



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