

Equity and Empowerment Advisory Board
City of Roanoke, Virginia
MINUTES (Virtual Meeting)
February 4, 2021

I. **CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL**

Vice Mayor Trish White-Boyd called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Councilmember Bill Bestpitch called the roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Mayor Trish White-Boyd, Councilmember Bill Bestpitch, Dr. Elda Stanco Downey, Patice Holland, Rev. Bill Lee, Angela Penn, Jerel Rhodes, Peter Wonson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rabbi Kathy Cohen

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Bob Cowell, City Attorney Tim Spencer, Assistant to the City Manager Angie O'Brien

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 7, 2021 MEETING**

Peter Wonson moved approval of the minutes as written; motion seconded by Patice Holland. Vice Mayor White-Boyd declared the minutes approved without objection.

III. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Formation of Committees

Vice Mayor White-Boyd stated that the Executive Committee had recommended the membership of five committees to address the priorities and policies of the Interwoven Equity theme in City Plan 2040. She explained that each committee would be asked to recruit up to four additional members from the community. She indicated that many people had expressed their interest in assisting the Board, and additional recommendations are welcome. Nominations will be considered at the next Board meeting on March 4, 2021. After discussion, Dr. Stanco Downey moved approval of the following committee assignments; seconded by Mr. Rhodes and approved by unanimous voice vote:

1. Trust: Dr. Stanco Downey, Ms. Holland, Vice Mayor White-Boyd
2. Break the Cycle of Poverty: Rabbi Cohen, Mr. Rhodes, Councilmember Bestpitch
3. Neighborhood Choice: Rev. Lee, Ms. Penn, Councilmember Bestpitch
4. Inclusive Culture: Mr. Wonson, Rabbi Cohen, Ms. Holland
5. Service Delivery: Rev. Lee, Ms. Penn, Councilmember Bestpitch

B. Review of Information from Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE)

Vice Mayor White-Boyd presented a summary of the GARE Racial Equity Toolkit. An outline of her remarks is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

C. Discussion of March 4 Public Hearing

Mr. Cowell reminded the Board that we are required to hold public hearings quarterly. The purpose of each public hearing is to provide an opportunity for members of the community to share their perspectives on inequities and to suggest ways to address them. In addition, each public hearing will include a request for citizen input on a specific topic. The topic for the first public hearing on March 4, 2021, will be the solicitation of suggestions for renaming the plaza formerly known as Lee Plaza. The Board will review the suggestions and make a recommendation of a new name for adoption by City Council.

IV. REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Vice Mayor White-Boyd explained that this agenda item will be for members to report on the work of their committees.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT MEETING

Vice Mayor White-Boyd reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for March 4 at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Holland asked whether it would be appropriate to share the announcements of the meetings. Vice Mayor White-Boyd and Mr. Cowell answered in the affirmative and noted that the information would be available on the City’s website, through alert emails, and on various social media. Persons wishing to speak at the public hearings will be required to register in advance.

Councilmember Bestpitch reported on efforts to work with the Equal Justice Initiative’s Community Remembrance Project, which have not been successful to date. Mr. Wonson stated that he had some information on the topic that he would forward to Councilmember Bestpitch.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Mayor White-Boyd adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Vice Mayor Patricia White-Boyd
Chair

Councilmember William D. Bestpitch
Secretary

APPENDIX

1. What is a Racial Equity Tool?

- proactively seeks to eliminate racial inequities and advance equity;
- identifies clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes;
- engages community in decision-making processes;
- identifies who will benefit or be burdened by a given decision, examines potential unintended consequences of a decision, and develops strategies to advance racial equity and mitigate unintended negative consequences; and,
- develops mechanisms for successful implementation and evaluation of impact.

2. Why should government use this Racial Equity Tool?

Government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. From redlining, voter suppression laws, even the distribution of the COVID vaccine.

3. Who should use a racial equity tool?

Government Staff, Elected Officials and Community based organizations

4. When should we use the racial equity tool?

The Earlier the better, we've all seen the results of racial inequity when it's not addressed or left off the table - it only gets worse.

5. How does this tool work?

It's a simple set of questions:

- Proposal: What is the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration? What are the desired results and outcomes?
- Data: What's the data? What does the data tell us?
- Community engagement: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
- Analysis and strategies: Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
- Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?
- Accountability and communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

******There are 6 steps to guide us through number 5, and we will walk through these steps in our sub-committees.**

6. What if you don't have enough time?

This is the reason we will have subcommittees, to get more done faster and more effectively.

7. How can you address barriers to successful implementation?

We will tackle them during the process.