



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

**CITY COUNCIL Racial Equity, Inclusion, and
Belonging Committee**

c/o Community & Economic Development Office

City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401

802-865-7144 VOX • 802-865-7024 FAX • www.burlingtonvt.gov/cedo

Draft Minutes REIB Committee

Tuesday March 16th, 2021 5:30 pm – 7:00pm

Remote meeting by Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89570239526>

Councilor Ali Dieng, (AD) Chair, Ward 7

Councilor Karen Paul, (KP) Ward 6

Councilor Brian Pine, (BP) Ward 3

Staff: Tyeastia Green, Director REIB Dept; Belan Antensaye (BA), REIB; Skyler Nash (SN), REIB; Vanessa Santos Eugenio (VSE), Human Resources; Marcella Gange, CEDO

(Committee Staff)

Public: Tony Reddington, Mark Hughes, Melo Grant,

Meeting called to order at 5.34

Draft Agenda

1) Motion to approve the agenda: proposed BP, second KP – vote unanimous

2) Motion to approve the minutes of 02 17 21: proposed BP, second KP – vote unanimous

3) Public Forum – closed at 5.41

Jess Hyman CVOEO: Providing information about Fair Housing Month and local activities:- <https://fairhousingmonthvt.org/>

Mark Hughes – Vermont Racial Justice Alliance – Wants to raise awareness and discussion on the possibility of consideration for an REIB Commission.

4) [Discussion Transport Racism](#) – Tony Reddington. Talks to the Burlington Walk Bike Council Walking Mode Commentary Series - —Addressing Unwalkable Burlington, see link. See also [attached slide presentation](#). Discussion on Champlain Parkway project and impact upon BIPOC communities in BTV. AD, BP, and AD ask questions on the presentation and the progress towards finding a solution. KP thanks Mr Reddington for the report and his honesty around learning

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities.

For accessibility information, call 865-7144. For questions about the meeting,

contact Marcella Gange at mgange@burlingtonvt.gov or 802 865 7178

5) Juneteenth Celebration: Director Green and the REIB Team talk about planning underway for Burlington's Juneteenth celebration and the 7 community member strong empowerment committee that is driving the vision, supported by an internal city planning group. All are working on a hybrid in-person and remote model, to allow for changing pandemic circumstances.

AD: What is the meaning of Juneteenth? TG – it is recognized as Freedom Day in 1865 when enslaved people finally received information about emancipation and it was enforced by the military.

BP: will there also be activities and goals around empowerment? TG: Yes – and gives examples of proposed speakers and performance ideas. Event goals of empowerment and understanding community resilience. SN: there will also be economic empowerment opportunities for community members and vendors.

AD: What was the selection process for the Empowerment Committee and is planning information available online? SN: Open application process, with applications reviewed by Human Resources and REIB.

AD: Why is Juneteenth and other REIB Department information not currently available on the City website?

TG: The Department has been forced to curtail online presentations of REIB Department information because of persistent public information requests and email communications many with racist under and over tones. Director Green's priority is to ensure the physical and emotional safety of her team.

Details on the Juneteenth celebration will be available here:

<https://www.juneteenthbtv.org/>

Clrs BP and KP spoke of their concern at this hostile environment and their support and gratitude for the REIB Team and their understanding of TG approach.

AD respects Director Green's point of view but is hopeful that website information could be made available, fully supports the team's work

6) Update on REI&B Strategic Plan and Reparations Study: BA: Held second listening session and now moving forward with aggregating data collected from the community on the 5 domains that are being considered as part of the strategic planning. Also reviewing the City's priorities for racial equity and the various documents and plans. Looking to see where and how the city priorities and community priorities align. Broad community survey will be distributed. Strategic Plan outline expected for early summer. General discussion follows with Committee members on process.

7) Open Forum Discussion

Mark Hughes, RJA: Discussion on moving forward a Burlington Commission on Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and his hope that this Committee will support. Provided a slide and information on the RJA campaign to circumvent the King St neighborhood in the Champlain Parkway Project, via a simultaneous Railyard Extension.

Melo Grant: Expressed frustration, disgust and a range of emotions since the Joint meeting of the Police Commission and Committee on Public Safety of the previous day. The Joint Committee was informed that the management of the contract on BPD transformation was to be taken from Director Green and instead managed by the General Manager of BED, Darren Springer. The Mayor's decision undermines the excellent work of Director Green and her Dept. Disappointed at the Mayor's action and his use of undefined 'neutrality and trust' to determine that Mr Springer was a more appropriate choice to manage these vital contracts. The speaker believes that the Mayor's decision is out of synch with the thinking of many community members.

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Lea Terhune: Agrees with the statement made by Melo Grant. Calls on City Council to stand up to this mis-decision by Mayor. Made statement on her views on the Mayor's actions, also made statement on history of Southern Connector and environmental justice.

BP: Echoing the disappointment of previous speakers to ignore the clear City Council resolution to place responsibility for the assessment process with Director Green and her Department. It was not vague or ambiguous. Urges all to unpack what it means to remove the only African American Department Head from this process and install a white male Department Head with no subject matter expertise in her place. Clr Pine vehemently rejects the assertion that Dir Green is not the best person to manage this process and that she would achieve it in a fair and impartial manner.

KP: Appreciates Clr Pine's comments and echoes that the decision did not reflect the City Council resolutions. Appreciates that the Mayor has the right to take this decision but hopes that we can move forward with a better resolution on the matter.

AD: We need to step back a little and think. We are elected officials and must govern by rule of law. Does not appreciate the way that information was communicated. Concerned that Director Green is able to move forward and not allow this to impact her work. Echoes the thoughts and statements of the public and council members. City Councilors are working on this and trying to address this issue. Please, Director Green and team, stay strong.

BA: provided information on the BIPOC vaccination clinics that will be supported by City staff and community organizations. If interested please call RRC hotline:

8) Motion to adjourn moved by BP and second by KP, unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7.34pm.