

**MINUTES
THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES
EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024
2 EAST MAIN STREET
DENS A & B, SECOND FLOOR**

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Trudy Nichol, Susan Sanders, Cris Anderson, Michael Castro, Mary Kruse, Lisa Macaione, Samantha Newman

Others present: City Administrator Heather McGuire, Lisa Stricker, Kristi Dobbs, Clint Hall

Absent: Erica Johnson

3. Approval of the January 18, 2024 Equity & Inclusion Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, second by Commissioner Sanders to approve the January 18, 2024 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Newman requested the spelling of her last name be revised; it is spelled Newman, not Neuman.

4. Discussion D303 School Boundaries

Commissioner Macaione stated the Boundaries for D303 were approved on February 13, 2024; all redistricting is complete. Commissioner Macaione stated she was unable to send a letter to the Board on behalf of the Commission because she didn't receive responses from the other Commissioners. Commissioner Macaione asked that this Commission please respect each other and take the work of this Commission seriously; that includes responding to fellow Commissioners' requests.

Commissioner Macaione described the discussion at the D303 meeting regarding Davis/Richmond schools and stated the D303 Board chose to split the schools up against the recommendation of the Administration. From Commissioner Macaione's perspective,

the D303 Board has created a disparity with no justification.

Commissioner Kruse asked if the Free and Reduced Lunch Program participants are anticipated to increase. Commissioner Macaione stated the participants at Davis/Richmond are expected to increase and be in the 60% range of students. Commissioner Macaione stated she feels that this is definitely a City issue. Chair Nichol asked if there was an action Ms. Macaione would like to see this Commission take; Commissioner Macaione stated yes, she would like the Commission to come together and sign a group letter to have an official position on how the D303 Board should have left the schools alone because it is not equitable.

Commissioner Sanders stated she went to the D303 meeting on Tuesday when they voted and feels Commissioners should go to the Board meetings because that is the time to speak publicly and hold them accountable.

Commissioner Newman stated that while this Commission agrees that we see the bias, there may be people on this Commission who feel differently than Commissioner Sanders about going to D303 School Board meetings to speak and explained that she isn't interested in going to School Board meetings because they are very stressful for her personally.

Commissioner Kruse thanked Commissioner Macaione for attending the D303 Board meetings and for speaking; she acknowledged it is difficult to speak at those meetings because there is no acknowledgment from anyone. Commissioner Kruse stated she supports a letter being drafted to acknowledge this is a problem and it deserves acknowledgment.

Chair Nichol stated that no Commission or Board member is allowed to acknowledge or take a position - either for or against any speaker; CA McGuire agreed that is correct and stated it is the same with City Council.

Chair Nichol stated she had a conversation with D303 Superintendent Dr. Gordon; Dr. Gordon explained that the parents of bilingual students have a choice of what school their child attends. In addition, D303 has their own Equity and Inclusion Program and they have approved what has been proposed and passed. Chair Nichol also stated that Dr. Gordon said there is no limit to the number of children who can receive reduced and free lunch; no one will ever be denied.

Commissioner Macaione stated she understands, but that is not the problem; it is her opinion that the D303 Board created and exacerbated a disparity that didn't exist. Chair Nichol stated the Mayor has made her stance clear by saying the City is not getting involved in this. Chair Nichol expressed interest to move forward and do what the Commission has been appointed to do. In addition, Chair Nichol stated everyone is free to send a letter and sign it as a Commissioner; that is everyone's right.

Commissioner Newman expressed her opinion that this group has been meeting for months now and still does not have any goals set. She is wondering when this Commission is going to start planning and doing what needs to be done.

Commissioner Kruse stated she agrees and doesn't want this to be a Commission that convenes just to talk with no action, but she feels the D303 issue is a legitimate situation that would fall into a "bucket".

Lisa Stricker stated before moving on, she wanted to make sure Commissioner Macaione feels heard and acknowledged that she wants to send a letter. CA McGuire stated that the Commission should take a majority vote to have a draft letter prepared by Commissioner Macaione and then it can be presented at the next meeting for approval.

4 Commissioners voted to move forward, 2 did not vote to move forward.

Commissioner Sanders stated she has a concern about sending a letter; the Mayor has made her stance clear, so how do we write a letter? CA McGuire stated it would be appropriate to use terms in the letter that aren't offensive. Commissioner Sanders said she would still prefer to go to D303 Board meetings and speak; CA McGuire stated that the letter being prepared is only a draft and should be presented at the next Commission meeting. CA McGuire recommended that if everyone is comfortable exploring Commissioner Macaione drafting a letter, that all Commissioners print a copy of the letter that Commissioner Macaione sends, and handwrite their notes and revisions on it to discuss at the next meeting. Commissioner Macaione assured the Commission that she would use appropriate wording for the first draft of the letter; she will email it and would like everyone to acknowledge receipt and have a response ready by the next meeting.

5. **Equity & Inclusion Commission 2024 goals**

Lisa Stricker stated in the interest of time, she would read through the previously discussed “buckets” to determine which Commissioners wanted to be assigned:

Moving Barriers – Chair Nichol

Biases - Commissioner Castro; he also stated that he would like to create a sub-committee for this topic. Lisa Stricker said they will have a one on one conversation and determine sub-committees after that.

Resource for Under-represented Groups – Commission Macaione and Commissioner Newman.

Need and Results – Commissioner Newman is interested but needs to learn more about what to.

Those Requiring Physical Accommodations – Chair Nichol

Mental Accommodations – Commissioner Newman and Commissioner Castro

Immigrant Populations – Commissioner Anderson and Commissioner Sanders

LBGTQIA+ - Commissioner Newman and Commissioner Kruse

Lisa Stricker stated she will send out emails to set up individual appointments with each Commission member.

CA McGuire reminded the group that Erica Johnson isn't here and there will be a new member soon and they will choose “buckets” as well.

Commissioner Kruse asked how many meetings a Commissioner can miss, because she contacted Erica Johnson several times and has never received any response; CA McGuire stated missing three meetings in a row is considered abandonment.

Lisa Stricker advised that she is unable to attend the meeting on March 21; the Commission agreed her attendance is crucial so it was decided to move the March meeting up a week. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14 at 5:00 p.m.

6. **Public Comment**

Clint Hall stated he just wanted to thank the Commission and to keep up the good work!

7. **Adjourn**

Motion by Commissioner Castro, second by Commissioner Macaione to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Voice Vote: Ayes; Sanders, Anderson, Castro, Kruse, Macaione, Newman. Nays: None.
Absent: Erica Johnson. Nichol did not vote as chair. **Motion carried.**

:kd