From:	Bryan von Lossberg
To:	brandi jessup
Cc:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Re: Wednesday Council meeting and being an ally
Date:	Saturday, June 13, 2020 4:27:31 PM

Hello Brandi,

Thank you for your message. First and foremost, I am sorry. I absolutely appreciate the problems and issues with the meeting last week. The structure and format of our committee meetings does not meet the needs of this time. And my facilitation failed the moment, as well. I have been consulting with my colleagues and some folks in the community since that meeting ended to rectify that wrong.

In short, Monday evening I will be constituting an ad hoc committee of all council members for several listening sessions over the coming weeks. Those meetings will be as structured to provide extensive public comment from the audience where council's role will be to listen. We have started reaching out to folks in the community to facilitate these (council members will not chair the meetings) and are looking for members from the BIPOC community for those facilitator or co-facilitator roles.

As I have mentioned to others, I would like these sessions to be opportunities for deep listening and substantive collection of input we receive, which then must be met with action and change to honor those voices and that input.

Thank you for your offer of assistance. If you would like, I would be happy to contact you next week to follow up. I would appreciate your input, and I would also be happy to explain in more detail what happened during the meeting relative to student leaders and representatives from UM who had been invited to the meeting and folks from the public who joined the meeting wishing to make public comment.

Thank you again for the message.

Regards,
Bryan

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On Jun 13, 2020, at 3:32 PM, brandi jessup <brandijessup@gmail.com> wrote:

To the members of the council,

I was one of the 40 or so people watching the council meeting on YouTube on

Wednesday and I was very concerned by what I saw. I am aware that there is a specificity and order to council meetings, but watching all of the BIPOC guests sit silently while the entirely white council talked for two hours then watching concerned community members being actively silenced while white council members talked over them was too much. There was no time for questions, there was no conversation. It felt like the BIPOC guests were there purely for show.

I am a middle-class white woman. I am new to being an ally as well. I have not always done it correctly and I'm sure there are things I'm doing now that aren't perfect. I know that the members of the council were most likely not actively trying to be racist, however, it was a perfect example of how our privilege allows us to continue to feel like we're doing something, feel like we're allies when really we are playing into the same systems of suppression that have led us to this point, and as a member of the audience, it felt incredibly, actively anti-black.

I'm sure I'm not alone in wanting to hear from the BIPOC members of our community or to want to have an actual discussion on topics of police brutality, use of force, equal opportunities, etc. I want to know what the leadership of our town plans to do to move us forward and create an inclusive, safe community for all citizens. I want to know why the woman who tried multiple times to call in feels unsafe, and I want to hear the Police Chief and the mayor's response to her fear. I want to know what the chief's response to white militias counter-protesting and intimidating citizens will be.

I would like to see a "redo". I think the council made a mistake, not out of maliciousness, but out of misunderstanding, and I would like for you to give it a second chance. Can we have a second meeting with the same BIPOC community members where the goal is to listen, not to talk? Can we make a full hour of that meeting open to community questions, and can we listen and learn even if the things said are hard to hear.

I don't know what the proper response is right now, but I know that it is not to continue to talk over marginalized voices. We have been talking for 400 years and it is time for us to cede the floor.

I would be happy to help in any way to facilitate a second discussion. I would also like to suggest that there is someone on the council actively moderating the youtube chat during all publically streamed meetings and taking questions there as well.

I'm attaching a great video from Instagram that I have found helpful. I hope we can all continue working daily to become better allies.

Best,

Brandi Jessup