

**Minutes  
Ad Hoc Workgroup on Diversity and Equity Issues  
March 10, 2022**

Chair Chung called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

Present: Chair Jayson Chung, Catherine Orr, Mary Anne Reed, Jade Alder Goforth, Alicia Hazen.

Excused: None

Also Present: Karen Reece.

**APPEARANCES (None)**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Continued discussion on Workgroup charge and tasks.**

Chair Chung opened by noting how his previous participation on a race task force in Madison lasting that was supposed to run for one year actually lasted two years and how difficult it is to address this topic in a short amount of time. He noted that they would spend our time revisiting the big picture of our work and would talk about next steps at the end. He turned the discussion over to Ms. Reece to facilitate.

**2. Report Writing**

Ms. Reece highlighted some takeaways from earlier brainstorming sessions. We had felt that the factors we had identified for advancing equity were “always important,” never only “sometimes” or “not as” important. We had highlighted representation, transparency, and meeting basic needs. Also, we had talked about how conflict arises as a natural part of moving forward and the need to learn how to move into conflict beneficially. At our third meeting, we had talked about many people “liking the way things are,” and how an “us vs. them” mentality easily arises. Who are “us” and “them”?

Ms. Reece asked for thoughts members had from reviewing our early discussions.

- The theme of access was prevalent. There are a lot of closed doors in the city, for example, with city committees. Need to educate the community on how to increase access. The city should be proactive and reach out to increase access and be welcoming. Actively invite people in via events, diverse vendors, etc.
- Important to change the basic environment regarding the acceptability and capability of talking about equity and inclusion. Being able to talk about problems and deal with conflict. A community-wide conference could be key to this. Changing what Monona “feels” like culturally.

- The baseline assessment written by the Nehemiah Center had highlighted “misalignment.” It’s important to be straight about the depth of our fundamental alignment issues—e.g., whether we agree on what the problem is, whether we mean the same thing when we are using the same commonly used terms.
- Need real change. Can Monona embrace change and change based leadership? Need to get beyond performative actions.
- Don’t want this to be a report that sits on a desk. In the Nehemiah Center’s report (specif., SWOT analysis), some of the “threats” jumped out, e.g., the fear of alienating some residents/voters by trying to change things. Feels like a big barrier. Who are we up against? Who will lead?
- Want report to recommend specific tactics for change, not just values...specific challenges for people to take action.
- Interested in a balance of what the city can act on and what the community can do. Given the inertia of government, lot of value in getting the community more organized. There are things the community should try to do for itself. Important to build the capacity of BIPOC community members.

The discussion turned to the next stage of work, wherein subgroups would hand over their work for full group review. There was discussion about the readiness of various subgroups, how deep/detailed/finished subgroup draft recommendations should be. Ms. Reece spoke from her experience about how enough time for this kind of work is never allowed, and you never have enough time to feel you’ve finished the job. These recommendations will be to start something. Other points that were raised:

- Don’t strive for a corporate-style report. Make the report accessible. Don’t disguise the messiness of the work. Be real about the process so that those who come behind have a road map that affirms how hard the work is.
- Could be effective to get some pull quotes to use in the report.
- Another way to accurately reflect the nature of this process: hold a public forum after we’ve issued our report.
- In the subgroup work, creating lists of recommendations, we’ve been heavy on the tactical side. The report will need more heart than the lists show.

Chair Chung asked Ms. Reece to describe an alternative approach for finishing up this stage of work that would help us keep on track timewise. Ms. Reece remarked that we are in a swirling phase natural to this kind of work. After today, subgroups could take the next week to clarify their work and pass it off to Chair Chung and Ms. Reece to compile a combined list of draft recommendations for the whole group to review. Will the whole group have a chance to discuss this list together? Yes. In addition, members have access to all the subgroup’s work if they want to review that on their own.

**3. Schedule Next Meeting Date.**

The group decided to cancel the next meeting, which was scheduled for March 17th, in favor of meeting on March 24th instead. That would give subgroups time to finish up their work and Ms. Reece and Chair Chung to compile the work. If the compilation won't be ready for the 24th, there are other topics the group needs to discuss, for example, the idea of a permanent DEI committee that is mentioned in our work group's charge.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Alder Goforth, seconded by Ms. Reed to adjourn. The motion carried.  
(4:52 pm)