

CITY OF EDMONDS DIVERSITY COMMISSION January 6, 2016

Chair Mario Brown called the Diversity Commission meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. at 250 5th Avenue North, Edmonds.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gayle Ketzle
Ed Dorame – Vice Chair
Patricia Valle
Tung Bui
Diana White
George Basioli
Adam Khan
Mario Brown - Chair
Maria Montalvo

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Dave Teitzel, Councilmember

STAFF PRESENT

Patrick Doherty, *ED/CS Director*
Cindi Cruz, *ED/CS Program Coordinator*
Michele Rastovich, *Diversity Commission Coordinator*

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: none

1. **Roll Call:** Call to order at 6:02 p.m.
Concern was expressed regarding access to the agenda for the visually impaired. Staff will work on a plan for copying agendas. Speakers will be recognized by Chair before speaking.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved as written.
3. **Approval of December 3, 2015 Diversity Commission Meeting Summary:**
After discussion, meeting summary was approved as written.
4. **Public Comment:** Dave Teitzel, Councilmember, noted that he is excited to see this group together and working on solutions to diversity issues in Edmonds.
5. **Report from City:** Patrick Doherty stated the Commission is scheduled to present the 2016 work plan to City Council on January 26.
6. **2016 Work Plan:** Budget of \$6,000 for Michele and \$3,000 for implementation was approved for 2016. The Commission can request an increase in budget if something comes up and there is not enough money for events and activities identified. Mario presented the draft work plan for discussion and approval.

Discussion included: questions about the wording of the mission statement which is directly from the ordinance; questions about what the 'report to Council by January 2017' might look

like; questions about how to access information that could help City deal with diversity; interest in making draft plan language stronger, rather than passive; goals should be both broad and attainable, with clear objectives; questions about “four education events during the year” with clarification that events could be any kind of learning opportunities in the community or bringing speakers from the community to the Commission. Commissioners can meet in small work groups but if a quorum of members is present, then it becomes a public meeting. The need to get to know each other better surfaced during the discussion and it was suggested that Commissioners could schedule one on one meetings with each other to get to know each other better.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed work plan. Commissioners concurred that the number of potential events is fluid; that the Commission needs a deeper conversation about whom to engage, and how; and that tasks need to be more clearly defined. With those understandings, the work plan was approved with the following amendment: add “actively engaging and reaching out to the community” as part of the general objectives. The plan will be presented to Council on January 26. Mario, Maria, Gayle, George, Tung, Ed, and Pat all indicated interest in attending the Council meeting.

Next Steps: Mario asked each Commissioner to identify his/her next most important step. Responses included: building relationships and spending one on one time with each other; holding a retreat; hosting a student forum regarding racial diversity; establishing a response protocol to community events; committing to a broad focus of diversity—not just racial; insuring that the Commission is accessible to all; developing the outreach plan.

7. **Martin Luther King Day, January 18, 2016:** Commissioners requested that staff write a press release to encourage participation in area events, and to serve as an introduction to the newly formed Commission. Edmonds Community College has a Black Box Theater event featuring Dr. Michael Eric Dyson. Ed and Diana are going to MLK prayer breakfast in Seattle and Mario is speaking at an elementary school.

Discussion ensued regarding responses to specific community events. Individual Commissioners could present statements based on personal interests or write editorials with individual bios. More discussion is need to consider how to use social media and how to profile Commissioners, perhaps on the City website.

8. **Community Updates:** Discussion centered around recent events involving local high school students and postings on Facebook. The Commission should not be reactionary, not act as judge and/or jury, but rather should encourage feelings of support, not governed by incidents. Commission will need to find a balance between showing a sense of urgency, taking on risk, and responding with caution. Thoughts included: If the Commission is silent, why exist?; we don't want to be too vanilla; half a billion are affected by mental illness – don't forget other diverse needs, including citizens left at the bus stop due to not being able to see the bus. Patrick noted that the Commission can empower the Chair, Vice Chair, or designated representative to respond to specific incidents. Commissions can email alerts to articles, but cannot respond to articles. Meeting was extended for five minutes. Ed presented demographics of Edmonds. Mario encouraged succinct comments and noted the next agenda will include how to handle incidents in the community

9. **Adjourn at 7:36: Next meeting: Wednesday. February 3 at 6 p.m.**