From:	Julie Merritt
To:	Rosalyn LaPier; Bryan von Lossberg
Cc:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	RE: Systemic racism in Missoula
Date:	Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:36:43 PM

Rosalyn

Thanks for staying engaged. Bryan can surely weigh in if I miss something but in short I will say we are still processing all of the feedback we have received and are trying to determine a path forward that honors the voices that have been raised in all the communications we have gotten. We will keep you and the community informed as we work through this process.

Thanks again and stay safe and well.
Julie

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

-------- Original message --------
From: Rosalyn LaPier <rrlapier@gmail.com>
Date: 7/9/20 9:37 AM (GMT-07:00)
To: Bryan von Lossberg <BvonLossberg@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Cc: "Grp. City Council and City Web Site" <Council@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Subject: Re: Systemic racism in Missoula

Has there been an update since last week's public meeting & public comments?

I listened to the entire meeting on my phone. But Zoom put me (perhaps all phone calls) on permanent mute, so we could not provide comment.

And I only heard one person speak in support of the proposed proposal (that was Deena Mansur) & everyone else spoke against it or on another issue.

I know that there has been backlash in the community against those who spoke against the proposal by members of the LEARN committee. I am hoping the City is aware of this & is doing something to address it. It is not helpful when your own committee strikes out against citizens who provide public comment.

I would appreciate an update.

Thank you,

Rosalyn LaPier
214 Hastings
Missoula
406-728-6224 (land line)

On Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 4:41 PM Rosalyn LaPier <rrlapier@gmail.com> wrote:

> Thank for this clarification, it is very helpful.
>
> There are two issues that I do want to address further. One is that the public meeting from last week should have been on the calendar -- and I think to be transparent City Council should state publicly that this SNAFU happened. Otherwise it appears to some in the community that this was done intentinally to not hear or silence some voices. As I stated before I had no idea the meeting was occuring -- even thougth I have been in communication with most of the people on the proposal committee & yourself.
>
> Second, is more urgent, I do believe that the City Council should withdraw their offer to 6 Pony & have an open and public "call for proposals." I believe this is an example of "systemic racism" & is something the City should be working to avoid. When the all-white City Council, with an all-white President contacts a white contractor "behind closed doors" without an effort to include BIPOC contractors or voices -- is a perfect example of what is refered to as "systemic racism" - or a system created to exclude BIPOC citizens and professionals. I believe if the City starts over -- with transparency of the entire process & with a public "call for proposals" -- this will go a long way to begin to break down that wall of "systemic racism". If the City Council decides to move forward as planned -- this proposal and the proposed product -- will always be tained or stained by its "behind closed doors" origin story.
>
> Related to both of these I believe that the City can ask our citizens for a "do over" -- let's start the process over, make it public, post the meetings properly, invite all voices, and ask for forgiveness -- and I believe that our BIPOC will forgive.
>
> Thank you for your time again,
>
> Rosalyn LaPier
> 214 Hastings Avenue
> Missoula, MT 59801
> 406-728-6224 (land line)
>
> On Tue, Jun 30, 2020, 10:04 AM Bryan von Lossberg <BvonLossberg@ci.missoula.mt.us> wrote:
>
>> Good morning, Rosalyn,
>>
>> I'll do my best to answer your questions where I can:
>>
>> RE 1:
>> Our Council rules allow the creation of ad hoc committees as deemed necessary, and in consultation with several of my colleagues, I constituted an ad hoc committee at the Council meeting on Monday, June 15. That was done under Agenda Item 12 New Business (https://pub-missoula.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=7ef5e3db-edbd-4306-a14a-026e4913ac54&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English)
>>
>> At that time and currently, the committee is comprised of the 12 current council members. My colleague Mirtha Becerra is the chair.

When I constituted this ad hoc committee, I initially characterized its meetings as "listening sessions." I received some understandable criticism for that terminology, and in acknowledgment of that, we have shifted the committee name to the ad hoc committee on public safety and systemic racism. I would welcome Mirtha's and other's sense of scope, but at the moment my view is the Council committee is interested in addressing exactly what you emailed us about initially: making system-wide change to end systemic racism in city government. And I would add ideally to collaborate with other Missoula institutions (such as the County and UM) in that effort.

RE 2:
Yes - the meetings are public. Our regular committee and Council meetings have had persistent technical challenges with public comment, and in response, Council asked UM IT to host the first meeting of the ad hoc committee that occurred last week on Wed., June 24th.
The video from that meeting is available through a link on the City's calendar of meetings here (under the Wednesday, June 24 item):
http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1149/AgendasWebcastsMinutes
From that page the actual video link is here: https://pub-missoula.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISIStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=393f800e-02c3-4675-a91d-d14d6af1bc21
While the meeting was listed on the committee schedule attached to the Council agenda for June 22nd, it was not listed on the calendar. We recognize the confusion and frustration this created and are working to improve that.

The next meeting of the committee was noticed for tomorrow from 11am to 1pm. UM is again hosting in a webinar format.
The meeting is on the City's calendar for July 1st here:
http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1149/AgendasWebcastsMinutes
As noted on the meeting notice, the registration link is
https://umontana.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3LU9w5K3Qc66uz1WAWRRlA

RE 3:
I am not familiar with the event your described, but I can say unequivocally that the role of the committee is NOT to silence BIPOC voices.

RE 4:
The City has not yet made a commitment to move forward with the work proposed in the proposal.

A couple of weeks ago, I reached out to Spider McKnight of Six Pony Hitch, one of the City's pre-qualified communications firms. I contacted Spider because of the phenomenal work she did around public engagement with the Downtown Master Plan Update. She worked with several members of the BIPOC community to prepare a proposal and presentation of a Community Research Project around Public Safety and Systemic Racism in Missoula.

The team includes:

• Wilena Old Person: Program Coordinator, College of Health/Board of Trustees Missoula County Public Schools
• Jamar Galbreath: Associate Director of Program Innovation at EmpowerMT
• Dr. Laurelle C. Warner: Campus Director for Walla Walla University Missoula Campus
• Alex Kim: Racial Justice Engagement Specialist at EmpowerMT
• Ku'au Ahina: University of Montana Pacific Islanders Club
• Brad Hall: Tribal Outreach Specialist, University of Montana
• Spider McKnight: Owner of the communications firm Six Pony Hitch

The proposal describes the LEARN team doing the following:
• Engage the community in a qualitative research effort that is both participatory and action oriented.
• Collect information and narratives across our entire community (BIPOC and white) to identify needs and issues and to get a better understanding of the current state of public safety and systemic racism in Missoula.
• Recommend changes that need to be made by Missoula City Council and Missoula County as governing bodies for a more equitable Missoula.
• Create a plan for wide dissemination of findings including a communications plan to bolster community support and work with City and County communications officers for media relations.

That team is reviewing the scope of the proposal based on feedback and interest it has received since the meeting last week.

That's where things currently stand, and Council welcomes suggestions and feedback about how to proceed.

Regards,
Bryan

Bryan von Lossberg
Alderman, Missoula City Council - Ward 1
City Council President
522 Howell St
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 552-7806

On Jun 30, 2020, at 8:07 AM, Rosalyn LaPier <rrlapier@gmail.com> wrote:

Greetings,

Yesterday, a group of young people who work with social justice & racial justice groups asked for clarity on last week's "public" meeting as discussed in the Missoulian article from the newly created committee.

I am interested in seeking clarity & transparency as well.

1) Can the Missoula City Council please share with the public the process for creating this Ad-Hoc committee? Who decided who was on the committee? The scope of their work? And the process for engaging the public?

2) Is this a public process? Apparently there was a "public" meeting last week, but where was this meeting advertised? I was not invited & neither we a lot of people who do this work. Yesterday, a young person called the City clerk who said it was not a City meeting, but a UM meeting. However, UM also follows public meeting laws. Again, I seek clarity & transparency here -- is this a public process? Are the meetings public?

3) Yesteday, I witnessed a member of this Ad-Hoc committee attempt to shame & intimidate an employee of a social justice organization -- on social media -- who was asking questions about transparency. Is it the intention of this committee to challenge those who ask questions by implying that their 1st Amenment rights to ask will be met with public shaming? Again, I am seeking clarity from the City of Missoula? What is the role of this committee? Is it to silence BIPOC voices?

4) Finally, the proposed (?) proposal was also shared on social media yesterday. I have read it. When did the City decide to move forward with this proposal? What was the process? Where is the transparency? How does this address systemic racism WITHIN City government & the police departement -- which is what our citizens are asking for? A 12 week study to ask BIPOC & all cititizens to prove that racism exists in Montana, Missoula & within City government seems counter-productive -- when we know that - yes - racism exists.

I look forward to hearing your responces & learn what actions steps are being taken by the City of Missoula.

Thank you for your time,

Rosalyn LaPier
214 Hastings Avenue
Missoula, MT 59801
406-728-6224 (land line)

On Fri, Jun 26, 2020, 10:20 AM Rosalyn LaPier <rrlapier@gmail.com> wrote:

> I was disappointed, but not surprised, to learn (no pun intended) this week that the Missoula City Council has decided not to act to address system racism in our local government. But instead has asked the BIPOC community to solve the problem.
>
> I am sharing an article from the Washington Post that addresses why this type of method is problematic.
>
> https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/06/26/black-ergs-tech/

I still hope that the Missoula City Council will choose to be more pro-active to make change.

Thank you for your time,

Rosalyn LaPier
214 Hastings Avenue
Missoula, MT 59801
406-728-6224 (land line)

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Rosalyn LaPier** <rrlapier@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 12, 2020 at 11:32 AM
Subject: Systemic racism in Missoula
To: <council@ci.missoula.mt.us>

Dear City Council,

I am a long time Missoula citizen, home-owner and tax-payer. I am also a 100th generation Native Montanan.

I am writing to push the City to make system-wide change – now – to end systemic racism in our governmental systems.

1) The City needs BIPOC voices in the room at all meetings. As a community we need to end systemic racism in our governmental structures. This means we can no longer have white-only meetings. If your answer to this is – we do not know how to solve this – then the City needs to hire an expert that can do it. Please do not ask BIPOC community members to solve this problem (and especially not solve it with free labor). It is not the job of the BIPOC community to create this change – it is the job of the City to make this change. BIPOC community members can only hope to hold you accountable – but you have to do your job to represent the entire community – not just white community members.

2) The City needs to publicly denounce armed militia in our streets. This is a public safety & public health issue (not a 1st or 2nd amendment issue).

3) The City needs to reorganize our Police Department to reflect evidence-based public safety and public health research that shows that the City needs – unarmed – conflict mediators, violence interrupters, crisis response teams and public health counselors to address many of the issues that armed police currently address. And keep a smaller armed police force that addresses true acts of criminal violence.

I hope to hear in the near future how the City will act on addressing structural racism in Missoula.

Please feel free to contact me at rrlapier@gmail.com with comments. questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time,

Rosalyn LaPier
214 Hastings Avenue
Missoula, MT 59801
406-728-6224 (land line)

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