe had asked KU to put a stop to it because they had not consulted the Shawnee tribe or other tribes for permission or inclusion. Fairway and KHS say that they did consult the Shawnee tribe and offered a formal role to Chief Barnes as consultant.
 - v. Shawnee tribe commission report that detailed 13 million dollars of repairs at the site and stated they wanted control of the mission.
 - vi. End of January 2023- Shawnee tribe introduced 2 bills (in Kansas senate and house) to convey the land to tribe, and specified that they could not be used for gaming.

1. The bills were introduced but not picked up for hearing, but has a possibility of coming back up in 2024. There is nothing happening currently with those bills. The Shawnee tribe has remained hopeful that they could get more traction. There are lobbyists on both sides (for the tribe and the city).
2. An outside expert has said that the land would not become sovereign land simply by owning it. The Shawnee tribe has stated that if they owned the land, it would still be subject to state laws and Fairway zoning laws, etc. They have stated that their purpose is to repair the mission. The city has alluded to the possibility of gaming and casinos if the tribe were to gain ownership of the land, despite the fact that the Shawnee tribe has never mentioned this.
3. The city of Fairway's concern is that the tribe could claim sovereign land and be subject to tribal law rather than city zoning and state law. There is a way that it could become sovereign land if the government gave them money for Shawnee land elsewhere and the tribe used that exact money to buy the Shawnee Indian Mission land.
4. Haile asked if the Department of Interior could get involved and ask Kansas to convey the land to the tribe. Juliana shared that she wasn't sure about the answer to that.
5. Miel asked about the Kanza tribe's involvement. Juliana shared that that Kanza tribe sent a letter to Governor Kelly saying that if any tribe should get land in the state, the Kanza tribe should get first right of refusal. The Kanza were an original tribe in the Kansas City area.
- vii. Miel asked what the Roeland Park Council could do to support native tribes in getting land back. Juliana replied that speaking out and keeping the conversation going helps.
- viii. The Shawnee Indian Mission was used as a manual boarding school during 1830s-1850s. It was also used as a place for Union soldiers to hide and other tribes had children who were sent there, and the city often shares this as a rationale for not giving control to the Shawnee, since it had historical significance for many different reasons.
- ix. Haile asked about doing a ground penetration study near Bishop Miege, but that was not explored because it was such a big area.
- x. Carrie asked if any of the local representatives have gotten involved, such as Representative Davids and Senator Corson, but Juliana said that no one has taken a side because it's too messy.

C. Approve June minutes (skipped due to lack of quorum)

D. Notes from the Chair – 5 minutes, H. Sims

E. Equity Scoring Proposal – 15 minutes, M. Castagna-Herrera

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.

- Miel shared about the background of the equity scoring proposal:
 - Developed by Councilor Miel and Councilor Michael Rebne. On July 10th, City Manager Keith Manager shared the capitol investment project that have been done in RP, with data broken down by each district in RP to report on how people of color are benefitting from the city's capital investments.
 - In the city, there are 1,292- residents of color. Area surrounding Boulevard Apartments have the largest percentage of residents of color. The study showed that the CIP investment was big in this district because it's the area with the pool, community center, etc. but did the residents of the apartments benefit? Rebne asked- how can we investigate beforehand how residents are going to be affected and how residents of color will benefit?

- Rebne's idea was to have an equity scoring guide for capitol investment projects, similar to the rubric for budget items. He came up with a draft idea and is wondering if the committee supports the idea of this rubric.
- Haile asked how this was different than the original rubric. Miel shared that the original rubric was specific for council items, but not capital improvement projects.
- Because there was no quorum to vote, Miel decided to invite Rebne next meeting to discuss further.
- Carrie suggested questions that ask about who is left out or would have trouble accessing this project. Or a question that asks specifically about whether apartment residents are able to access the project?
- Haile shared that some projects benefit everyone or the city in general but don't benefit people of color specifically. Miel shared that there are DEI considerations (such as verbal walk signals for deaf visitors) for those bigger projects.

F. Education Series – 5 minutes, H. Sims

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

- a. Ethnic Enrichment Festival 8/18-8/20
 - i. Haile will coordinate via email so that we can go as a group.
- b. Fiesta Hispana 9/16-9/18
 - i. Overlaps with RP Concert in R Park.
- c. Joint meeting with Prairie Village Diversity Committee (August)
 - i. Haile will meet with Cole Robinson (head of Diversity Committee) soon. Committee discussed the idea of Cole to come to next meeting to share ideas about getting people to come to events.

G. August Meeting – 5 minutes, H. Sims

- a. Police Department will provide update on Faith in Blue event in October
 - i. Carrie suggested that AIRR provide know your rights info at this event to increase trust with the immigrant community
 - ii. Haile emphasized that he'd like to have more people involved. Miel asked how we would advertise? Suggestions included fliers to homes, getting Neighbors for Roeland Park involved, Facebook groups.
 - iii. Haile shared that RPPD will handle food, ambulance so it won't cost a lot of money.
- b. Anna Jacobson, city consultant for Native American history

H. Review goals to reflect name change-- 5 minutes, H. Sims

- a. Will discuss next month due to lack of quorum.

I. Other Matters

a. Follow Up on Anti-Trans Legislation Response

- i. Carrie asked about whether there had been any movement on the city communication to the public about the non-discrimination ordinance as it relates to the anti-trans bill, including a reassurance the anti-trans discrimination is not accepted in Roeland Park, trans' residents/visitors rights in the city, resources to contact if harassment is experienced and information about gender inclusive facilities (pool, community center, city hall).
- ii. Haile said that he would follow up on this.

J. Adjourn- Haile adjourned meeting at 8:16pm.

