



EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, September 19, 2019

6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center

2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Glacier Room (2404)

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order/Declaration of a Quorum**
2. **Approval of meeting minutes of August 15, 2019**
3. **Public comment**
4. **For Consideration**
 - a. Truth Seeking Racial Equity Initiative Presentation
Shenicka Hohenkirk
5. **For Discussion**
 - a. Equity & Empowerment Framework
 - b. Racial Equity Action Plan
 - c. Commission work plan
6. **Reports**
 - a. Staff
 - i. Language Access Policy
 - ii. Undesign the Redline Exhibit
 - b. Commissioners
 - i. Bus tour to Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL
7. **Adjournment**

Next meeting:

Thursday, October 17, 2019

6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center

2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston

Room 2404

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City of
Evanston™
EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 15, 2019
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Lorraine Morton Civic Center
2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Parasol Room

Present: D. Holmes, M. Wynne, A. Ibañez, J. Grover, K. Lyons, M. Dillard, M. Weinberg, T. Eberhart.

Absent: J. Corbier de Lara,

Staff Present: P. Efiom

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jane Grover at 6:30 pm and a quorum was declared. Comm. Maxx Weinberg briefly introduced himself. He is excited about trying to hold people to our traditional values.

Minutes from the July 18, 2019 meeting were approved without changes. There were 4 speakers who signed up. Toni Rey with Joining Forces offered his support to the Commission. Doreen Price introduced the book *The Spirit Level Why Equity is Good for Everyone*. Carlis Sutton commended the Commission for attempting to bring something meaningful [reparations] to Evanston. With the passing of the recreational marijuana law, guest wants to bring attention law, Sean Key, comes to encourage that the Commission support equity in the Marijuana recreational wants to bring to attention to the issue of equity for people. need to take this issue very

Comm. Dillard presented the process and recommendations of the “Solutions Only” subcommittee. One of the recommendations was that “City Council endorses and supports the truth and reconciliation initiative.” Alderman Rue Simmons requested that that recommendation be removed because she did not want the critical work of reparations to get confused with the truth and reconciliation initiative which will include protracted community engagement. The recommendations for reparation and truth and reconciliation will be separate memos.

The Commission has considered a truth and reconciliation effort for several months. With the passing of the Commitment to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity Resolution by City Council and the Commission’s completion of the work on “Solutions Only” Commissioners decided the time is now to launch a truth and reconciliation initiative.

Because institutional racism has historically been embedded in the policies and practices of local government, including Evanston, Comm. Holmes, stressed the importance of the City taking the lead on this initiative. However, this will be a City-wide effort that is inclusive of all organizations and individuals. Eileen Heineman of the YWCA spoke about the racial healing circles that the YWCA convenes as part of Chicago’s Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Initiative. As a trained racial healing circle trainer, Heineman would be interested in adding

additional circles and is willing is to train others in leading racial equity healing circles. Comm. Eberhart pointed out that while racial healing circles can certainly be beneficial; they focus only on people who are interested in participating. Eberhart says that in order for this initiative to be successful, the systemic white racism must be addressed. Dr. Efiom shared that the work of the initiative would be outward or community facing. While the work of her office would institute changes that would require staff, commissioners, and board members to engage in racial equity training. Weinberg cautions that such conversations have the potential to open racial wounds and can re-traumatize individuals.

Alderwoman Wynne stated that history is important and hopes that through this process the history of Africans Americans in Evanston will be documented. Dino Robinson recommended that Commissioners read *The Emergence of Black Political Power in Evanston, Illinois, 1931–1947* by Edwin B. Jourdan, Jr. Dr. Efiom will order copies for all Commissioners.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Next meeting:
Thursday, September 19, 2019
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center
2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston
Room 2402



Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Equity & Empowerment Commission

Subject: Reparations Recommendations - Wealth and Opportunity Gaps

Date: September 9, 2019

Background

At its June 2019 meeting, Alderman Rue Simmons requested that the Equity and Empowerment Commission assist with identifying ways to address the historical wealth and opportunity gaps that African American residents of Evanston experience. Ald. Rue Simmons sought a “Solutions Only” process to identify actions that the City of Evanston could take to implement a meaningful repair and reparations policy.

The Commission created an *ad hoc* subcommittee and convened community meetings on July 11 and July 13 to include residents and gather public input on why Evanston should address repair and reparation, who should be involved, what actions could be taken, and what revenue sources should be considered. Both meetings were well-attended.

Attendees identified five **priority categories for action** (History/Culture, Finance, Education, Institutions/Systems, and Power Structure) and then broke into smaller groups to **prioritize actions** within each category. Notes of both meetings are attached; they also include public input for a related, but separate, community reconciliation initiative. City staff also provided attendees with a partial list of existing City programs and ordinances that already address specific priorities regarding policies and actions to begin to remedy the City’s role in historical and institutional racism and discrimination.

Acknowledging that additional research and data collection that are beyond the scope of this commission are necessary to create a fair and equitable process that is sustainable, the Commission makes no specific recommendations as to how these policies would be implemented.

Livability Benefits:

Equity & Empowerment: Provide for meaningful community engagement; Ensure equitable access to community assets.

Recommended Action:

The Equity and Empowerment Commission recommends the City Council receive this report and directs the City Manager to do the additional research and data collection that would determine the feasibility of these recommendations.

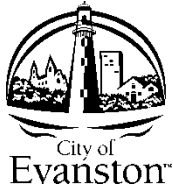
Housing:

- Provide property tax relief to African-American, long-time owners of residential property in Evanston.
- Provide housing repair and rehabilitation assistance to African-American property owners in Evanston.
- Provide down payment assistance to income-qualified, African-American home purchasers in Evanston.
- Provide housing rental assistance to income-qualified, African-American residents in Evanston.

Economic Development:

- Re-purpose the Gibbs-Morrison Center to provide co-working or work cooperative space for African-American entrepreneurs.
- Invest in workforce training for African-American Evanston residents.
- Provide low-interest loans for African-American Evanston entrepreneurs.

**Business of City by Motion: Equity & Empowerment Commission Reparations
Recommendations For Action:**



Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Equity & Empowerment Commission
Subject: Truth and Reconciliation Initiative
Date: September 9, 2019

Background

At the June 5, 2019 meeting City Council passed Resolution 58-R-19 A COMMITMENT TO END STRUCTURAL RACISM AND ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY. At its June 2019 meeting, Alderman Rue Simmons requested that the Equity and Empowerment Commission assist with identifying ways to address the historical wealth and opportunity gaps that African American residents of Evanston experience.

The Commission created an *ad hoc* subcommittee and convened community meetings to include residents and gather public input on why Evanston should address repair and reparation, who should be involved, what actions could be taken, and what revenue sources should be considered.

During those meetings, the community, primarily the African American Community, expressed deep, long term frustration that their concerns were not being heard and just as importantly the believe that the history the African American people in Evanston is being lost. This was a recurring theme that the Commission has heard as we have engaged the community over the past two years. The Commission believes that now is the time to move forward with a much discussed long-term community wide Truth and Reconciliation Initiative modeled after what many other cities are doing. This initiative would be led by the Commission.

Livability Benefits:

Equity & Empowerment: Provide for meaningful community engagement; Ensure equitable access to community assets.

Recommended Action:

The Equity and Empowerment Commission recommends the City Council endorse and support a city-wide Truth and Reconciliation Initiative