

APPROVED MINUTES
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION Special Meeting
August 7, 2019 – 7:00 PM VILLAGE HALL – ROOM 215

1) **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Brewer called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2) **ROLL CALL:**

PRESENT: Commissioners Annemarie Kill, Kelly Benkert, Brynne Hovde, Jacquelyn Rodriquez, and Chair Glenn Brewer

ABSENT: Commissioners Karin Grimes, Maya Puentes, Cassandra West, Yoko Terretta

ALSO PRESENT: Cedric Melton, Director of Community Relations Department

3) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Commissioner Rodriguez moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Hovde has a non-action item to add under New Business. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hovde. The agenda was approved unanimously.

4) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Kill moved to approve Special Meeting minutes from July 10, 2019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hovde. The motion was approved unanimously.

5) **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

6) **OLD BUSINESS**

A) CRC's Racial Equity Recommendations

1. Update on Board actions regarding equity

a. CRC's Proposed "Oak Park Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement"

b. Board Goals, Protocols and Budget

Commissioner Kill suggested discussion on Board action regarding equity be reserved for when Trustee Walker-Peddakotla and Trustee Boutet are present to provide an update.

2. CRC draft of Oak Park Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy/Ordinance/Resolution

a. Feedback from Board Members to members of CRC

Commissioner Rodriguez will gather feedback from Trustee Walker-Peddakotla and Trustee Taglia before CRC's next special meeting.

Commissioner Kill and Puentes met with Trustee Andrews. He stressed that equity

policies and strategies should be data driven and measureable. He would support 1) identifying first “if” there are inequities in Oak Park, 2) utilize the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) assessment tool, and 3) measure results. Trustee Andrews stated during their meeting that he understands not every black person of color agrees inequities exist in Oak Park and that the actions of CRC, or members of CRC, have made those individuals feel uncomfortable sharing that opinion. Commissioner Puentes had responded members of CRC would very like to hear from residents of differing and similar opinions regarding an equity statement and/or policy and invited those residents to speak at public comment before CRC. Trustee Andrews stressed his willingness to make himself available to anyone on CRC in the future.

Chair Brewer met with Village President Abu-Taleb, Trustee Taglia, and Trustee Moroney. He shared with each CRC’s desire to understand members of the Village Board better on the discussion of racial equity. Trustee Taglia is supportive of CRC’s agenda; he shared that he would prefer an equity statement that pleases the entire Board. He also stated that he will make himself available to meet again. Chair Brewer suggested it would be good for another member of CRC to meet with President Abu-Taleb, Trustee Taglia, and Trustee Moroney to ask them the specific questions desired to be asked of each Trustee consistently. Trustee Moroney had expressed concerns regarding defining systems of oppression and understanding how that relates to decisions of municipal government. His ask is if CRC has identified specific policies that are potentially problematic. Like Trustee Andrews, Trustee Moroney strongly supports identifying measureable goals related to an equity policy. Chair Brewer suggested that providing for members of the Village Board the red-lined equity statement with rationalization for proposed changes, and a side-by-side comparison of GARE racial equity training versus the National League of Cities training. Trustee Moroney conveyed he has communicated desire to see data related to equity results from the Village Manager. The Village Manager has not been able to prioritize racial equity as a working agenda item until it becomes a Board goal. Chair Brewer believes the Village Manager will be responsive once it is a Board goal. Members of CRC should consider providing recommendations for late September before the Village Board is overly concentrated on the budget. There was concern that the process being discussed would be better led with GARE’s guidance.

Commissioner Hovde reported on meeting with Trustee Buchanan. Trustee Buchanan expressed in that meeting her support of an impact assessment regarding racial equity. She believes racial equity is a conversation for the Village Board to prioritize, respecting stakeholder opinions, and eventually engaging other taxing bodies. She does not feel racial equity is a conversation that needs to include all members of the community but should concentrate on reaching out to groups of color, the faith-based community, and relevant community leaders on the topic. Trustee Buchanan is supportive of the statement as presented and otherwise appreciates Trustee Walker-Peddakotla’s leadership on the agenda of racial equity.

Members of CRC discussed the idea of reaching out to the faith-based community with a focus of meeting members of the Black community where they are at, supporting a wider net of marginalized communities, and connecting with groups that are organizing around teachings of social justice.

b. Feedback from City of Evanston regarding their resolution

Commissioner Benkert has a scheduled call with a representative from Evanston to garner more information on how they passed their resolution. Ms. Benkert shared concern that a legal situation that may be related back to racial equity involving the City of Evanston may interfere with their willingness to share openly. Commissioner Benkert will report out at the next meeting on that call.

c. Form of recommendation (policy/ordinance/resolution)

Commissioner Kill introduced the discussion of how to move forward; should the first step be to suggest hiring GARE to conduct an assessment of policy and programs and their effectiveness regarding racial equity. Chair Brewer suggested CRC ensure that racial equity is a priority in Board Goals and concentrate on a Resolution as part of their 2020 Work Plan. His understanding is that once racial equity is a Board Goal and a Resolution is passed further action will become a priority for the Village Board. As a strategy, Chair Brewer suggested CRC request being tasked with collecting Requests for Proposals (RFP) for conducting an assessment. Commissioner Benkert questioned the need for an RFP because GARE is a national network that provides a service that should not require an RFP to utilize, more similar to the example of the Village joining National League of Cities as a resource for the Village. Discussion continued on how to move forward either educating the Village Board on what GARE is and the service it provides as a sole source justification rather than issuing an RFP for conducting an assessment. Consensus was gathered on moving forward with three action items:

- Join GARE, conduct racial equity assessment
- Key staff and elected official training
- Form Internal and External Racial Equity Core Teams (Task Force)*

Commissioner Hovde will reach out to GARE for more detailed information on what is involved in an assessment and involvement of staff training as part of the process, as well as clarification on the difference between National League of Cities versus Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). Members of CRC discussed examples of statistics that advanced cities on racial equity maintain as part of understanding and maintaining good practices; keeping data on woman or minority owned businesses that submit proposals for Village sponsored RFPs, etc.

Commissioner Kill will flesh out language for clarity on three steps for moving forward. Members of CRC agreed that the goal will be to vote on recommendations for the Village Manager at the next CRC meeting. Recommendations will be forwarded to Trustee Walker-Peddakotla and Trustee Boutet as advocates of CRC for feedback and support. Related budget items will need to be included in the 2020 budget as a specific line item or as an identified item within the Village Managers purview.

* Internal – primarily staff; external – including members of Citizen Commissions.

d. Use of the “Racial Equity Tool” for process of drafting

No further discussion required at this time.

7) New Business

Commissioner Hovde brought forward a question of the appropriateness for the Community Relations Commission to discuss racial equity goals regarding issuance of special use permits for potential marijuana dispensaries. Chair Brewer suggested there is a good deal for the Village Board to determine on allowance of recreational

marijuana versus medical marijuana before equity discussions can be productively discussed.

8) Adjourn

Commissioner Kill moved to adjourn. Chair Brewer adjourned the meeting at 8:43 P.M.

Next Regular Meeting: August 21, 2019

Next Special Meeting: September 4, 2019