

# Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee

August 29, 2023; 7 – 8:30 pm; Hybrid

## Attended by:

Haile Sims, Chair	Carrie Paulette	Miel Castagna-Herrera
Chief John Morris	Michael Rebne	Kendra Neal Wright
Emily Cramer	Xavier Comeaux	Diane Mora, Secretary via Zoom
Kate Raglow	Regina Moore	Mitchell Walker

## 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.

## Agenda

### A. Approve July minutes

Kate Raglow made a motion to approve the July 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded by Carrie Paulette and was unanimously approved. Motion carried unanimously.

### B. Notes from the Chair – H. Sims

October meeting on October 24. Please make note of that on your calendars.

### C. Faith In Blue Planning – Chief John Morris

*Goal 4: Create more community engagement activities that involve our Police Department to facilitate stronger relationships with the community.*

Used to be called "Safety Day" then began to partner with Faith in Blue as a faith-based organization nationally. He coordinates the programming for the state. Promotes safer, stronger, and more unified communities across all groups in the community. We like to partner with the DEI Committee because they like to promote and include the message of diversity.

a. Date: Saturday October 7

b. Time: 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM (2 - 2.5 hours) These times are good for family lunches and nap times for the younger ones.

c. Location: Community Center needs to be reserved. Haile will follow up with Jennifer about this. Kate raised concerns about the availability of the Community Center, but Chief says there are options for the parking lot of the city hall as a backup plan. The community center is the best location because of bathrooms and other facilities.

d. Food: Hot Dogs and Hamburgers. Chief has the donations for the food.

e. Entertainment: Bouncy House. City funds the cost of the bouncy house. If we want to have face painting we need to find funding for that. It has not been part of the event in the past.

f. Participants: Police, Fire, Ambulance, DEI Committee, Sheriff's department, K-Nine project, and other agencies that would like to come by and have lunch. Last year the DEI committee helped arrange for ice cream. And Haile will follow up with that idea again this year.

Chief indicated the DEI Committee is welcome to have a table or be involved in any capacity.

Haile asked about outreach to churches and community outreach organizations. Chief does send out invitations to all faith based organizations and all social media outlets. Chief sends the invitations to all apartments like the Boulevard Apartment Managers. Kate asked about announcing in the city newsletter, but the next newsletter publication may not coincide with the date of the event. Carrie suggested the constant contact that the City uses occasionally. Kate indicated that the majority of the City prefers Twitter.

Carrie asked what the DEI Committee do to help ensure that folks attending feel safe and welcomed to the event because of previous interactions with the police. Chief suggested having the invitation translated into Spanish and to use photos from previous events showing diverse folks attending the event in the past. Churches are a great promoter of the event and can really make a difference in public perception of the event as a safe space and welcoming event. Kate Raglow indicated that this event is a way for the City of Roeland Park to demonstrate that as a City we are trying to reinforce our beliefs into action as a welcoming and safe community for everyone - residents and visitors. Chief reinforced that this is NOT a police department event, it is a community event.

**D. Equity Scoring Proposal – Michael Rebne**

*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 equity scoring guide is something he has been interested in for scoring and evaluating policies that come in front of city council. It's a tool for vetting these policies and that allows us to evaluate our results. Are our policies reactive instead of proactive? This scoring guide enables us to be more proactive. It also enables us to think through policies with a similar vocabulary and through a similar lens. Some of the ideas are borrowed from programs in other cities like Seattle. Even the seemingly mundane policies (new street lights) affect folks in particular areas of the communities differently. The score card promotes discussion that might not otherwise occur. It also enables the community to weigh in and hold the city accountable. Number 9 asks specifically about how a specific action will be evaluated for its success. Scoring isn't a one size fits all for every proposal or project, but would enable proposals and projects to be vetted. Michael is

presenting this tonight with hopes that the DEI Committee will encourage the City Council to utilize the scorecard regularly going forward. Haile clarified that if we were to approve use of the this that the expectation would be that Council would answer these questions prior to any projects including capital improvements, but not limited to capital employment. Rebne indicated it should be used on even small budget items. Rebne indicated it is NOT limited for use with budget items; but perhaps a dollar limit could be set as a basis for reviewing budget-related items. Although NOT begging hard and fast to the budget limit. Haile asked about its relevance for city ordinances. Carrie likes the scorecard as a way to help us verify that we are moving toward equity in ways that even routine things have the potential to move us toward or away from equity. Previously Carrie and the Committee was under the understanding that the scorecard was only useful for budget items, now we understand it is useful for many discussions. Kate as about Rebne indicated that the first expectation is that the Committee actually uses the scorecard. Has it not been used because people forget about it? Kate indicated it is cumbersome to even bring something to the Council for agenda discussion. So the racial equity questionnaire is n't available online so it's difficult for folks to remember that it needs to be a part of the process as well as to what types of items it applies. And often agenda items are bundled (i.e. budget items are bundled by staff) and the scorecard just hasn't been used well. A concern by Kate is that staff feels overburdened by the additional use of the scorecard. Rebne indicated it is not just for staff it is for council use. However, it is 8 questions with short answers not paragraphs of information. It is a thought form to record that we are considering the impact of proposals, and to remind us to discuss the equity component of topics. Rebne is asking us to support the use of the scorecard through reminders for the council to use. Haile's understanding of the scorecard in order for the DEI Committee to recommend to the Council to use the scorecard regularly. Rebne indicated the Mayor has expressed interest and support for using the scorecard. Haile said that regardless of what the DEI committee decides about how or whether to use the scorecard, how do we make it something that gets used and not just sitting on a shelf. Carrie asked how, of if, the scorecard enables us to streamline the communications between Council and the DEI Committee. And in general how can the DEI Committee be more aware of agenda items that DEI Committee should probably weigh in on. Kate indicated that agenda's don't get published with much lead time for the Council members which also exacerbates the issue Carrie is bringing up. Unfortunately the Council members also feel the same sense of timing on the communications.

**E. Johnson County Government Guest Speaker – Kendra Neal Wright**

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

Kendra is here at Haile's invitation to share Johnson County's practices in the realm of DEI. She is accompanied by Mitchell Walker to help and support any questions.

VIBE is used at JoCo workplaces and stands for Voices for Inclusion Belonging and Equality. Vibe also means the atmosphere of a place felt and communicated to by others. We hope folks feel invited, included, and have access. The statements are intentionally concise and clear with definitions and relational understandings.

She uses a 1990 Framework that has been adapted by JoCo for its purposes and provides a common language from where to start working. No framework is "perfect". Common language enables us to reach solutions, and enable us to have conversations about how situations affect us at different times.

VIBE has four areas of focus that stem from an understanding that if we strengthen our work environment, we also strengthen our larger community because of how employees interact with the public.

Our internal stakeholder framework consists of everyone in the organization regardless of role or leadership; includes officials, human resources team, co-executive sponsors; facilitators, 15 members county wide that are appointed by application and invitation, and county managers and supervisors.

Why does VIBE exist? *"We trust and empower each other to do the right thing for the right reason for the public good."* It requires cultural intelligence and sensitivity to support this mission.

They began VIBE with the intention to understand the needs of the organization through infrastructure, and used several internal tools to survey employees and actually look at how different identities within the organization are impacted by VIBE.

Haile asked if the VIBE trainings and framework are accessible to our committee. Kendra indicated that VIBE is currently only available internally within the JoCo organization. Kendra's focus has been on internal development; she is joining us tonight to see how we are an example of how committees like ours attempt to implement similar programming externally into the community.

Externally they have committed to being a part of a platform called "Welcoming America" which is a support across many communities related to racial equity.

USC Racial Equity programming was another project JoCo participated in as a pilot program to engage in equity and leadership training and programming.

Haile was impressed with how much the county supports the cities in this work. He asked whether this work can be shared with cities who have small staffs like ours. Could a city committee be able to have representation or is it only for individual applicants? Kate would prefer it to be an individual, not a "committee" appointment. Haile wants to know how can the Roeland Park DEI committee be a partner or a resource to JoCo in this work?

How do we remain in contact with Kendra and Mitchell? Haile suggested a staff liaison might be a good option. It might be possible for Roeland Park be a community partner at things like Juneteenth because they have "business partners".

**F. Education Series – H. Sims**

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

Haile encouraged everyone to support the following events.

- Fiesta Hispana 9/16-9/18
- City of Roeland Park is also having a Fiesta Hispana at R Park
- He would also like to plan a joint meeting with Prairie Village Diversity Committee (Future) Carrie would also like to know what we can learn from the Prairie Village committee, too, while also lending support to them. Kate and Carrie and Haile all agreed that affordable housing will become a discussion for all of our communities county wide. And affordable housing is definitely an important topic of discussion and equity. How do we frame this issue around people, not the underlying fears of existing property owners. This will become even more of an issue with Panasonic brings jobs to the area.

**G. September Meeting – H. Sims**

a. Anna Jacobson, City Consultant for Native American history will attend our meeting to talk about the Roeland Park historical signs. Kate indicated that as the historical committee moves forward on the signs that we include her in that discussion and the project overall. Carrie reminded us that we should try to meet jointly with the historical committee. Kate suggested that if we do that, we should have a prepared agenda indicating concerns and solutions.

Haile suggested that this would be a special meeting outside of our normal monthly meeting. The question was raised about whether this would be an appropriate opportunity to use the equity scoring guide. Kate indicated this was attempted before but when the signs came about it was not a successful endeavor. However this would be a good opportunity for using our new questions.

Carrie brought up the dual-language program for Shawnee Mission Schools, similar to KCPS already has. Carrie believes they are looking for different ways to spread the message about this programming, and she wonders if they should be invited to attend one of our meetings to see if there is a way to spread the word about the program?

b. Review goals to reflect name change - postponed to a future meeting.

**H. Other Matters - None**

**I. Adjourn**

Kate Raglow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Carrie Paulette and was unanimously approved. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

