



City of Pflugerville

Minutes - Final

Equity Commission

Monday, August 1, 2022

6:30 PM

1008 W. Pfluger Street, Pflugerville, TX

Special Meeting

Equity Commission Members:

Pat Epstein-Chair

James Matlock -Vice-Chair

Victor To- Secretary

Daisy Delgado Castillo

Virginia Rogers

Ana Pomar

Claudia Yanez

Equity Commission Members: James Matlock – Vice Chair; Virginia Rogers; Pat Epstein - Chair;
Ana Pomar; Claudia Yanez

Staff: Sereniah Breland, City Manager; Jason O'Malley, Chief of Police;
Jennifer Griswold, Library Director

Others: Council member David Rogers

1. Call to Order

Call to Order 6:32 p.m.

2. Citizens Communication

In accordance with the Texas Attorney General's Opinion, any public comment that is made on an item that is not on the published final agenda will only be heard by the Equity Commission. No formal action, discussion, deliberation, or comment will be made.

None

3. Discuss and Consider Action

3A. [2022-0757](#)

Budget Discussion

Discussion on budget for training and investment in causes related to the Equity Pillars.

James Matlock, Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair Matlock opened the discussion about an Equity Commission budget by reminding the Commission about speaking with the council the previous

February in regard to a budget. Vice-Chair Matlock stated they were late in the game and stated that at the July Equity Commission meeting it was suggested that they ask for a budget of \$2000 to \$3000. Vice-Chair Matlock proposed \$5000 instead. The Vice-Chair reminded the commission that they got \$2000 worth of training for the last Commission and the city should not have to look far for \$5000 for next fiscal year. The budget would primarily go towards training. If there is any left, the Commission could use some of it for name branding, and work with partners like Black Pflugerville or Pflugerville Pride to use some of that money to provide some type of sponsorship for their events.

Chair Epstein asked if the Commission wanted to talk through the subject, then put it on the next agenda for a vote.

Ana Pomar asked what else would the money be used for. Ana Pomar asked if they used \$2500 for training, would the rest for a retreat?

Vice-Chair Matlock said it depends on how much the training is. The Vice-Chair stated that he would like to use some funds to support other equity organizations that fit within the umbrella of being a minority organization, one that the Commission could assist with in funding their endeavors.

Chair Epstein reminded the Commission that one of the things they had talked about early on, was in regard to being more visible.

Chair Epstein said she does not disagree because she thinks they do need a budget, but stated it would be more effective to use funds to sponsor someone to go to conferences or etc., where they can learn and bring that back information to the commission. In terms of sponsorship the city funded some of the events of partner organizations.

The City Manager explained that the city funded some portion of the Pride and Juneteenth events. Giving money to the Commission to do the same thing would just be moving money from one place to the other.

Chair said if the City Manager would put the Equity Commission's name on it, they would not have to budget for it.

The City Manager explained that she does zero based budgeting so she doesn't start with money, she starts with the needs and then builds a budget around those.

Virginia Rogers joined at 6:40 pm

Chair asked since they are behind on the budget, would they have time to submit a request.

The City Manager stated that submitted the budget to the Council today, but there is still some time to ask for a budget for the Commission.

Chair Epstein said that is something she would ask someone from the Commission to consider taking on, someone to do research on the cost of some of the things the Commission would like to use the budget for.

Ana Pomar volunteered.

Chair Epstein asked if she could do it by next Monday.

Ana Pomar said she has already started and has contacted the Dean of Dell Medical Center for information on training. She said he stated they provided equity based, unbiased training and she is waiting to hear back from him on who they used. She said she also knows that Region 13, the Education Service Center generally does train in that area.

Chair asked Vice-Chair if the training he was thinking of was in terms of “how to” or “self-awareness.”

Vice-Chair stated that the training would be in self-awareness through the equity lens.

Chair asked how does that help us as people who are doing this work, to know each other’s vulnerabilities.

Vice-Chair said if he has a blind spot, for example in the area of women’s rights, he may not promote what they are doing for women because of not being aware of this bias.

Chair Epstein said they could get info from city departments on their training. The Chair stated that perhaps the Commission could get to the point where they could offer trainings and share information.

Ana Pomar said she agreed.

Chair Epstein stated that the idea of community awareness of the Equity Commission to the community would take some effort on the part of the Commission. She asked what kind of cost would go with that. The Chair also stated that the Commission needs one of the members to take it on. Perhaps it could be something like writing a piece periodically for the Key to the City. She also suggested an interview with the Pflugerville Pflag. Chair said that these were things that are already available and would not cost.

Ana Pomar said the Vice-Chair brings up great points. Training is a great idea. She thinks that the branding is a good idea even though they exist at the pleasure of the council.

The Chair said she agreed, but they are such a new commission that people don’t know they exist. She said they need to be proactive.

Ana Pomar said she is trying to be thrifty. She asked if the city provided equity training for employees

The City Manager said yes there is a lot of training for employees.

Ana Pomar asked if it was only online

The City Manager said much is online but some is in person and some is a hybrid. It depends on the type of training and on different department

schedules.

Ana Pomar stated that if they could connect to that training, they could watch it at home and then come together to discuss the content.

Vice-Chair said you can hide online

Ana Pomar said the discussion would be in person.

Vice-Chair Matlock said if you are not face to face, then it loses some of its impact.

Chair Epstein asked the Vice-Chair if there was a price to the type of training he was speaking about.

Vice-Chair said he will come back with a price tag. Vice-Chair Matlock said they developed this committee 2 years ago and talked about partners, etc. then.

Ana Pomar said that was a different commission.

Chair Epstein said the Charter is on the original presentation to the council.

Vice-Chair said the commission defined the pillars but the sat on them. He stated that the Commission needs to have work tied to the goals that assess.

Chair Epstein asked if it was something they could do at the library.

Vice-Chair said they could use the partners as performance matrix.

Chair Epstein asked if the Commission could talk about equity work in general at social events

The City Manager said any goal setting should be done in a public meeting.

Ana Pomar said they need to take the action items to a higher level. Tasks need to be delegated, otherwise they are just spinning our wheels.

Vice-Chair agreed. He said that is an issue with any nonprofit organization and he would love to see the Commission acting on some of the issues. They need to have the charter posted at the meetings, with the understanding that you have to have some room to pivot.

Ana Pomar agreed.

Ana Pomar said she wants to fight against the idea that the group is just another group that wastes time, she wants the group to be a group that gets stuff done.

Claudia Yanez said she works with a Board, and to the Vice-Chairs point, they can find a middle ground. For example, they can have high level objectives that they want to remain consistent. The Commission could then have the higher-level Charter and a checklist for specific actions. They could assign a specific time of a year as the target for each item to be addressed, but leave

the wiggle room for things that unexpectedly come up.

Chair Epstein said she felt like they have been information gathering up to this point.

Ana Pomar said she was not criticizing the information gathering, but felt they also need to accomplish something.

Chair Epstein said what you are asking is what are the action items

Ana Pomar said yes.

Chair Epstein asked if she thought it would be better to pick one topic.

Ana Pomar said she thought it would be better to have a retreat with the council.

The City Manager reminded the Commission that there are 5 directives from council;

- Create focused recommendations specific to Pflugerville related to equity and empowerment issues.
- Actively promote community awareness and education on the value of diversity.
- Promote equity on the basis of economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Develop recommendations for actions to strengthen policies, practices, services and programs.
- Create a culture and framework of community equity, diversity and inclusion awareness efforts, programs and activities that are available and accessible to all community members.

Vice-Chair Matlock said he thought they had done some good things but they need to get educated.

The City Manager suggested there are things they could do like listening sessions in the community, booths at festivals, and that staff are happy to give suggestions on actions

Vice-Chair Matlock said he appreciated but other equity-based organizations were who they needed to hear from.

Chair Epstein said the listening session would need to be well defined.

The City Manager said that departments and staff tie everything they do to the strategic plan for the city. She stated if she were doing a budget for the group, she would tie it to the strategic plan.

Ana Pomar asked if they make a motion

Chair said they can make a motion but might want to wait until the regular meeting.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked if there have been listening sessions at the city

before.

The City Manager said she is proposing that to the council, specifically that the council literally listens and the community without speaking and the community members can ask 3 questions.

The City Manager said that listening sessions they should be off site, go to the churches, the pee wee games, out where the community is.

Vice-Chair Matlock said he agrees, but just as we have a large population in Pflugerville, but only a few show up for city council.

The City Manager said it is the same in every community.

Vice-Chair Matlock said if you bring in the head of the organizations, and feed them lunch, you are more likely to get a response because we are listening to the activists. Those that are already involved and committed.

Chair Epstein said that the Commission was all over the place and this agenda item is on the budget. She further stated that what she believes they are saying is they would like a budget of \$5000 for community conversations, training, and a retreat.

Ana Pomar asked if someone should do a budget on a retreat, some options for a retreat and what they would cost.

Vice-Chair Matlock stated it would be perhaps a speaker and a lunch.

Chair Epstein said she does not have time to do a budget in a week, she will need help.

Vice-Chair Matlock said he will make some calls. He asked the Commission to bring their ideas and findings to the Monday, August 8th meeting, at which time they will finalize the recommendation.

Ana Pomar said she will work on the retreat and asked if the Vice-Chair was doing the training piece.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked if Claudia could help. He further asked for clarification of the parameters that they need to look at when looking into the retreat and training hours.

Ana Pomar said the training would determine the hours.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked if it would be a day of training.

Consensus was a half day.

3B. [2022-0758](#)

Retreat

Discussion on planning retreat for FY 23

James Matlock, Vice-Chair

Chair Epstein stated that this was discussed item 3B.

3C. [2022-0759](#)**Voting Equity**

Discussion of voting in relation to equity issues

Pat Epstein, Chair

Chair Epstein turned the meeting over to Ana Pomar.

Ana Pomar gave a presentation on voting habits in Travis County. She spoke about the upcoming voter registration drive at the library.

Ana Pomar explained to the Commission that she had submitted a Public Information Request with Travis County to ask for a list of the Pflugerville voters that would include age, gender, address, and other demographic information because that way the Commission can find out what part of town they are not voting from and target that area. In addition, it may show a disproportionate number of people in certain age groups or other demographic profiles who are not voting. In that way, the Commission can focus efforts on those areas that are underrepresented.

Chair Epstein asked if it was Travis County data or Pflugerville data that she was presenting to the Commission.

Ana Pomar said that she was not able to get the Pflugerville data right away because the Secretary of State and the County Clerk require 60 day waiting period to provide information on that level. She stated that she has made those requests and she is just waiting on that information.

Virginia Rogers asked if the data only represented the Democratic voters. She also asked if Ana Pomar had contacted the Republic Party.

Chair said it is important to note that the data presented is just the data, not partisan data.

Ana Pomar said the data is nonpartisan. She further stated that if she is lucky, she may have the detailed data Monday.

Chair Epstein again stated that the data they were viewing was objective data, not affiliated with any particular party.

Ana Pomar said that was correct. She then went over state and county data from the 2020 election. She pointed out there was only an 8% turnout for the state. Ms. Pomar said that was a good indication that the Commission needs to look at things that effect voter turnout. One of the things may be people moving into the area, voter beliefs; they don't see elections having a positive impact on their lives. Others may vote for a particular party because their family votes the way. She stated that political scientists think there is a lot more work that needs to be done to analyze why people vote the way they do.

Ms. Pomar said she was most interested in the demographics. She pointed out that the data shows homeowners vote more often than renters. Ms. Pomar stated that this information tells the Commission that they should be going to areas heavily populated by renters to give them information about voting. She stated the data also shows that native Texans are more likely to vote than immigrants. She said that immigrants do not vote as much, even if they are naturalized.

Ms. Pomar went on to say that Texas tends to skew towards young Hispanic in population, but they are not voting so that is something the Commission can look at, how to entice them to vote.

Ms. Pomar stated that they know employers have to allow 2 hours for employees to go out to vote. She said as a community we need to invest in voters. Perhaps encouraging employers to allow more time to vote.

Chair Epstein clarified again that the data was regardless of party. This is universal data, not skewed one way or the other.

Ana Pomar said she knows the Vice-Chair is very interested in equity in voting, but she will have a phone call on Monday with the League of Women Voters (LWV). This would give the Commission an opportunity to suggest the LWV add questions in regard to equity, so candidates can address that.

Chair Epstein said it would be interesting to have someone from LWV come and talk to the Commission. She said access to voting is her biggest concern,

Ana Pomar said if they incorporate the data into the listening sessions, they can decide where to have the listening sessions.

Chair Epstein asked how do we frame voting in equity terms. For example: long lines that would take more time than 2 hours to vote, voting holidays, to get a day off is hard, something that is universal to everyone. She suggested more voting polls.

Ana Pomar said one of the first things to do is to identify the targets, i.e., elderly, women, black women, minority, those who are already registered but not getting to the polls.

Chair Epstein said perhaps we advocate for polling places with seating for older people.

Vice-Chair Matlock said the other thing is that these referendums are written to be confusing.

Chair Epstein said she wanted to make it clear that equity knows no party, it is bipartisan, it is important that everyone have the ability to vote.

Ana Pomar said they need to work on the myth of jury duty also.

Virginia Rogers said if they could get separate stickers that said Pflugerville specifically and then get some fast-food places to agree to give a free drink, it may encourage more participation.

Chair Epstein said it is all about access and encouraging.

Future Agenda Items

Action items on 3A

Bring notes whenever something is on an agenda.

4. Adjourn

Adjourn 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Coffey Griswold
Library Director

Approved as _____ on August 8, 2022.