



# Equity Subcommittee Meeting

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**

**Attendance:** Sarah Dixit (Chair), Kiana McKenna, Jonathan Alder, KJ January, Jesus Torres

**Staff:** Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, Alex Gibilisco, Chris Wright, Ginny Ramos, Mark Carlos, Kelly Thomas, Nicolette Ocheltree, Lisa Gardner

## **Land Acknowledgment**

### **Approving May and August Minutes**

Jesus Torres moved, Kiana McKenna seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

## **Community Updates**

Kianna said that PICA WA is looking for places in Northeast Spokane for an Eastern Washington/Spokane Office.

Councilwoman Wilkerson met with Dr Charlita Sheldon from Dr Thane McCullough's Office who is excited to work with the communities of color as a woman of color herself. Part of her initiative is to do needs assessments for those communities and related organizations.

Salish School is looking for a new spot along the river.

Spokane NAACP will be hosting a candidates' forum, as will the Gonzaga Climate Center later this week.

Stephaine Courtney is out of town but submitted a report that The Shades of Motherhood Network had a very successful fundraiser the other night featuring a hip hop violinist. They raised \$30,000 and people had lots of fun. She also attended a fundraiser in Seattle.

Mujeres in Action had a very successful fundraiser as well celebrating their fifth-year anniversary.

This is East Central Mural was dedicated last weekend. It is located on the side of the Carl Maxey Center and is interactive via an app. The Liberty Park playground was also reopened with brand new play equipment that is more ADA accessible and with gender neutral bathrooms that have signs in English and Spanish. (East Central has a sizeable Spanish-speaking population.)

## **Council Liaison Update because Councilwoman Wilkerson**

Council Member Oelrich has been appointed to serve out former Council Member Kinnear's seat until the Municipal Election is certified in November.

Now Council President Kinnear has introduced an ordinance regulating massage parlors to put a stop to human trafficking.



Budget Season is still going on, including addressing the \$20 Million shortfall.

SCRAPS is still being questioned by Council for allegations of mass euthanasia of animals.

Denunciation of Mayor Woodward for appearing on stage with accused domestic terrorist Matt Shea was a contentious vote showing the growing political divide within the City.

ARPA dollars are still being distributed and reallocated. Council Members Zappone and Wilkerson are working on getting more dollars invested into childcare solutions.

Municipal Criminal Justice Coordinating Subcommittee is accepting applications and those can be found on the City's website until October 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be two opportunities to attend an informational session about the new subcommittee.

During the recent wildfires, many of the alerts were only sent out in English, making it hard for families who are non-English speakers or who speak English as a second language to evacuate and avail of resources.

PICA WA does in house translations for Micronesian languages, but the City hasn't reached out.

#### **Letter responding to Mayor Woodward's appearance with alleged domestic terrorist Matt Shea:**

Chair Dixit drafted a letter for the Subcommittee to consider. They will be holding a special meeting to finalize the language.

Councilwoman Wilkerson said that many felt like their religious rights were being taken away and spoke about it in the Council chamber. There were more groups, particularly those from minoritized populations that didn't feel safe coming down to Council Chambers to testify but did reach out to Council via email, phone calls or by having meetings with Council Members. She expressed that the subcommittee has an opportunity to lift those voices up.

It was brought up that the Council has mechanisms in their Council Rules to put limits on testimony that are off topic, demeaning, or is getting out of hand in any other way. One example from another body is that then President Jerrall Haynes of the Spokane Public School Board gavelled the public portion of a meeting and switched to a virtual meeting because of how unruly the meeting became.

Members of the Equity Subcommittee expressed a desire to send suggestions to Council to make Council Meetings more accessible. The letter should include recommendations like increased trainings, et al.

#### **Environmental Justice Equity Workgroup**

Lisa Gardner, Director of Communication for Spokane City Council gave a presentation about the Environmental Justice Equity Workgroup. It is a workgroup of the Sustainability Action Subcommittee



that focuses on issues relating to the underserved and to equitably implement the [Sustainability Action Plan](#). She has been guiding the workgroup since the previous initiative manager left. She encouraged the Equity Subcommittee to collaborate with the Environmental Justice Equity Workgroup especially around issues that involve people of color and areas of the City that are historically low-income like Hillyard, West Central and East Central. The Environmental Justice Equity Workgroup meets every other Tuesday at 3pm via Microsoft Teams.

**Council's Budget Director wasn't available for a budget update, but he encourages the Subcommittee to send any questions, comments, or suggestions to him via [mboston@spokanecity.org](mailto:mboston@spokanecity.org).**

**Next meeting will be November 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am via Teams and in the Tribal Conference Room at City Hall**

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