



City of Portland

Remote Racial Equity Steering Committee
Thursday, February 25, 2021
5:00 PM

ZOOM INFORMATION:

The Racial Equity Steering Committee will hold a meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 5:00 PM. This meeting will take place remotely using Zoom.

Virtual meetings are allowed using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online.

Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live, a recording will be uploaded to portlandmaine.gov/livestream the next day. For public comment, you will need to use the "raise your hand" feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public comment.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83062619858?pwd=Qk1jemhUbnlwNEtUWFhQT0dxZ3ZlQT09>

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Webinar ID: 830 6261 9858

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International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kd7xf4Uyx1>

- II. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes.
- III. RESC interim report presentation debrief
- IV. Update on proposals
 - a. Racial Equity Assessment and Training
 - b. City contracts proposal

- V. Discussion of CTO proposal
 - a. CTO Proposal
- VI. Adjourn

Date: February 18, 2021
Attending: Ali Abdul, Suheir Alaskari, Kate Knox, Lado Ladoka, Merita McKenzie, Peter O'Donnell, Jonathan Sahrbeck, Louis Pickens, Pious Ali (Co Chair), Lelia DeAndrade (Co-Chair); Samaa Abdurraqib (Facilitator)
Absent: Deb Ibonwa

Approved minutes February 4

Goals:

RESC Agenda 2/18

- Minutes and agenda approval
- Discussion of proposal for [racial equity assessment and training](#)
- Discussion of [City contracts proposal](#)
- Discussion of upcoming meetings & Adjourn

Other news:

- Abdurraqib and DeAndrade will present to the City Council on Monday 2/22.
- Other members of the committee are welcomed to attend.
- Committee members can also attend other meetings related to this work, such as budget meetings

Discussion: Proposal for Racial Equity Assessment and Training for Portland Police Dept, city employees and City Council

- Recommend using a prestigious qualified organization, such as the consultants hired by Portland Public Schools
 - Work with Portland Public Schools includes multiple day-long trainings, full staff training and regular professional development work
- The committee discussed different options for consultants, investigating Government Alliance for Racial Equity as well as the Mid Atlantic Consortium; they recommended considering consultants with experience working with specific professions.
- Recommend that this work is overseen and administered by one organization, instead of multiple organizations independently working on various parts.
- The committee should try to offer more detail about what makes a group highly qualified
- Other organizations or program to consider Racial Equity Leadership Council, Procedural Justice training for police officers

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Discussion: Recommendations regarding city contracts and social and economically disadvantaged minority businesses and support for home purchasers

- Proposal 1- 10% of city contracts should be awarded to minority owned businesses
 - The proposal mirrors a federal law that requires this process with contracting, but the city isn't compelled to use this process with other, non-Federal funds
- Proposal 2- 15% of city employees should be historically disadvantaged minorities

- This distribution should be across departments at all levels of city workforce, interview panels should be diverse
 - The Racial Equity Board should monitor the data on these
- Proposal 3 - Recommendation that the city provides a 3.5% down payment for section 8 qualified home buyers and become a lien holder so that the PMI will be dismissed.
 - Recommend requirement for education for home purchasing.
 - Funding could be available for this from the city housing fund or CBDG
- This is part of the charge to address policies and practices related to racial disparities

Vote: Unanimous in favor, all three proposals

Committee adjourned at 6:30.

February 4, 2021

Portland Racial Equity Steering Committee

Proposal DRAFT: Racial Equity Assessment and Training for PPD, City employees, and City Council

We propose that all Portland Police Department Employees (and all City Employees) undergo extensive Racial Equity Training provided by qualified prestigious consultants such as the Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium out of Bethesda, MD.

Through the equity training, participants will better understand bias, racism, microaggressions, systemic racism, structural racism, institutional racism, race and power, and race and injustice, and more. This training shall be on-going work, where participants receive training throughout each year of employment.

As a result of this training, looking at data, there will be a reduction in cases of aggression, micro aggression, and racial injustices.

[INCLUDE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ABOUT GARE RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT]

RESC Proposals for charge #2:

- I. Establish a commission to investigate the ways in which the City interacts with area agencies, organizations, and non-profits in the name of public safety. This commission will make recommendations for how these partnerships can best work to enhance public safety in racially equitable ways.
- II. Create and establish a Department of Racial Equity and a Director or Commissioner of Racial Equity as a permanent position within the City Manager's office (see full proposal on page 6 of this document)
- ~~III. Create and establish a permanent position within the City's Health and Human Services department or the City Manager's office to regularly and daily monitor available resources (beds, treatment options, etc) to provide updates to service providers who are working within communities in need.~~
- IV. Public safety is:
 - A. Protecting the wellbeing of people of all races & ethnicities, communities, and organizations.
 - B. Safeguarding people from crimes, disaster, and other potential dangers and threats, and reducing fear
 - C. Ensuring that all people get a fair and equitable chance to lead a high quality of life that is not predicted by race.
- V. Proposals to Address Racial Disparities Amongst Homeless Population in Portland as well as Among Those that Are Able to Access Health and Human Services Programs (see full proposal on page 3 of this document)
- VI. Proposal to have the Council declare racism as a public health crisis. (see full proposal on page 7 of this document)
- VII. Proposal to develop an equity plan to address racial inequities (see full proposal on page 8 of this document)

- viii. Proposal to reserve 10% of all city contracts for social and economical disadvantage minority owned businesses. (see full proposal on page 9 of this document)

Proposals to Address Racial Disparities in Access Health and Human Services Programs (from Deb)

1. **Require GA office and all social service departments run by the city's Department of Health and Human Services to track and annually publish racial demographics for applications, denials, and approvals, and make the data publicly accessible. This data shall be reported to the following: the City's Racial Equity Commission, City Council, and the statewide Permanent Commission XXXXX. This data will also be publicly promoted on an annual basis.**
2. Create a Racial Equity Task Force, composed of staff, community members, social services providers, and policy and data analysis experts to examine racial demographics in Health and Human Services programs to:
 - a. analyze data, policies and practices, with the objective of eliminating race-based disparities
 - b. hear complaints and mediate conflicts between clients and departments
 - c. publish a public report on activities and data analysis at least annually.
 - d. Implement [Equity Based Decision Making Framework for Homeless Service Systems](#)
3. Increase access to social services by:
 - a. Providing 24/7 access to emergency services
 - b. increasing distribution of information about available services broadly and publicly
 - c. conducting outreach and assistance to communities, especially communities of color.
4. Develop and implement [The Framework for an Equitable Covid-19 Homelessness Response](#) to address current and future public health crises, including:
 - a. Unsheltered People
 - b. Shelters
 - c. Housing
 - d. Diversion and Prevention; and
 - e. Strengthening the system for the future.

Proposal for Racial Equity Director position

The Director of the Office of Racial Equity for the City of Portland, Maine will work in the Office of The City Manager and will be responsible for advancing a framework that will improve internal policies, practices and systems to eradicate structural and or institutional racism that may exist in City government. The Director will achieve this goal by working with the Racial Equity Committee established by the City Council, and through community engagement, analysis of policy, data collection, and training and recommend more comprehensive accountability measures for City of Portland departments. The Director will oversee the development of department action plans to eradicate racial inequality, and will also issue a biennial “Racial Equity Status Report” to the Racial Equity Committee and the City Council.

In addition to the above the office will also provide analysis for any proposed legislation as to whether the proposed ordinance would promote Racial Equity by helping to close opportunity gaps for communities of color, or impede Racial Equity by furthering Racial Disparities.

The Director shall have experience in the following areas:

- A experienced visionary and practitioner in dismantling institutional racism and experience in recreating systems of belonging.
- Proven ability in managing changes in complex organizations.
- Experience in developing, implementing, and leading inclusion programs with demonstrable outcomes.
- Identifying equity concerns related to public policies.

- Is trusted local leader and a bridge builder of racial equity
- Proven ability to foster a progressive and diverse workforce and promote a diverse workplace.
- Be a data driven decision maker and propose policies and administrative changes that positively impact equity in City government and in the delivery of services to the community.

Director of the Department of Racial Equity

Proposal: To create a new Department of Racial Equity for the City of Portland, Maine that will be led by the Director of the Department of Racial Equity.

We propose that the goals of this position will be to work with the City's permanent Racial Equity Commission, the community, and internal departments to analyze city policies, programs and practices with the goal to "eradicate any structural or institutional racism" within the city government structure and to work with the city's police department to review all policies and to reimagine the definition of "community safety,"

We believe this office should work to reimagine and reinvent and reform the systems that have traditionally inhibited the progress of Black and Brown and Indigenous people. We also suggest that the Director consider how other factors such as gender, sexual orientation and disability fit into the discussion and recommendations for reform as well.

Proposal #1: (From Jerome)

The RESC works together to create a brief for the Mayor and City Council declaring why Racism is a public health crisis. Race being a social determinant of health is a public safety issue and falls within one of our understandings of the definition of public safety “ensuring that all people get a fair and equitable chance to lead a high quality of life that is not predicted by race”. Therefore, I propose we recommend that the mayor ***"sign an executive order declaring racism a public health crisis in the City of Portland"***.

Possible language (with a contextual preamble that isn't included here):

Now Therefore Be It Resolve That I Mayor Kate Merchant Snyder and the Portland City Council do hereby declare racism to be a public health crisis in the city of Portland, establish a working group to address these issues and to, seek solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; continue to work to build alliances with organizations that are confronting racism and encourage partners to recognize racism as a public health crisis; continue to promote racially equitable economic and workforce development in Portland ; continue to promote racially equitable hiring of City employees; and conduct a racial equity impact assessment of the city's budget, policies and practices;

Proposal: #2: (from Jerome)

Proposal #2- To establish a racial equity plan with regards to public safety and community prevention that includes the following priority areas:

- Support for Children & Families
- Black employment
- Black wealth & Financial stability
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Health
- Voting

Proposal 1: to reserve 10% of all city contracts for social and economical disadvantage minority owned businesses. (from Lado)

Any contract around 5 million and above should require a minority subcontractor before a contract can be awarded.

Proposal 2:

City workforce should reflect the population it serves. City should require 15% of its employees to be historically disadvantaged minorities.

Proposal 3:

The city covers the down payment for historically racial disadvantaged residents of Portland who have housing choice voucher and qualify to purchase home

- City pay 3.5% down payment for section 8 qualifiers (Federal Housing Administration)
- Required 10 years residence in the property
- Take secondary lien on the property incase of foreclosure
- Limit participation to 10 qualifying families a year
- Asked for the Private Mortgage Insurance/PMI (\$150/mo) to be waive by the mortgage company
- City of Portland shall promote this program to social and economically disadvantaged communities
- The city will collect data on this program and report it to the city council on annual bases

General information about the different vouchers:

Housing Choice Voucher

- Shelter Plus for individuals who have experienced homelessness
- Bridging rental assistant program(BRAP) for people who are struggling with mental illness
- Step Voucher two year housing voucher for farmerly unhoused population
- Project based section 8 program(building specific)
- Section 8 voucher

Waiting list is from three years to ten years(section 8 and project based section 8)

Housing Choice Voucher priority

- Long term homeless
- Disable
- Veteran

Section 8 Homeownership program requirement:

- Family qualify for home ownership program

- Housing is eligible for purchase under the voucher
- Family completed first time home ownership training
- Family satisfied the minimum income and work requirement
- Family have not defaulted on mortgage securing debt to purchase home

TABLE 2: The chart below illustrates the direct federal assistance in helping Maine families as of 2018.

FEDERAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE	FAMILIES ASSISTED
House Choice Voucher	11,700
Section 8 Project Based	7,800
USDA Rental Assistance	5,900
Public Housing	3,800
Supportive Disable and Elderly	900

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priority, 2018

From Suheir Alaskari

Charge # 2 and Charge #3 proposals

1. Create a voluntary Cultural Alliance under Portland City's supervision where NGOs, Portland public schools, universities, researchers, and advocates can share resources about diversity, inclusion, equity, and cultural competencies. These resources should be available for the public to raise awareness about best practices in dismantling racism.
2. A partnership between Portland City and the regional Chamber of Commerce to have a pledge of hiring a certain number of black, immigrants, native, asian, and any minority candidates by the end of 2023 (besides Thrive 2027). A specific acknowledgment should be awarded for any employer who reached a higher number of job opportunities and hired such candidates by the city. A certificate of the most diverse employer should be made, for example, and awarded. Form a collective power against social injustice and racism between cities in Maine and Portland town to partner with other cities initiatives against racism; for example, South Portland City established a permanent Human Rights Commission.
3. Religious, cultural competency:
 - Many Muslim Mainers feel the pressure of not celebrating their religious holidays to avoid social stress. Jewish and Chinese communities are facing the same. Other religious holidays should be celebrated the same way we honor Christmas in Portland. Portland City could host the first local market where people can buy multicultural religious decorations. This will offer income opportunities for many minorities, especially women who used to prepare such decorations themselves as a tradition.
 - **"Halal food is not a shame"**: Portland Schools adopt this slogan and start offering halal meals for the minority students. Many young generations face bullying just because they follow their religious traditions, which causes identity crises and unsolved anger

4. Economic Improvement towards social empowerment:
 - Collect reliable data about a business owned by black and other minorities in Portland City as a start.
 - In partnership with the Portland City office of Economic Opportunity and local community banks start offering intensive training for these business owners about how to survive the market during COVID and available resources, many small businesses struggled with getting access to the PPP program.
 - Portland city to invite media and local newspapers to have free of charge promotion camping for these businesses around the year.
5. Support BLM and dedicate a week for it in the City official calendar where events will be held dedicated to raise the awareness about it.
6. Engage local Artists in creating a wall with all racist's crime victims in modern history as a reminder for all of us and people visiting Portland city.
7. Open a call for community in Portland to form a scholarship for black young people with criminal records to help them start up their own business or endeavor the costs of higher education
8. Portland City to work with the Zoning Administration to change and adapt some of Portland City's street names to represent Portland diverse communities.
9. Homeless clients to be given reflective strips or vests to protect them from car accidents Portland city with Preble Street and other city's shelters to adapt this policy.

A Proposal to Review all current outstanding CTOs and the policies surrounding the issuance of CTOs

- 1. Review and publish publicly the analyses and results of such reviews of all Current Outstanding Criminal Trespass Orders** from shelters, public places and private property for:
 - a. disparate impact on historically marginalized communities
 - b. those struggling with substance use or mental health diagnoses. [\[LD1\]](#)
- 2. Review and publish publicly the analyses and results of such reviews of all the Policies Surrounding the Issuance of CTO's, withdraw CTO's and offer social services and shelter instead**