



DEI Committee Minutes
Via Zoom Pursuant to Chapters 113 and 115 of the
Codified Ordinances (as amended in Ordinance 22-28), and
Resolution No. 22-29, enacted March 22, 2022.
Thursday, March 16, 2023
8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Council Chair Sean P. Malone
Mayor David E. Weiss
Council Member Anne Williams
Council Member Carmella Williams
Citizen Member Phillip Rowland Seymour
Citizen Member Julie Kaufman

Others Present: Chief Administrative Officer Jeri E. Chaikin
Chief Diversity Officer Colleen Jackson

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Sean P. Malone at 8:03 a.m.

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Approval of the February 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that there was one correction to note in the minutes. There was not a contract in place with Kay Coaching and the City, and they simply could not come to an agreement on a renewal of the contract. The minutes now reflect that correction.

It was moved by Ms. Anne Williams and seconded by Ms. Carmella Williams to approve the February 16, 2023 meeting minutes.

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Dates and Times for Remaining Community Meetings

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they will start a discussion solidifying the dates and times of the next community conversations. There is one coming up tonight specific to point-of-sale housing inspections, but he wanted to make sure they have the dates and times for the broader quarterly community conversations. Ms. Kaufman was very helpful to send a Doodle Poll. It looks like they are set for May 18th as the next one. The other two dates would be in August and November. For August they are looking at either the 29th or 30th in the evenings, but he does not have an exact time, roughly between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. He asked if they thought more people would attend on a Tuesday or a Wednesday night, or if it matters. He also asked about any potential conflicts. He suggested meeting on the 30th, if no one objects which is a Wednesday. The final meeting date will be either November 28th or 29th. That's the week after Thanksgiving. Tuesday was suggested since they've already have meetings on Wednesday and Thursday.

CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that Tuesdays are the same night as Neighbor Night in Moreland so that would be a conflict.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they would go with November 29th instead. That will help with promotion and planning for folks to get those dates on their calendars.

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Format for March 16th Community Conversation with Building and Housing

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the meeting tonight will take place at The Dealership at 7:00 p.m. They will start with a presentation by members of the Building and Housing Inspection Department.

Ms. Anne Williams stated that Building and Housing Inspection Director Kyle Krewson, Housing Commissioner William Hanson and Housing Inspector Reginald Evans would be presenting.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that they will also be joined by Assistant Law Director Lisa Gold-Scott who deals with ADA issues, and fair housing to answer any questions on those topics.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he appreciates all the City employees joining them after hours. The residents hopefully will appreciate it as well. It's not often people get to speak to those folks in person. He asked about the format.

Ms. Anne Williams stated they talked about going by topic covering three areas and then have a question and answer session. It will be more of a dialogue rather than just a presentation.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it is open to the public and an opportunity to talk about an issue that was raised at the community conversations in November 2022. It was an issue of concern by residents regarding how the process works and the fairness of it.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that the three topics included the basics of building and housing, point-of-sale inspections and renting in Shaker. Aside from point-of-sale inspections, the issue that comes up the most in gatherings are experiences of renters and their rights. A lot of people had questions following a fire in the City. She thought to add Assistant Director Gold-Scott to be more informative and educational for residents and it should spark some good discussion.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that his hope was that the point-of-sale discussion could be broader, and they could cover more housing issues generally. They could talk about the six initiatives they focused on at the community meeting last month, priority setting, and perhaps metrics. More importantly moving forward with more discussions on all these topics. Point-of-sale inspections is the first one. A lot of people are interested in the rental component. They could spend a moment on each of these six topics, thinking about whether there are metrics. Council has a retreat planned for next month and they may come back with some other ideas on these topics. They are still trying to figure out what if any problems there are and how they could potentially address them.

Ms. Anne Williams stated that she does not have any ideas for metrics at this point. They are important but she does not know of any that fit this topic. Tonight may spark some ideas.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that a lot of the concerns raised are about the fairness of the inspection process. There is also an issue of dealing with landlords and how we incentivize landlords to make repairs or help them keep homes in a habitable condition. After review of the statistics the committee may be able to find ways to reduce the number of housing violations in some manner over time. There was a backlog after COVID-19 due to inspectors not being able to inspect a lot of properties. Things fell into disrepair in certain buildings in the City. The committee will have a better sense after tonight. They talked a little about the promotion of minority or under represented businesses at the last community conversation, and shared some ideas. A lot of the ideas involved some work that the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC) is already doing. That is another topic that Council will probably discuss at their retreat along with some of the incentive programs for small businesses in the City as they think about the Lee Road Plan and revitalizing that corridor. They will come up with new programs and initiatives to support businesses in that district and Citywide, such as the Business Improvement District (BID).

Mr. Seymour stated that there were a bunch of great ideas that did come up such as promotion work for brick and mortar businesses as well as in-home and online businesses. They want to make sure that they're promoting those businesses and making folks aware. Another piece was providing infrastructural support for those businesses.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that one of the things that came to mind given the overlap between what the City's Economic Development Department is already doing and what SHDC is already doing, it might be nice to have a forum devoted just to problems that are confronting minority or under represented businesses, or businesses in general in Shaker with a focus on DEI. SHDC is already holding those kind of business meetings.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that she has had discussions with Economic Development Director Laura Englehart about the creation of this list, but have not spoken directly with the business community about what their needs are specific to DEI. The two of them are in the process of planning a community conversation for the business owners so they can work together to meet some of their needs and they can raise concerns that are DEI specific so the committee can help or gain insight on what's working well to continue it. It is one thing to have a list compiled of all minority-owned businesses, but the committee should be asking how they want to be supported. They can do that by having a conversation. Hopefully sometime this summer that'll happen and they will know better how this committee can support those efforts in addition to what is being done by the SHDC. It's important to make sure that they know who to recommend for opportunities that come up. She wants to take a multi-pronged approach to support them and ask them how they want to be supported.

Ms. Kaufman stated that SHDC has business association meetings. They are typically split to address the needs so they are not guessing what people are interested in talking about at these meetings. The greater Van Aken district usually has its own meeting, and then Chagrin/Lee has its own meeting. There are times when both groups are together, but typically those groups have met separately to talk about the issues that make sense for those entities. SHDC works very closely with the Economic Development Department. She started to draft a diversity and inclusion preference indicator document which has been circulated to a slew of people in the business community, to Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson and other folks. It's basically a way to gather information and for people to self-

identify. Instead of the committee pulling together a list, this information will let them know who to go to as opposed to generally putting things out. The committee is trying to do this in a careful way. The conversations with the business owners is a great way to go. One of the business owners who uses space at The Dealership is a DEI consultant and will do one of the business association meetings leading one of the conversations with the Chagrin/Lee group. She is mentioning this because there's nothing better than over communicating. SHDC has been talking about this too. She would be happy to hear a bit more about what was said in the small group.

Mr. Seymour stated that it will be shared.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that what intrigued him was the needs of people who are working from their homes. We have many people now working from their homes, not just folks who are working at Progressive or University Hospitals, but small business owners. As recently as 10 or 15 years ago this was not a thing in Shaker that was encouraged or celebrated. There still might be some challenges that people face. He suspects there's a lot of underrepresented people who have small businesses in their home. It hadn't really occurred to him, but he found it interesting that the Racial Equity Subcommittee brought up the issue of home-based businesses too. We may not have a good sense of how many work from home and asked if the SHDC has data on that.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she believes the SHDC has a list from the Economic Development Department of home-based businesses. It might not have 100% of the home-based businesses, because it won't include the ones they don't know exist.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it looks like they are in the initial stages of all the initiatives, but they have good momentum, good ideas and a lot of great connections. It is great that Ms. Kaufman is participating in this committee and at the same time working with the SHDC. Maybe they could have a guest speaker either from the SHDC or from the City but it is probably better to have that broader conversation first with the community.

February Community Conversation Recap

Council Chair Mr. Malone asked if Ms. Kaufman could give a recap of the welcoming initiatives led by her at the last community conversation. He asked if she could give a couple of the ideas that were discussed there, some of which are ongoing and have been in existence. There's also the work that Neighborhood Development Specialist Theo Darden is doing to revitalize the welcoming committees in each neighborhood.

Ms. Kaufman stated that she appreciated that she and Mr. Darden along with a few Moreland neighbors were having a meeting before the community conversation to discuss welcoming Moreland residents specifically. She has been listening to these conversations for a while. She appreciated they were having that meeting in the cafe in the library. They then changed over to the DEI community conversation, and people ended up staying for that conversation. Carolyn Steiner who has been working with an English language learner program at the library ended up sitting at the table. Another woman who was a former sociology professor happened to have a ton of experience running focus groups. Ms. Steiner stated that she is looking to run focus groups with the English language learners and a match was made with this person who had come to the meeting. She was interested in hearing what the DEI Committee was doing and she and Ms. Steiner made this connection. A new resident

to Shaker came with an interesting perspective who works with young people. The two main things that came out of it was meeting someone that you would have never met before and having a conversation. There were not many people, but the magic and the beauty happened with whomever was there.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that there may have been 20 to 25 people there if they're being generous. It was tough given the time they had to promote that meeting. It doesn't matter how many people are there, it's always worthwhile. One of the great things is that a woman from a nearby community joined the meeting after reading about it online and learning that her community does not have a DEI Committee. She feels like she is not supported as a city employee where she lives and is hoping she could start something similar there. She was looking for ideas and inspiration. That was rewarding for all of them to see.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that number four on his list of six topics was building awareness and alignment with the key City-wide priorities which was discussed at his table. That is shorthand for promoting awareness about facilities planning and the big picture issues that are going on in Shaker with the schools and their bond initiative and also the City's recreation plans. Surprisingly, not a lot of people wanted to talk about that. Within the next few weeks the schools are going to have a finished plan or be close to a finished plan that they intend to put on the ballot. This summer there'll be a lot of conversation about this. Maybe his group could set up or participate in a forum that helps educate people about a bond initiative or City recreation study, which will be starting at some point this summer as well. He has started a monthly recreation working group usually the last Wednesday or Thursday of the month at noon on Zoom with folks from the school district athletic department, the operations department, and the Recreation Department to get everybody on the same page. Those are big topics and it is hard to set metrics, but there's still a lot of misinformation out there. He welcomes any ideas and support anyone would like to contribute.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that item number five involves revitalizing community and neighborhood engagement. The City will not have the services of Kay Coaching this coming year. Neighborhood engagement and community engagement has been ongoing in the Moreland neighborhood. It has not necessarily expanded in similar ways to other neighborhoods, and they still need to support and expand what's going on in Moreland. This will be a topic also at the Council retreat.

Ms. Carmella Williams summarized their conversation. There were folks from three Shaker neighborhoods: Sussex, Moreland, and Lomond who participated in that conversation. They all expressed the importance of having strong relationships among residents in the broad community and neighborhood to neighborhood specifically. They had great ideas on how to fill the void by the absence of a consultant by tapping into the local universities that have community engagement specific studies and resources that could be helpful to us. We thought that would be worthwhile to research to see if it is an option. They also talked about the necessity of building community relationships around food and events, and more importantly tapping into existing efforts with the various stakeholders in the community, while also looking for additional ways that the DEI Committee could do that as well. They acknowledged that because so much of this work is already going on in various spaces throughout the community, it would be wise to take advantage of those existing relationships. The overall theme was understanding the importance of building on the work that was done in Moreland, in addition to expanding that work and making sure that it's stable and structured in a way

that allows it to be long lasting. That is important as well as connecting with our various community partners.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the idea of trying to use local universities is intriguing. Mark Joseph might be a good person to contact on that front.

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that the resident who suggested we explore that talked about Case Western, Cleveland State and John Carroll universities specifically. They didn't go into detail on what each of those institutions offered. Dr. Joseph is someone who does work in mixed income communities, but works at Case Western. If he's not the right person, he could connect them with someone. The thing to focus on is connecting with those universities, circling back to those residents who made that suggestion and trying to identify specific points of contact in those institutions to begin that conversation.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they are still gathering feedback from the community. It is hard to set metrics necessarily, but consistent effort and consistent communication will go a long way on all of these topics. This may be another topic where there is opportunity for a forum from the community about how people feel about the neighborhoods in Shaker, not just the neighborhood they live in, but neighborhoods on the other side of the City. Somebody told him recently in a conversation that they want to have a Fernway Olympics, not in the sense of an athletic competition, but a bake-off or a musical competition to engage neighbors in a fun way. People are not just thinking about their individual street anymore, but they're thinking about their neighborhood. He wonders if some sort of idea like that could be translated into a friendly way to get to know neighbors in an event. Anything they can do to get people to think beyond their block. Block parties are a great tradition in Shaker, but you are sometimes limited in your outlook by it. As great as the Moreland neighborhood work has been, he is concerned it is only being understood or appreciated by people in the Moreland neighborhood or people in the know at the City. The rest of Shaker isn't aware of what's going on there.

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that one of the takeaways from that last conversation during the recap was overlap. Not only was there overlap between the topics that they've discussed, but overlap with work that's being done by various City departments, committees and so on. They are having this conversation, but in the broader sense there is so much natural overlap that maybe they can set aside some time to connect those dots so they're more effective in using their people power in ways that bring people together and knock down borders.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that as frustrating sometimes as it feels to just have meetings repeatedly, the point is to have the meetings. Ideas are generated that you hadn't anticipated.

Ms. Kaufman wondered if they could do an intentional event for people to meet. The reason she knows as many people as she does is because she is intentional about showing up and attending all kinds of things, or introducing herself to people. It is something that she works on. She wonders if they could find a way to give people permission to meet neighbors in a way that does not make people feel uncomfortable when they otherwise might feel uncomfortable. She thinks it could be part of a larger campaign.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it's a terrific thought. They struggle with building community when everyone has their social networks online, so the question is how they get to know their neighbors.

Ms. Anne Williams stated that something like that, maybe not in that format, is a great idea. She appreciates Ms. Kaufman sharing that.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that since COVID-19 the City has not really had community-wide events. Before there was the Van Aiken district, there was a big parking lot where there were community events although it did not reach the entire community. Perhaps there could be a more intentional way of bringing people together, like One World Day, with a multicultural celebration where everybody is invited. They could start by having pop-up gatherings or events. Maybe they could have a DEI tent at sporting events or other places where they have food, sports, and music for a more universal connection for people beyond their neighborhood.

Mr. Seymour stated that the old Shaker tagline is that a city is known by its schools. There are a lot of online conversations about the schools and the school plan. His suspicion is that there aren't a lot of visits to the schools. In the spirit of collaboration they could work with the schools to facilitate visits. They could facilitate community engagement in school athletics to find natural community building inflection points around athletics or around the schools in general to create spaces where there could be natural introductions. The City could sponsor a Red Raiders basketball game, or football game or band concert.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that he agrees with that approach. He also likes the idea of taking trips to look at the school buildings. His recollection is that tours have been offered to the elected officials, but not the public. That's something they could think about as the schools are promoting their plan.

Ms. Carmella Williams stated that about 68 to 70% of our population no longer has students in the schools. That's a huge community of people that don't have a direct connection with the schools currently, but could offer their support to the school in other ways. She envisions an invitation sent out to the City community inviting them to a home game for Shaker to cheer on the Raiders.

Mr. Seymour stated that it could be as simple as aligning communications and sponsoring an event. It feels like an opportunity. Lots of people are talking about the schools on their facebook groups, and he suspects not many people visit the schools. It could be helpful in the context of community building to use the schools.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that would blend into the last topic of youth engagement or intergenerational connections. Several people came to the community conversation in November who were interested in volunteering at the schools. He wonders if they could expand the network of volunteers who help overworked teachers and administrators in the district.

Mr. Seymour stated that organizing volunteers for teachers sounds helpful but often creates more work for them. He suggested having a volunteer from the City to make it less onerous for teachers and administrators.

Updates

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that the internal DEI assessment is now complete, and Council will discuss it in April.

Chief DEI Officer Ms. Jackson stated that it will be presented formally to Council at the retreat and just yesterday the internal DEI Task Force presented the internal DEI Action Plan to the leadership. She will be in individual conversations with each director and the chiefs to help actualize the portions that are specific to their department and to visualize some DEI goals for each department. Coming out of the assessment, she is pleased that people feel they can speak up and be heard with the expectation that something will be done. The City wants to uphold its DEI values. There are always places to improve, but they are not starting from scratch. There is an understanding, expectation and appreciation. Now it's time to get it done. The internal DEI Task Force came up with great ideas, and by the end of April it'll be public and everybody can look at it.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that it probably won't be until May that this group can discuss it. He asked if anyone had ideas for a guest speaker to present for maybe 10 to 15 minutes at the outset at the next meeting. He hopes they can each come up with some other ideas for next month's meeting on each of the topics they have been assigned. This work is a little vague sometimes, but there are things they can do based on the ideas that are generated each month to move things forward in a positive direction.

Mr. Seymour stated that there is a Shaker Citizens for Fair Ticketing initiative that's happening and suggested inviting the organizers to talk at the next meeting.

Council Chair Mr. Malone stated that they could consider that but they might want to invite someone from the City to give the City's perspective as well. They haven't necessarily talked about policing and certainly that's a big topic when it comes to DEI, but it isn't one of their goals for this year.

Ms. Carmella Williams invited everyone in the DEI Committee and everyone listening to the Moreland Neighbor Night the last Tuesday of every month usually held at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building at 6:00 p.m. That way everyone can see one form of community engagement in action.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Colleen Jackson, Chief DEI Officer