



**Metro**

600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736

# Meeting minutes

Meeting: Committee on Racial Equity Meeting  
Date/time: Thursday, March 15, 2018  
Time: 6 to 8 p.m.  
Place: City of Beaverton, 12725 SW Millikan Way, Columbia River Room, Fifth Floor, Beaverton, OR 97076  
Purpose: Continue the work of the Committee on Racial Equity

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## **Attendees**

**Co-Chairs:** María Caballero Rubio and Sharon Gary-Smith

**CORE Members:** Martine Coblentz, Kari Herinckx, Duncan Hwang, Laura John, Patricia Kepler, Donna Maxey, Dele Oyemaja, Daisy Quiñonez, Katie Sawicki, Effie Stansbery and Olivia Walker

**CORE Liaisons:** Metro Councilors Shirley Craddick

**Metro staff:** Raahi Reddy, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu and Nyla Moore from DEI, Jon Blasher and Heather Nelson-Kent from Parks and Nature (P+N); and Paul Slyman, Molly Chidsey and Matt Korot from Property and Environmental Services (PES)

**Guests:** Oswaldo Bernal, etc. members of the Beaverton Diversity Advisory Board.

**Absent:** Karla Hernandez, Shweta Moorthy, Councilor Sam Chase and Commissioner Karis Stoudamire-Phillips.

## **Call to order:**

CORE Co-Chair María Caballero Rubio called the meeting to order. She explained that the Co-Chairs have decided to take turns chairing the meetings from this time on, so she will be chairing this one. The non-chairing Co-Chair, Sharon Gary-Smith in this case, will have the chance to be a full participant in the conversation at the meeting.

María thanked Alexis Ball from the City of Beaverton for hosting this CORE meeting, which is the first one taking place outside of the Metro Regional Center. Holding meetings outside of Metro facilities was a request from CORE members. María also thanked the three members of the Beaverton Diversity Advisory Board, for coming to meet the CORE members and staying for the meeting.

María then asked the CORE and audience members and Metro staff present to introduce themselves by saying their names, affiliation and preferred gender pronoun. The meeting attendees did so.

After the introductions were over, María will ask Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Metro Equity Strategy Program Manager, to introduce the next agenda item.

## **Discussion of the racial equity actions in the draft plan of the Property & Environmental Services (PES) department – Paul Slyman, PES Director**

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu reminded the CORE members that at their Jan. 18 meeting, the Property & Environmental Services (PES) department staff made their introductory presentation about their department and the work they have done to create a racial equity action plan. PES staff asked to return to the CORE to present the details of their draft racial equity action plan in March, when the

actions were better developed and ready for feedback and input from the Committee. So tonight, Paul Slyman, PES Director, will present the details, answer your questions, and obtain the feedback from the CORE members.

Paul discussed who PES is and what the department does. "P" stands for Property, which includes taking care of the Metro Regional Center, fleet (anything with wheels), mail, and construction projects. They have been working closely with procurement to make more construction contracts accessible for minority businesses. "E" stands for environment. This includes garbage and recycling. Metro manages the system after the garbage is picked up from our homes and brought to Metro's transfer stations to be disposed of.

The most recent annual PES budget includes \$77 million in operational funds spent on contracts to run the waste-related facilities, including managing and moving materials and household hazardous waste.

PES also conducts work related to houselessness. Two PES staff, Stephanie Rawson and Rob Nathan, work on cleaning up illegal dumping, including waste from houseless people's camps. The department partners with the Multnomah County Sheriff and Constructing Hope to do this work.

PES also has youth education programs, delivered by six teachers that work in classrooms around the region. They used to provide classroom education equally, and now they focus on providing the service equitably.

Another important program area for PES is community partnerships. Oregon Tradeswomen has a contract with PES to increase the number of women working at the transfer stations because there are not many women working in the waste industry. The racial composition of Metro contractors in the waste facilities exceeds the regional percentage of people of color, primarily Latinos, and not many African Americans. Another partnership with the National Association of Minority Contractors, Oregon Chapter, will help address the barriers that are keeping minority businesses from getting contracts with Metro. The partnership with North x NE will help decrease the amount of sharps.

PES is working to address inequities in contracting, hiring, access to services and capital. Paul discussed the importance of new hires and the diverse ways they have come to their current job status. He also discussed the disparities in garbage and recycling collection services for single family homes versus apartments and multifamily homes. Another access disparity is the fact that transfer stations are not easy to access from the west side of the Metro region. There is the idea of creating a new transfer station in Forest Grove on the west side, and it would be a costly project. Either way, access to transfer stations requires the use of a vehicle.

Finally, Paul talked about the innovation grants program, which aims to spur new ideas for how to deal with the materials that are currently going to landfills. China has been the destination of the majority of recyclables from the west coast of the United States for more than a generation. And now China no longer accepts a large number of those materials. New ideas are needed.

CORE members had a number of questions about PES's plan to advance racial equity and the services the department provides to the public:

- Why can't all people in the region access the same composting/recycling services? This would require a regional service standard for garbage and recycling for the entire region. PES is considering this, gingerly. There are 23 cities and three counties in the region, and Metro is focusing on addressing the largest problems created by the largest generators of waste. Metro Council is considering a commercial food scraps recycling program to keep the waste local and address its disposal locally. There isn't a regional residential food scraps standard, but at present many cities have one and/or are considering offering that services locally.
- Would it make sense to have smaller waste system agencies? Are there any national models that Metro could use as reference? Most of the country looks up to Metro as a model of well-managed waste system. It is true that some of the garbage collection rates can be unfairly high. Local governments' function is to franchise the haulers. Metro oversees the system at the wholesale level. If the wholesale level system were subdivided, it could create some efficiencies, and other inefficiencies as well.
- What work is PES doing to involve communities of color? PES is doing a lot of work on this area. A big part of the work being done is to help people see that they should care about involving communities whose voices haven't traditionally been heard in the process and conversation about the garbage and recycling system.
- How much work is it taking to educate staff on racial equity? The key is to provide education at a pace that people can absorb well. Metro has been providing DEI-related work for a number of years now. Staff are interested in learning these skills for the most part. There is some resistance, but most people are willing to learn, make mistakes, and keep working to get better.
- What work is PES doing to encourage contractors to be more equitable? PES is working with all of its contractors to adopt a racial equity approach that matches the departments. PES is working to make all its access services more equitable, especially the waste round-ups, by partnering with community-based organizations that have the trust of historically marginalized communities, especially people of color. Also, PES has now money in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget to bring most of the jobs in production at MetroPaint into the agency as regular employees. Until now, the vast majority of those production jobs have been staff through a contract with a non-profit organization, which has resulted in a number of intended disparities. Now the people in those jobs will be regular Metro employees with better pay rates and benefits.

After these questions had been asked, María brought the item to an end and introduced the next one.

#### **Public comment**

Mr. Oswaldo Bernal, from Beaverton, requested to address the CORE members. Mr. Bernal indicated that he is concerned about the recycling facility on Denny Road being closed down. He works in the communications industry and he is concerned that lacks good communications about what the agency does, especially communications focused on the Latino communities. Every two years Metro releases a request for proposals for communications support, and the firms that get the contracts do not do a good job helping the agency communicate with the community. He never hears about Metro's work. Also, last year Mr. Bernal tried to respond to a Metro survey that was promoted via Twitter, and he was ignored by the agency when he tried to engage. Mr. Bernal is offended by the way how he was treated when trying to engage with Metro.

**Presentation of the Oregon Zoo draft racial equity action plan – Don Moore, Jennifer Payne and Pam McElwee, Oregon Zoo**

Don Moore, Oregon Zoo Director, provided an overview of the Zoo's functioning. The Oregon Zoo is one of the Metro venues, and it is an enterprise unit, which means it has to be economically self-sustaining. The Zoo currently receives 30 percent of its funding from Metro, and the remaining 70 percent is generated through enterprise activities and a small amount of grants. The Zoo's ability to generate revenue is largely dependent on the weather. When the weather is nice, people like to come to the Zoo. During harsh winter weather, the Zoo's attendance suffers. The Zoo has significant accessibility issues, including parking constraints and problems with access by MAX. It also faces questions about equitable access for people of color and other historically marginalized communities.

Jennifer Payne, Manager of the Education Center at the Zoo, and Pam McElwee, Zoo Animal Presenters (ZAP) Program Coordinator, discussed the current initiatives being taken by the Oregon Zoo to address some of its challenges. One initiative is to dedicate 20,000 tickets for reduced or free admission for members of underserved communities. The Zoo also discontinued its second Tuesday free admission program and replaced it with the "Zoo for All" program for low income families to enter the Zoo for \$5, with free admission for children.

The Zoo also has a target of dedicating 15 percent of money for construction contracts for minority- and women-owned firms. The recently completed Education Center was built with 30 percent participation of minority- and women-owned firms.

The ZAP program is a paid internship for teenagers (15 years and older) that offers them the opportunity to work at the Zoo and in the community putting people in contact with appropriate animals. The Zoo focuses its outreach for the program among communities with low income and communities of color. The Zoo partners with community-based organizations and local high schools to recruit ZAP participants. The participants become conservation leaders and feel strong connections with nature.

Other initiatives include the Urban Nature Overnight (UNO) Program. It provides young people the opportunity to participate in camping trips. The UNO program also reaches out to historically marginalized community members who do not have other opportunities to experience the outdoors in this way. The Oregon Zoo also has an established DEI Action Team, which is taking a leadership role in the development of the venue's racial equity action plan. Zoo staff also participate in the recently-created Metro-sponsored employee resource groups (ERGs) for staff of color and staff from the LGBTQ+ community. Overall, the Oregon Zoo is working toward create a true culture shift: becoming smarter about how staff work together and support and consult with one another to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

The process that the Oregon Zoo staff have taken to develop the draft racial equity action plan includes outreach to internal and external stakeholders. In terms of internal outreach, the plan has included the create of staff awareness about its development, a survey for staff and volunteers, intentional conversations among the managers, executive team participation and support, and discussion at Zoo Town Hall meetings, which are all-staff meetings. External outreach included

primarily the focus group conversations with community members recruited by the Coalition of Communities of Color and Momentum Alliance, in the spring and fall of 2017.

The draft Oregon Zoo priority actions to advance racial equity fall directly under the umbrella of the five goals identified in Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Many of the actions relate to increasing the racial diversity among Zoo staff. The Zoo has diverse staff, but the diversity of staff is heavily concentrated in the ranks of temporary and seasonal, part-time staff. Full-time, benefited staff are not as diverse. Being an enterprise unit, the Zoo also faces the challenge of constantly being focused on the sale of products and tickets. This sometimes prevents the organization from slowing down and digging deeper in the process of advancing racial equity actions.

For next steps, the Oregon Zoo will be making a more in-depth presentation to the External Policies and Internal Policies & Work Culture CORE Subcommittees in April. The input that they receive from the CORE will be used to finalize the plan. Their estimated time for completion of the plan is June of this year.

Several CORE members had questions and comments related to the presentation by the Oregon Zoo staff:

- Comment: The Zoo could benefit from developing and utilizing best practices, especially to create measures that bring accountability to its work, especially from the perspective of people of color. The questions the Zoo should ask itself are: How to move from the current state to a more diverse workforce? How to engage experts of color to help the Oregon Zoo on this journey?
- How can the Zoo leverage the ZAP program to change the local culture at the Zoo? This would help create an employment pathway for people of color, from internships to employment.
- The Zoo used to have a partnership with Portland Community College. Why did it end? The program ended because it did not recruit students consistently, and it also did not contribute to create a pathway for employment.
- Working with incarcerated women at Coffee Creek Correctional Institution, in the butterfly program, brings up the question about barriers to employment at the Oregon Zoo for formerly incarcerated people. This is certainly an area in which the Zoo can do more and a better job to create opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

After these questions, María asked Juan Carlos to present the next item.

**Discussion of meetings schedule and future Metro major policy initiatives presentations to the CORE – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Metro Racial Equity Program Manager**

Juan Carlos reminded CORE members that at the Nov. 4, 2017 retreat, the committee members brought up their desire to meet outside of the Metro Regional Center. Juan Carlos and Nyla met with Donna Maxey and Dele Oyemaja, CORE members who volunteered to help come up with a schedule of meetings and locations. The schedule presented in one of the documents that were sent as part of the meeting materials packet. The recommendation from the small group for the six CORE general meetings is to have one meeting at the Metro Regional Center, and the next in a different part of the region. A similar recommendation is made for the Subcommittees, who will consider it depending on what works best for each group.

Juan Carlos also mentioned that Metro has a number of big policy initiatives and projects taking place soon, which would benefit from input from the CORE. The same document he mentioned before outlines the upcoming major initiatives that staff would like to bring to the CORE at the specified meetings.

Finally, Juan Carlos announced the he will be starting a new job as Business Service Manager in the Parks + Nature department in April. This was a difficult decision because he really enjoys his work in the DEI Program, but he decided to pursue a new opportunity to advance racial equity by managing the Parks + Nature department's revenue contracts and a few staff teams. He and Raahi are working on figuring out a transition plan to make sure that all the great work currently underway continues to move forward. Juan Carlos also thanked the CORE members for all their work and contributions to advancing racial equity at Metro, and indicated he will greatly miss working with them on a regular basis, but he will remain in touch.

**Consideration of the minutes from the Jan. 18, 2018 CORE general meeting – Co-Chair María Caballero Rubio**

María called the CORE members' attention to the minutes from the Jan. 18, 2018 meeting, which they received in the meeting packet. María opened the consideration of the meeting minutes by asking CORE members to indicate whether they had any corrections, questions or comments about the minutes. No CORE members had any edits or questions. María then asked for a motion to approve the minutes and a second, in order to call the vote. Patricia Kepler moved to approve the Jan. 18, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted by staff. Dele Oyemaja seconded the motion. María called the vote and all members present voted to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

María declared the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Nyla Moore and Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu