



City of Seattle



Meeting Minutes

January 21st, 2021 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Commissioners Present: Deaunte, Jessi, Chris, Byram, Annabelle, Manuel, Victor, Yazi, Nathaniel, John

Commissioners Absent: Latosha (excused)

SOCR Staff: Molly Brewer, Leo Segovia

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Molly Brewer

Guests: Erez Benari (commissioner applicant), Shaun Scott (guest), Dominique Stephens (mayor's office) Brett, Steven and Ryan (Commissioner candidates)

Welcome and Introductions

Public Open Comment – no comment

Approve Minutes and Agenda

- July Special Meeting: **Vote approved (unanimous)**
- November Regular meeting: **Vote approved (unanimous)**
- January Agenda: **Vote approved (unanimous)**

Leo Workplan

- Engage with AAOC, victor can reach out to lou-lou. Latosha had close relationship with AAOC and will be back in February. There is a lot of desire to engage with the commission from AAOC
- Healthcare legislation – insurance claim denials- getting trans folks to have to more resources
 - o Bill has been sponsored and introduced to Senate, not yet introduced to committee but meeting is held 1/22 to hear it
 - o Leo in process of writing proposal for this bill
- Ingersoll has posted pros/cons of the new bill on their Facebook page

Committee Structure and Chairs (vote)

1. Commission Operations
 - a. Co-chair nominee
 - i. Annabelle – **10 approved**
 - ii. Chris – **10 approved**
2. POC Inclusive Committee – **Vote approved (unanimous)**
 - a. Co-chair nominee

- i. John – **10 approved**
- 3. Community and Media Engagement Committee - **Vote approved (unanimous)**
 - a. Co-chair nominees
 - i. Nate – **10 approved**
 - ii. Yazi - **10 approved**
- 4. Executive Committee

Committee Report Out

Commission operations – email distribution lists to engage with external and internal people. Plan for Q1 is to build this distribution list, and we will work with SOCR to get that up and running. Cadence – quarterly.

POC Inclusive –Victor: I have been in contact with Empress as they are opening hospice care facility for LGBTQ folks. Some organizations that do hospice work are very religious and don't consider the needs of LGBTQ folks so I raised that issue with them. It would be helpful for John to reconnect and plan how to move forward with this contact. <https://www.empres.com/>

Jessi: half of hospital care beds are catholic affiliated which has repercussions for LGBTQ folks

Community and Media Engagement Committee – email distribution list – will pull over content that we can put out to the newsletter.

- Please reach out to committee if anyone wants anything posted on social media (IG, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok)
- Google form was a proposal to get public comment but was decided against because we could get spam so we are still thinking about how to get feedback without getting unwanted spam.

Jessi – 3 priorities for her last year, one included outreach surrounding COVID vaccine and another included outreach about hate crimes. Are either of these something we can and should follow up on?

Byram – Regarding vaccines and outreach, a question that came up for me at work is—is there any guidance/restrictions around vaccine eligibility for HIV positive people?

Jessi – “Find your phase” tool asks if you are immunocompromised due to HIV so it is a consideration for the future but doesn't make you eligible now.

Byram- Can we respond to Mayor and get clarity around eligibility concerning HIV positive status? Is there any clarity around eligibility status surrounding homelessness? Is this messaging easily accessible and easily communicated?

Deaunte – Should we reach out to other commissions, specifically Disability Commission to learn about how we can collaborate?

Manuel - <https://www.facebook.com/events/933642737040840>

Jessi – It sounds like folks are interested in that effort. Next step is to reach out to Mayor's Office to check-in about this. There is opportunity to talk at the 5 co-chair meeting in February.

Policing Updates and Vote

Jessi- Seattle Police Department (SPD) has caused public safety issues for a while. The sweep of Cal Anderson Park was a big issue. A couple of us co-chairs got a quick meeting with Deputy Mayor Washington two days before the sweep happened because she heard us say we were against the sweep. We reiterated our concerns from a civil rights perspective and perspective of LGBTQ where offers for shelters are not authentic if the shelter has religious traditions and strong definitions of gender that they fall outside of. We didn't move DM Washington on that but we planted some seeds of concerns. We raised concerns about people's possessions being destroyed just because they are wet.

Dominique had an email about how collective bargaining works with law enforcement where law enforcement can't bargain their way to contract that removes city/county ability to enforce police accountability. Durkan came out in favor of this and suggested changes to make this stronger. It is easier to be stronger on things that aren't under our purview and we are interested in moving items that are under her purview.

More recently we have seen SPOG president Mike Solan, 5 officers traveled to DC to attend insurrection at Capitol. At the time the vent occurred, Solan tweeted things blaming BLM and Antifa for the insurrection and complaining that cops would be blamed for this. There is a question about how much he and others in leadership knew ahead of time about officers going to DC and whether it was encouraged or not. They are trying to avoid accountability for officers who went and said they will lawyer up because this falls under 1st amendment. SPD has been behind a lot of racist violence. Their contract has expired and they need to negotiate a new one soon. In the past the negotiation process has limited state bills. SOCR could have ability to step in here. Jessi/Deante/Victor had meeting with Caedmon, Mariko and Mike at SOCR to see what can we do. We want to push for stronger punishment for hate crimes and we and OCR has come to conclusion that people who are given hate crime designation are suffering from mental illness or are under influence of drugs/alcohol and disproportionately are Black/brown folks even though you'd think legislation would protect those people. We hear a push for stronger prosecution around hate crimes and OCR has said we need to do more about City sanctioned hate around SPD before we tackle individuals... tackle systemic issues first.

We have ideas for things moving forward. SPOG contract is being negotiated and we will either get accountability now or we won't.

Byram – In 2018 during last SPOG contract agreement we spoke out recognizing accountability issues and urging the City to return to negotiating contract rather than approve. The contract was approved. Contract said in areas where contract and police accountability ordinance conflict, the contract takes precedence. This is primary thing that found SPD to be out of compliance with federal consent decree. It is imperative that we deal with the issues surrounding officers at the insurrection first before this contract negotiation.

Deaunte – Cochairs here are transparent with people closest to Mayor's Office. In the next 10 months we won't have the same Mayor so we want to ensure that we hold her feet to the fire.

Shaun – It is time for someone in SPD to demonstrate minimal accountability. They have gotten away with forcibly displacing journalist to using blast balls and tear gas to lying to press, all of which are against the law. City Council has subpoena power to make Mike Solan sit down at a hearing to make him answer questions about extent to which SPD has culture that enables white supremacy. We need to get

them on the record and have them explain themselves. Council won't use subpoena power without extra pressure to do it because half are complicit in ratifying these police contracts. The other half may be more amenable. A dream scenario is that a public hearing happens and results in loss of power to SPOG and that they will lose leverage at next negotiations. City Council will then have to do something that looks like anti-racism.

Byram – One thing that came from meeting with SOCR is to make statement (can include human rights commission and SOCR) that calls for Council to make a public hearing about this. People deserve to know about this before we enter into contract on their behalf and know the extent of complicity. We are tired of hearing that this is a “reformed police force”. I see falsified police reports from SPD weekly and the primary targets are Black, Indigenous, and people of color and with non-conformist identities particularly who struggle with mental illness, addiction.

Annabelle – We should do whatever we can to give City Council / Mayor's Office / SOCR the backbone to use the powers that they have to hold people accountable, including themselves. This could mean calling for hearings, resignations, protests, whatever it looks like we need to look seriously at this.

Chris – Zero sum accounting is accounting for every dollar they receive before they receive it. We need to know what funds their money goes to. Office of Budget Accountability for Mayor's Office and SPD are complicit in SPD receiving too many funds from Seattle residents without accountability. It cannot be business as usual, must be accountability for every dollar before they get it.

Annabelle – Mayor Durkan has talked about graffiti. Graffiti has shown words that have been reclaimed by the LGBTQ community and this graffiti was not hate speech or defamatory. It is hard to think about City or SPD applying hate crime laws and not think about that context.

Nate – We should create an Ad-Hoc committee to discuss the hate crime issue and/or SPD and SPOG issue.

Byram – SPD/SPOG issue is very urgent so we can't wait months to figure this out, this will require quicker action with contract negotiations happening soon this year.

Jessi – If we want to create special meetings around this we need to have quorum for votes. If people are open, should we push City Council to have a hearing? This is time sensitive because Council can determine whether these officers get punished, and knowing the complicit-ness of SPD.

Byram – We can reach out to Community Policing Commission to learn more about this. This is also timely due to the local and national attention this is getting, this is a window to act. Opportunity to seize this opportunity whilst this is a national conversation as well as local conversation. We need to know if there were any City resources used in this insurrection?

Annabelle – **draft motion** : Draft a letter that calls for : Hold hearings on the involvement of SPD officers in the January 6th insurrection, the extent to which this participation was known by SPOG or SPD leadership or other officers, and organizational cultural issues that tolerate or support white supremacy. City council should use their powers to support that investigation and ensure that is able to succeed. -

Voted by unanimous consent

Jessi will start drafting letter by Friday Jan 29th, and will send by Monday February 1st.

SOCR Report

Recruitment Steps:

7 Vacant seats (1 Mayoral, 2 Commission, 4 City Council)

- 1) Press release February 1- February 26th
 - a. Where to distribute?
 - b. Application materials (Resume, Cover letter, essay questions?)
- 2) Interview Panel (Molly, two commissioners)
 - a. 30-minute interviews in 2nd and 3rd week of March during evenings
- 3) Appoint and confirm by April 20th

Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call

- 5 co-chair meeting coming up in February 10th
- Members of public are able to join committees and do committee work as they are open public meetings.
- Diversity Career Fair – contact Chris

(END 8: 40)