

The City of Clayton
Community Equity Commission
Virtual Zoom Meeting
April 30, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Minutes

Roll Call

Present: Yvonne Tisdell, Laura Horwitz, Adam Sheble, Chris Schmitz, Ben Uchitelle, Stuart Berkowitz, Francis Pires, Dr. Sean Doherty (ex officio), Rev. Laurie Anzilotti (ex officio), JoAnna Schooler (ex officio), and Darlene Reed (ex officio).

Additional: Alderman Boulton, Alderman Buse, City Manager Gipson, Assistant to the City Manager Andrea Muskopf, June Frazier (City Clerk), Rachel D'Souza-Siebert (Gladiator Consulting), and Ann Fischer-Jackson (Gladiator Consulting)

Minutes

Ben Uchitelle moved to approve the April 30, 2020 minutes. Laura Horwitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Small Group Discussion

Commission Members broke into small groups for discussion. Please see attached report from Gladiator Consulting.

Full Group Discussion

Please see attached report from Gladiator Consulting.

Public Comment

Karen Aroesty with the ADL requested that the Commission focus on structural racism/systems change – public policies, institutional practices that drive them, personal bias, and focus on race because it will lead to other problems.

Lilly Raymond from the Board of Education & St. Louis Psychiatric Rehab Center requested that the Commission have racial equity be the focus.

Kathleen Gund, Clayton resident, asked if the Commission is supposed to be the citizens advising the elected officials.

Another resident asked how the public learns of future meetings.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Facilitators' Report

Community Equity Commission

Clayton Municipal Court Room, 10 S. Brentwood Blvd.

March 9, 2020 at 5:30 PM

Welcome & Introductions

- Mayor Harris welcomed everyone and said questions will be entertained at the end of the meeting if there is time.
 - She thanked commission members for agreeing to be part of this process and for the robust talent they are bringing to the table.
 - The formation of the Commission has been discussed since at least 2017. Some of the following were contributing factors:
 - Region's historical division socioeconomically and racially.
 - Recent events such as Ferguson/Michael Brown and the work of the Ferguson Commission, research of health trends by St. Louis County showing disparities, Better Together and the resulting turn to local government for change as well as uncovering of racial tension following the IHOP incident.
 - The Commission's purpose is outlined in the ordinance.
 - The main goal is to help city productively work toward equity.
 - Clayton wants to model at a local level how to advance equity and inclusion. For example, address the issues that undermine the city and its constituents, facilitate the opportunity for community to interact and learn from one another and local government, and support collaborations already existing that are inclusive. This is beyond race relations and meant to be fully inclusive of all marginalized groups.
 - Long term aspirations – create a community welcome to all where there are no disparities based on race, gender, ability, etc.
 - How we get there is to be determined by this group.
- Alderman Susan Buse (Ward II), liaison for the Board of Aldermen, introduced herself.
 - We can continue to move forward with existing momentum and collaborations.
 - The work we're here to do is overwhelming and urgent.
 - Commission members will be encouraged to see Clayton already has in place some good that we can help build on.
- Alderman Joanne Boulton (Ward I), liaison for the Board of Aldermen, introduced herself.
 - Her own residents were worried about the volunteer program ending and it inspired her.
 - We are the County Seat so everyone should be comfortable and they are not.
- Commission Members introduced themselves.
- David Gipson, new City Manager, introduced himself and explained that he serves as the staff liaison to the Commission.
 - Equity commission serves in an advisory capacity.

- Mayor Harris introduced Rachel D’Souza-Siebert and Ann Fischer-Jackson with Gladiator Consulting, who was hired to facilitate the discussions of the first several meetings to help the Commission determine how they want to move forward.

Setting the Table – Gladiator Consulting

- D’Souza-Siebert: If equity is everyone’s responsibility, then it ends up being no one’s responsibility. These conversations are uncomfortable but get you to meet new people and you realize the resources are already there. We are just the catalysts to help that realization come to fruition.
 - Reviewed definitions of:
 - Diversity – Variety; A range of different things.
 - Inclusion – The action or state of including or of being included within a group.
 - Equality – Refers to equal opportunity and the same levels of support for all segments of society.
 - Equity – Refers to offering varying levels of support depending upon need to achieve greater fairness of outcomes.
 - Include liberation/justice – Complete removal of the barriers ex. – removing the fence.
 - Implicit Bias – Refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
 - Microaggression – A statement, action, or incident
 - The example of “Where are you from?” as a microaggression was discussed and D’Souza-Siebert cited the Race Card Project as the example that is from.
 - Intention and impact are not the same thing and cause different responses in people.
 - Systemic Racism – A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.
 - Racial Equity – A state in which a person’s life outcomes cannot be predicted by race;
 - When we talk about ‘isms, can substitute all forms – sexism, ableism, etc.
 - Reviewed Clayton demographics
 - Reviewed STL Equity Indicators and Clayton’s position
- Fischer-Jackson reviewed other similar commissions and their results:
 - Similar demographic makeup
 - Successful in measurable data/outcomes
 - Similar to how Clayton plays a central role in the region
 - In addition, St. Louis Park, MN, Boston, & South Bend, IN could be examined
 - Tacoma started with complaints about inequity in hiring and city jumped in
 - Set solid foundations with unified goals
 - Gathered commission
 - Set framework for which all hiring goes through that came about through education across all levels

- Launched Equity of Human Rights Office
- Adopted targeted universalism
- Madison had a dramatic school board election that brought the issues to the forefront
 - Did work inside & outside of government
 - Had strategy team & core team
 - Used existing neighborhood resource team
 - Started with “fast & easy wins”
- Gladiator can provide other resources/case studies as requested
- Both cities started with a report, just like Clayton
- Suggestion to look at local Human Rights Commissions like Kirkwood
- Can the Commission get info from other local commissions and their reports? What about Seattle toolkits?
 - Fischer-Jackson also suggested Government Association on Racial Equity (GARE) toolkits. Mayor Harris responded that we have that info but didn’t want to overwhelm the commission to begin. City Manager Gipson said he can send more information, too.

Small Group Discussions

- The group broke into small groups to discuss the following questions:
 - Based on your experience as a Clayton resident, on what priority should the commission focus it’s time?
 - What does progress look like?
 - What themes are emerging?

Full Group Discussions (Small Group Reports)

- Group A – priority: truth telling, coming from a posture of who serve, housing and socioeconomic diversity. Progress looks like opportunity.
- Group B – first step is to gather existing data and find gaps. Can’t set priorities until we know what we are missing. What are structural issues preventing us from being diverse? How do we push that out into the community?
- Group C – learning is implicit. Hiring practices for the city. Supplier diversity, housing, continuing school diversity. Progress – looks like improvement on the priorities.

Public Comment

- Karen Aroesty with the ADL requested that the Commission focus on structural racism/systems change – public policies, institutional practices that drive them, & personal bias, and focus on race because it will lead to other problems.
- Lilly Raymond from the Board of Education & St. Louis Psychiatric Rehab Center requested that the Commission have racial equity be the focus.
- Kathleen Gund, Clayton resident, was taken aback by a huge table of people when there are only seven members on the Commission. She asked if the Commission is supposed to be the citizens advising the elected officials. She said it seems like the partners are not simply supporting the commission, but part of the process.
 - Mayor Harris explained that this is a “get to know you meeting” so that is one reason everyone is here – to meet and find out what resources everyone can bring to the table. Most commissions are structured this way. Race relations are a huge problem

in this region. We want to be a model, so we incorporated all forms of discrimination. We realize that race will be 80% of the work. The directive states that we will address all forms of discrimination. A chair will be elected by the commission itself.

- Another resident asked how the public learns of future meetings.
 - Mayor Harris explained that public notice is posted on the website and individuals can also sign up for emails through the website. She said that meetings can also be pushed out on Nextdoor and Facebook.
 - Staff added that an established date will be set after it has been agreed upon through a poll.

Follow up info to come from Gladiator to the commission regarding next steps and meeting dates.