**Seattle Human Rights Commission**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 4, 2017, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

City Hall - Boards and Commissions Room

**Commissioners Present:** Tammy Morales, Jonathan Nichols, Bill Dow, Lara Diaconu, Ashley Miller, Amy Huang, Pauline Alvarado, Jeremy Wood, Sarah Bishop, Danielle Wallace

**Commissioners Present by Phone:** Fekadu Shibeshi

**Commissioners Absent:** Yasmin Christopher, Marcel Baugh, Alice Serko

**SOCR Staff Present:** Marta Idowu

Welcome and Introductions

**Call to Order:** By Pauline Alvarado at 6:05 pm

**Approval of Minutes:** Lara says the date of the hearing was 4/18, appeal 4/24. Tammy moves to approve, Amy seconds, all in favor, none opposed or abstained.

**Approval of Agenda:** Tammy says that we should add talk discussion about Trump-proof Seattle letter, Bill suggests adding Sarah’s discussion on the Ethiopian Community Center. All approve, no abstentions or rejections.

**Public Comment:** Marguerite Richard—has two complaints, (1) against every person in the room and (2) against the security company, has fraud-related intents.

**SOCR update:** Right after we present the workplan, we go right into Commission Expansion. This will occur in CM Herbold’s committee on 5/23 at 9:30am.

The City and County of Denver Offices of Disability Rights, Women’s Rights, and Human Rights will be in town on 6/15 and 6/16 and really wants to meet with our commission.

**Appeals and Hearings Update:** Pauline and Lara had an appeal, Bill and Tammy had an appeal. Lara is not sure whether there will be an appeal this month, but it is on 5/22 at 1pm. Fekadu and Pauline volunteer, Jon is a maybe.

Wednesday, July 5 is the next hearing. Ashley thinks she can do it. No other volunteers so we will fill later on.

**Action items:**

**Duwamish Resolution**

Jeremy explains the history of the resolution, said he has met with members of the School Board and other community members. Other groups have moved away from a federal recognition perspective given administrative issues and the current political climate. Their biggest concern is feeling invisible in the city. Jeremy with them reworked some of the action parts of this to urge the City to embark upon a practice of consultation with the Duwamish tribe on certain matters and to work with them to make their continued effort/presence more visible.

Marta asks whether we are pushing Commission support or City support given the action lines of the proposed resolution, Jeremy says that it will start with the Commission supporting it and then taking it to the Mayor and City Council for their approval.

Danielle recollects what the commission’s role in this process is, and expresses concern that we could potentially coopt the issue. She is curious whether the group has had further conversations on the commission’s role. Jeremy says that since the resolution is about consultation, it is important that consultation did indeed occur. Jeremy says he has had conversations with the chairwoman and has watched the School Board’s movement, which has prioritized the aims of the tribe and given deference to the concerns of other tribes. Jeremy says this dovetails better than expected in some ways that the concerns that were raised to him about visibility and feeling that their presence is respected. Jeremy believes that there is grassroots support among other tribes and their leadership once something is on the table.

Lara wonders whether the tribe’s lack of legal status inhibits the City from adopting a legal recognition approach that is being asked for in the resolution. Lara asks whether a letter is a better mechanism to get the City to adopt something. Jeremy says that prior to the final denial, the City did act in a semi-formal manner with another tribe. Lara questions the “government-to-government relationship” language, suggests modifying it, Jeremy agrees. Sarah says she thinks it is powerful that the school board already passed it as it did Indigenous People’s Day. Jeremy says the School Board has received surprisingly little blowback.

Danielle thanks Jeremy and others for working on this because there is lots of momentum behind it.

Tammy moves that we approve with the previously mentioned edits, Ashley seconds, all approve no abstain or opposed.

Sarah suggests that we should consider writing an introduction letter giving a chronology of the consultation with tribal leaders and the School Board. Jeremy asks whether it makes more sense to put it in the resolution. Sarah takes that as a friendly suggestion. Pauline motions to add that to the letter, Amy seconds, all approve, none opposed, no abstentions.

**International District Navigation Center**

Amy wants to discuss concern in the International District, next steps in terms of strategy. Amy says that the community is concerned about the lack of engagement with small businesses and residents. Mayor is putting a pause on the navigation center. Amy says that she is hearing ID people saying that we need to support homeless community.

Pauline suggests this as a policy proposal for our intern Maria to organize around. Tammy says that ECOSOC discussed writing a letter in support, but we should do our research ahead of time. Tammy says that while there was some alarmism, the community was more upset about it being another thing that was being shoved down their throat.

Tammy says there are two issues: (1) what to do about the navigation center and what the community is looking for in terms of mitigating their fears by having the center there and (2) what is the city going to do about every time they want to plop a project down there they do not talk to the community first. Bill says that it is all about the political will and varies with every administration; the issue is how that community engagement occurs more than the navigation center. Bill also cautions about slowing down a project that is so needed given the homelessness crisis.

Jeremy wonders if there could be more robust community engagement in development. Tammy says this is already sort of a thing, the City has a program, and we’re going to see it again with the Youth Jail.

Danielle wonders how community support will be implemented—who gets to represent the community. Tammy says there is a risk to making things community driven when the community is loud, vocal, has time, and ideas. Jeremy says that the way we can potentially avoid this is make the community driving consider race and equity issues.

Jon says that this may be a symptom of a bigger issue, believes we may have more of an impact if we demand the instances of when the race and equity toolkit has not been used. Lara says that we could call the City out when it has not been used, and every time we do we write a letter.

Tammy uses the Youth Jail as an example of how there was no outreach to the communities that would be affected by approving the permit to the facility. She suggests additional transparency about how the toolkit is used, says that powers that be often dismiss land use even though it is a big power on communities for decades. Ashley says that would be a really great activity for our intern.

Jon suggests a “Racial Equity Audit.” Lara suggests that Maria could go to the community and interview people about these types of issues. Bill suggests narrowing it down to a certain community.

**Trump Proof Seattle Letter**

Tammy asks whether we support the letter. Jeremy asks what the need for the letter is right now. Tammy says that the concern is that changes will be made against the coalition’s interest in the hopes of making it legal. She says this is a way of keeping the pressure on as the conversations happen to make sure it will not be watered down. Jon says the goal is setting the precedent that a municipality can indeed tax, not sure if it will overturn “income is property,” but write it in a way so it beats a legal challenge.

Bill asks what letter we are talking about. Tammy clarifies that the proposal is 1.5% tax and no less than $250,000.00.

**Youth Detention Facilities**

Tammy gives a quick overview—she has had several conversations with Dominique Davis of Community Passageways. Dominique seems to be moving to an understanding that the facility will be built, so he is more concerned with how the facility will be run—logistics, staffing, etc. Others have asked the county for these documents too and there has been a lack of transparency, that even though there has been a move to “softer spaces” there is no evidence provided that those changes have been made. Tammy suggests that we ask the City and County for that information—operation contracts, staffing contracts—and an all-out pause until the community deals with design.

Tammy also says that on 5/16 the City Council is going to try to pass an ordinance that retroactively allows EPIC to appeal the permit for the facility. They would like a review. Tammy suggests that we could write a letter in support.

Sarah asks whether we can propose and support a letter now. Sarah moves to approve writing a letter about appealibility, Amy seconds. Jeremy says he would also support voting in favor of a letter that would adopt and implement the recommendations in Tammy’s memo. Jeremy moves, Bill approves, none opposed, Danielle and Jon abstain.

**Ethiopian Community Center**

Tammy explains, Ethiopian Community Center is proposing 3 stories of affordable housing with ground floor of community space. Office of Housing has approved financing/assistance for the residential portion but they do not pay for the ground floor financing, so they went to the supplementary budget meeting asking for $4 million to help finance the ground floor. Tammy went and testified saying this challenge is not unique to this project, all of these communities of color need help. She said that the City should be digging into this conversation about how to help these organizations find the financing they need to get the rest of it done. Tammy says it is shovel-ready-to-go, but other groups have been fighting for the same dollars.

Sarah adds a framing of the human rights issue—homelessness and increasing rate among the East African community, and it is a culturally responsive way of finding housing. OIRA did a report last year for feedback from the East African community, the number one recommendation was to support them increasing housing in their community.

Jeremy says that he is very intrigued because this dovetails with many City goals. Bill says that he agrees with the spirit of trying to find money for the organizations but would not support a proposal to support the Ethiopian Community Center. He relays conversations he had with City staffers who explained that the concern was that this group was being leapfrogged in front of a lot of other groups who were already in line and ready. Would hesitate taking quick action given how little we know about the issue.

Lara suggests that they reach out to the National Development Council for help and technical assistance.

Sarah says that the ask should be that we ask for an explanation from the Equitable Development Initiative about the process and where the other CBOs are, and the why of why it did not get funded by the City Council. She wonders whether there were barriers that stopped them from getting funding. Tammy says that the reason why it was not funded was it did not meet certain goals that are needed.

Tammy says that Kadmen from OCR says that she would talk about the City is doing with respect to the criminal justice equity team but she could not make it tonight.

Commission agrees that we need additional information before we take a position on this.

**Internship Workplan Review**

Tammy suggests that Maria figure out what an audit would look like. Pauline agrees, says smaller group of commissioners could meet. Danielle says that she can help with the audit, has some resources that could be of use.

Ashley says that there is value in having everybody on the commission meet with her, especially since her first day is a SHRC meeting. Lara says that as a part of the onboarding process we should review the background of the commission as a part of the introductory week. Lara says that she could assume the logistics for appeals and hearings because she and her husband are going to Romania, she may be out of commission for June and July.

Danielle raised the question of whether we need a lawyer on appeals. We determined it is not needed.

Jeremy says he would support some sort of administrative role with appeals.

Danielle motions to approve the workplan, Tammy seconds, all in favor, none opposed, or abstain. Approved.

**2017 Workplan Review**

Jeremy says that it may make more sense to take the names off of the goals at this stage and figure that out as a second step.

Tammy says that one thing that makes her nervous is the lack of a Human Rights Day Planning Committee. Tammy says we need to get a date and keynote very soon. Marta says that the date is December 7 at First Baptist Church (same as last year). Jeremy suggests taking this conversation offline and coming back to it in a month to get a person for sure.

Sarah suggests we add something about Duwamish recognition because we are doing what we approved today. Jon suggests we consider this unfinished business. Sarah says we could consider adding an unfinished business section and emerging issues section. Jeremy motions that we add a clause saying we continue business from last year’s work plan, Bill seconds, all approve, no abstain or nos.

**Task Force Updates:**

None

**Executive Team Update:**

**Commissioner Development Update**

Jeremy says that we should have a few Mayoral seats open up.

Bill says he has an update from Councilmember Herbold, she wants examples of need to expand commission to include in the legislation. Bill says he will draft something, get Exec to approve, then get the other OCR commissions to approve. People agree with that plan.

**Interview Committee**

Jeremy is coordinating to interview with individuals. Also mentions that we are soon going to have a lot of openings in the next period.

Ashley suggests that we actively seek commissioners from the communities we are targeting in order to invite people to apply. We should also have an open call. Ashley also mentions that Get Engaged gets a lot of great applicants but that we do not see any of them.

Tammy says that we should get a job description for commissioners and potentially each go out to community meetings to advertise.

Bill asks whether we can see the applicants for the Get Engaged position, mentions that would be helpful to get additional great applicants. Pauline says she may be able to help coordinate that, says she can request the rankings.

Jeremy says that he hopes that we can get interviews arranged by the end of tomorrow.

Ashley says there are two open mayoral appointments, that may give us power for putting folks forward. Those two spaces plus an additional five in the coming months, and then Get Engaged in September. Reappointments would be done in July.

**Other**

Tammy asks who will help draft letter for Youth Detention facility, Amy and Jeremy offer.

Amy mentions that Community Involvement Commission had over 500 applicants, they did great outreach in social media and door-to-door. Sarah says that we could send a letter to those applicants who do not get on that commission to apply to the SHRC if they are not picked for that.

Jeremy says we should reach out to DON to get a copy of that list to send out to them.

**Pauline motions to adjourn at 8:05pm, Bill seconds.**