



# Equity Subcommittee

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

9:30-11am

City Hall Lobby, RM Tribal Room

[Meeting Link](#)

+1 323-618-1887

Phone Conference ID: 994 148 536#

**TIMES GIVEN ARE AN ESTIMATE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

## Land Acknowledgment & Welcome

9:30	Land Acknowledgement, attendance
9:35	Approve May, September Minutes
9:40	Share successes in life, work, or advancing equity
9:50	Council Liaison Update

## Subcommittee Briefing Session:

10:00	Budget Status Update	Matt Boston
10:20	Belonging – brainstorm initial policy ideas to advance belonging	All – Alex Gibilisco
10:40	Standing for Belonging Move from Hate to Community	Sarah Dixit

## Standing Update(s):

	Recruitment, MCJCS Interview Panel, Language Access	
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11:00	<b>Adjournment</b>
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- Next Equity Subcommittee Meeting, October 3rd, at 9:30am, City Hall, Tribal Room (1<sup>st</sup> floor)

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION:** The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. The Council Briefing Center in the lower level of Spokane City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., is wheelchair accessible and also is equipped with an infrared assistive listening system for persons with hearing loss. Headsets may be checked out (upon presentation of picture I.D.) through the meeting organizer. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Human Resources at 509.625.6363, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or [msteinolfson@spokanecity.org](mailto:msteinolfson@spokanecity.org). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Human Resources through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.



**Attendance:** Sarah Dixit (Chair), Council Member Betsy Wilkerson (Council Liaison), Councilman Michael Cathcart, Kiana McKenna, Jesus Torrez, Jonathan Alder, Jennifer Morris

**Staff:** Alex Gibilisco, Erik Poulsen, Mark Carlos, Ginny Ramos, Nicolette Ocheltree, Director Marlene Feist, Kelly Thomas, Shae Blackwell, Nick Federici, Jeff Gunn

### **Land Acknowledgment**

#### **Approving June Minutes**

Jesus moved, Councilwoman Wilkerson seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **Approving June Special Meeting Minutes (Why race Matters Training)**

Jesus moved, Councilwoman Wilkerson seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **Approving July Special Meeting Minutes (Parks After Dark Response)**

Councilwoman Wilkerson moved, Jesus seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Guest Speaker: Public Works Director Marlene Feist speaks about General Facilities Charges (GFCs)**

State Law RCW 35.92.025 governs how the City can charge a General Facility Charge. It is a one-time charge imposed as a condition for a new utility connection.

Future customers have to pay for capacity of existing customers. “Growth-pays-for-growth” policies were first implemented in 2002 but they haven’t been updated and has no inflationary index. This presents a problem because Spokane is growing at a rapid pace and rates aren’t catching up to growth rates. The City needs more funds for development.

Director Feist is proposing to raise the fees so that the City can:

- Have a Citywide update to the GFCs that represents current costs and anticipated projects over time and helps to keep monthly rates more affordable for everyone.
- Uses a reasonable and rational approach to assign costs.
- Ties GFCs to an inflationary index to avoid having the fees quickly get behind and avoid having to make such major changes in the future.
- Supports certain types of development with a dedicated funding source for GFCs.
- Implements new costs over time to allow our community time to adjust.
- Supports City goals around water conservation.

2023 Decisions around GFCs:



- City Council approved an interim GFC through March 2024.
  - GFCs were increased by 66% -- to represent the inflation on the GFCs that were adopted in 2002.
  - Projects with a building permit or a counter complete application for a building permit at the time of new rates were adopted would fall under the historic rate.
  - Are in place through March 4, 2024.
- Incentives in 2023:
  - ADUs in certain zones are exempt from GFCs until the end of 2024.
  - GFCs are deferred or waived for affordable housing projects.
  - PW & CED have been charged with developing a way to pay for incentives.

#### Additional Work on GFCs:

- Additionally, Council adopted GFC rates consistent with work to date
  - takes effect on March 4, 2024.
  - Seeking feedback on possible changes prior to that date
- Additional Outreach
  - Required in 2023.
  - Includes the Mayor's GFC Review Committee.
  - As well as presentations to additional groups, including Plan Commission, Equity Subcommittee, Sustainability Action Subcommittee and Housing Action Subcommittee.
  - Work is designed to consider options or changes to the rates that would go into effect in March 2024.

#### **Recording is interrupted from 26:57:00 to 27:38:00**

We've had the lowest GFC rate in 20 years, but it also correlated with low building rates. There are more opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions.

#### **Guest Speaker: Councilman Cathcart speaks about his legislative priorities**

Councilman Cathcart's biggest priorities include budget and public safety because "we can't pay for our priorities if we can't fix our budget, and our budget is very broken right now."

He is also working on language access for City Services with the Office of Civil Rights and Alex Gibilisco. One of the options he is working on is working with Google for translation services. He also envisions a kiosk at Council Chambers that translates in real time. Another option is that constituents can download an app to help translate in real time. There have been a number of advancements with AI that will also help make translation services more accessible.

The language access legislation is set to be voted on around Labor Day of this year.

A member of the subcommittee asked about reviewing the budget and Councilman Cathcart said that it originates on the Administration side and goes back and forth before Council gets to see it, but he will work with them and Councilwoman Wilkerson as their Council Liaison to help with the budget.

#### **Guest Speaker: Erik Poulsen and Nick Federici speak about Legislative Priorities**



Erik Poulsen is the City Council's Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. He served in the State Legislature and back then he says that he was the "face of the Legislature then as a white male." He told the subcommittee that through the years, the Legislature has become more reflective of Washingtonians having more women serving (the most in the Nation) and BIPOC communities represented.

Erik also updated the subcommittee on a few bills that have passed. Before the Legislature did one Equity related bill and called it a day. Now they use an equity lens on more legislation. He mentioned the EPA Regional Administrator's visit and how Councilwoman Wilkerson and former Council President Beggs worked with the Legislature to have them lease the brownfields back to the City for housing availability. He mentioned that there will be a short session starting in January. This short session has a couple of items that are still alive from the last session that concluded.

Erik introduced Nick Federici (Fed-er-E-see) who is the City lobbyist. Nick has worked on a lot of issues including housing and poverty alleviation. He is the City of Spokane's "eyes and ears in Olympia." One issue that the lobbyists have led on is repealing the defunct housing covenant laws that discriminated against BIPOC communities. Another initiative is expanding the Working Families Tax Credit to undocumented residents. Another is language access programs and clinical trials expanding to under-represented populations.

Nick mentioned the police pursuit law that was passed and how some changes were made after it was passed. It may be "revisited over and over again frankly as folks try to find an equitable solution." Most Legislators of Color voted against the bill because of equity issues. This is historic as there are more younger and diverse legislators being elected and they are sharing their lived experiences versus a formerly older, White and male-dominated State Legislature.

Initiatives that the Council has worked with the lobbyists are sound proofing for the Civic Theatre by the new soccer stadium in Downtown Spokane and securing funding for the American Indian Community Center. Those initiatives were primarily led by constituent requests.

If anyone wants to bring up issues for the lobbyists to bring forward, they are encouraged to talk to Alex Gibilisco and Councilwoman Wilkerson, who will then bring it forward to the Legislative Subcommittee which is an internal group in the City of Spokane. Councilwoman Wilkerson brought up an issue that some cities are wrestling with where DACA Recipients who have served in the military are barred from serving as commissioned police officers. Erik said that it is an issue that is in the works of being resolved.

### **Good of the Order**

August 28<sup>th</sup> from 5 to 6:30pm the subcommittee will have a community day to make the Spokane City Council Meetings more accessible to general members of the public.

**Next meeting will be August 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am via Teams and in the Tribal Conference Room at City Hall**



## Equity Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2023

**Attendance:** Sarah Dixit (Chair), Stephanie Beans Courtney (Vice Chair), Council Member Betsy Wilkerson (Council Liaison), Council Member Karen Stratton, Kiana McKenna, Jesus Torrez, Douglas LaBar, Lili Navarette, Captain Tom Henderen, Dennis Swennumson

**Staff:** Alex Gibilisco, Mark Carlos, Ginny Ramos, Nicolette Ocheltree, Jeff Gunn, Kelly Thomas, Director Garrett Jones, Lisa Gardner, Chris Wright

### Land Acknowledgment

#### Approving April Minutes

Jesus Torres moved; Kiana seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### Share Successes

Stephanie Courtney mentioned that Black Maternal Health Week. She shared about the Mayor's proclamation stating that Black Americans are four times more likely to die due to pregnancy related issues than White Women and 60% of it is preventable. In order to address that, Stephanie led a coalition to bring awareness and a separate project for kids including step teams and workshops to address cultural trauma. Her coalition received the Chase Youth Award for Governor's Choice for their efforts.

#### Council Liaison Update: Councilwoman Betsy Wilkerson

Councilwoman Wilkerson deferred her time to Councilwoman Karen Stratton for the proposed ordinance.

#### Amending Section 12.06A.040 of the Spokane Municipal Code concerning park rules and regulations, specifically hours of operation. Establishing a misdemeanor for violation of park hours

CM Stratton said that there has been an uptick in crime in city parks. Director Jones explained that the Parks Department is governed differently because it has a appointed citizen board which includes a Council Liaison. He also explained penalties and citation history including what used to be misdemeanors and are now civil infractions. Currently there are \$350,000 worth of damage being done by "negative activity." This includes vandalism and destruction of park property.

Captain Henderen outlined numerous recent crimes including rapes and shootings in the parks especially in the Northwest part of the City. 11pm to 5am is the biggest timeframe where activities are being reported. Most are parties that have escalated to gunfights. "Our attempt is to gain control of the parks," said Henderen. He said that Spokane Police Department will collect demographics to ensure that they aren't causing any adverse societal effects in neighborhoods.



There was a question about existing laws about guns in public. Captain Henderen mentioned that the suspects don't brandish the guns until things escalate in the park and police don't usually see the guns at first when confronting them.

There was a question about park rangers enforcing existing park laws because of police overtime issues. Henderen and Jones both explained that it would be dangerous and expensive to send in the park rangers who aren't properly armed for these kinds of incidents.

There was a question about data around disparities in enforcing the laws in parks. Henderen said that these gatherings were rare prior to 2018, so the data is sparse but there is some data available after that timeline. They do look for disparities like racial profiling.

Director Jones mentioned some issues can be resolved with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) like improved sight lines and lighting, but it isn't enough for everyone because Dwight Merkel Park is well lit and still has some incidents.

An Equity Subcommittee member mentioned follow-up with suspects and looking into upstream prevention programs. Another member asked about community outreach and tangible things like community surveys and feedback. They also asked about education and mental health supports at the parks. Director Jones mentioned the award-winning Parks Master Plan that was co-created with local community members, especially people living near the parks. He said that it is part of the prevention piece by creating safe environments in the parks. Councilwoman Wilkerson also mentioned that there is the SPD Behavioral Health Unit that addressed these kinds of issues.

-There were concerns raised that only certain demographics and people who are involved with Council are being surveyed and consulted. Director Jones said that the Parks Department recognized that and that they started surveying at events and tabled throughout the City to reach as much people as they could.

Someone mentioned growing up in East Central and there used to be more community engagement where there were more activities for youth and families to do in the park to have more ownership of their parks. They asked about what measures are being looked into to fight upstream to deter the negative activity.

-Director Jones mentioned a couple of programs in Shadle Park that were tailored for youth with gang membership prevention in mind.

Henderen said it is a great idea to do more activities in the park, but a lot of the suspects aren't local to the City of Spokane. Councilwoman Stratton mentioned the Shadle Wellness Coalition who do activities with at-risk youth. He mentioned that when the incidents started happening, he wasn't aware that the penalties for crimes in city parks were changed from a misdemeanor to a citation.

Lisa Gardner mentioned that when they did the Juneteenth Movie in the Park, it started at 9pm and the neighbors weren't concerned with the 10pm noise ordinance because the movie presented positive activity to counteract the negative activities that happen after dark. They even came out and helped clean up the next day.



Henderen said that the point of the ordinance is enforcement and by virtue of having it out there it will be more of a prevention tool and hopefully rarely enforced because it is dissuading negative activity in the Parks.

The Subcommittee discussed next steps including providing feedback to Council. Chair Dixit called a special meeting to put a letter together to provide feedback to Council. Going back to its creation, one of the Equity Subcommittee's roles is providing feedback through an equity lens for proposed legislation and this is the first time they are reviewing a piece of legislation put forth by Council. The date for this special meeting of the Equity Subcommittee will be noticed to the public once it is agreed on and no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

**Next meeting will be June 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am via Teams and in the Tribal Conference Room at City Hall**

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