

Racial & Ethnic Equity Commission
Draft Minutes of Meeting
January 19, 2023, 6:00 pm Kenosha County Admin Building

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Garcia, Bradden Backer, Daniel Gaschke, Brian Thomas

Excused:

Via Phone line: Mimi Yang, Justin Crosby, Derrell Greene

Others Present: Kelsey Hubeler, Jennifer Kopp, Tami Rongstad

6:01 PM

1. Call to Order/Roll Call –Commissioner Backer called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

6:00 PM

2. Approval of Minutes- November 17, 2022: **Supervisor Thomas made a motion to approve. Seconded by Supervisor Gaschke. All aye. Motion passes.**

6:02 PM

4. Citizens Comments – Citizen would like to make citizen’s comments at the end of meeting

6:02 PM

3. Finalization and Issuance of REEC Arrest Report- Commissioner Backer requests a motion to approve the revised arrest report with the change of December 15th to today’s date. Supervisor Thomas moves to approve, Supervisor Gaschke seconds the motion to approve the date change. Supervisor Thomas would like to amend the motion to discuss the revisions of the arrest report in its entirety with the red line version presented.

Commissioner Greene is concerned that the terminology disproportionate is lacking from the report; he feels this report does not adequately reflect the task given in drafting the report.

All Aye. Motion Passes

Discussion regarding the terminology of disproportionate being removed. Commissioner Backer reads version one of the draft report containing the word disproportionate. **Commissioner Greene makes a motion to restore language of the first draft of the report. Seconded by Commissioner Backer.**

Discussion ensues.

Commissioner Backer states language was removed to make report factual and less accusatory.

Commissioner Greene strongly feels the word disproportionate belongs in the report. Commissioner Garcia requests the REEC includes the original terminology or definitions. Kelsey clarifies the definitions will be included within the report. Supervisor Thomas suggests eliminating the word disproportionate was the correct decision at last meeting vote.

Consensus seems to be to restore original language but eliminating the words Kenosha County.

Backer- aye

Garcia -aye

Yang- aye
Greene -aye
Gaschke- nay
Thomas- nay
Crosby- nay

Motion carries.

6:25 PM

5. Discussion of Housing – Commissioner Backer would like to meet with KABA to access data on housing so it can be utilized. Supervisor Thomas informs the commission that there is data on their website. Commissioner Greene relays he met with John Jansen and it is necessary to pull data regarding race and income with housing disparity.

6:27 PM

6. Responsibilities of Commissioners- Commissioner Greene wants to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the commissioners. It appears to the public that the Commissioners are doing little work. Commissioner Greene reiterates that the work of the Commission is important; volunteering and time are important. Commissioners need to make themselves available or consider stepping down. Commissioner Greene would like to decide who will be the new chair. Supervisor Gaschke would like to update the Commission that he spoke to the County Executive regarding filling the seats of the vacancies. Chief of Staff Tami Rongstad states interviews for the vacancies have concluded. There may be a second round of interviews and an update will come soon. Commissioner Greene feels the vacant seats puts this commission in a bind. The Commission would like to add the election of chair and vice chair to next month's meeting.

Supervisor Thomas would like to hand out data to be viewed before next meeting. The sub committees should have been meeting between November and today.

Commissioner Yang states she can not chair the Commission as she does not live full time in Kenosha. She is between Boston and Kenosha.

The Commission discusses their dedication and availability for the Commission sub committee assignments. Commissioner Backer reiterates that Commissioners need to meet outside of monthly meetings whether it be in sub committees or otherwise.

Supervisor Thomas states if someone in Kenosha County is invited to the commission, they will attend. Anyone can be invited to a subcommittee as well.

Commissioner Yang prefers that the entire Commission focus on one project at a time and divide the one topic among the subcommittees.

Supervisor Gaschke informs the Commission it might be wise to choose temporary leadership until the vacant seats are filled as the new seats may not be filled until April given the timelines and procedures filling these seats must follow.

Commissioner Backer will reach out to everyone individually to discuss.

6:49 PM

7. March 2023 Report to Executive Committee- Commissioner Greene states the next report is due in March and will need to meet with the Executive Committee. Commissioner Greene would like to hold a listening session in February to gather data to have included on report in March.

Supervisor Thomas hands out data packet with detailed reports from the City of Kenosha Action Roadmap. He would like to branch off this report and go into further detail. Supervisor Thomas would like to use these reports as a footprint and roadmap of where to go next with the Commission.

Commissioner Crosby does not live in the City of Kenosha, so he feels that he is not the best Commissioner to find a hosting location for the next listening session.

Commissioner Backer requests a Commissioner to come up with a list of topics for February's listening session. Commissioner Garcia suggests that the listening session be solely about the arrest report published by the Commission.

Commissioner Greene would like to change the terminology from listening session to Community Forum as the community will be asking questions and he would like to engage with the Community.

Commissioner Yang would like to host an open forum.

Supervisor Thomas suggests a discussion topic as Reasonably priced housing- look at building codes and costs. Food share will lose several hundred dollars per month and with the cost of inflation, how will that affect our community.

Commissioner Yang would like to add housing to the listening session. People of color have more hurdles to secure a mortgage.

Commissioner Backer would like to add Housing and affordability and other obstacles with housing access. Commissioner Greene volunteers to secure the location for the listening session, but would like to set a date in February. Commissioner Backer states that he and Commissioner Greene will decide the location and date and relay back to the Commission. Supervisors suggest that a Monday is best.

7:12 PM

8. Update regarding participation in 1/16 Lincoln Middle School "Moving Forward to Sustainable

Change" event – Commissioner Backer reports that there were 8 separate groups that spoke during the event. Each group that ranged from 4 minutes to 30 minutes, talked about what their specific organization was doing. There were 6 follow up questions from the community, the one that was specific to the Commission was if the meetings were open meetings.

7:20 PM

9. Additional data regarding Sheriff's hiring- the panelists who are trained to be a critical part of hiring process are comprised of 1 black male, 16 white males, 1 white female. Commissioner Greene feels the Commission should urge HR department that they investigate diversifying the hiring committee and adding more females. Commissioner Backer states after talking to HR, to reach out to the Sheriff's department to inquire how they comprise this panel. Kelsey clarifies the panelists are the leaders of the Sheriff's Department in rank. How can this Commission make the panel more diverse?

7:25 PM

10. Future Scheduling: February 16th at 6:00 PM

7:26 PM

11. Adjourn- Supervisor Thomas makes a motion to adjourn, Seconded by Supervisor Gaschke. All Aye. Motion Passes

**Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Peralta**