

CITY OF ELLENSBURG
Date of Meeting
Time of Meeting
Place of Meeting

Minutes of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Commission Meeting
July 8, 2025
3:00 PM
Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Nancy Goodloe called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call Present: Phil Backlund, Tylene Carnell, Kandee Cleary, Teresa Divine, Nancy Goodloe, Amber Hoefer, and M. Eliatamby-O'Brien.

Also present: Nicole Klauss, DEI Commission staff member; Rhonda Schmidt, Ellensburg School District liaison; Ruben Cardenas, CWU Associate Vice President liaison, Student Engagement and Success; Ramona Bryant, League of Women Voters of Kittitas County; and 3 members of the public.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Backlund moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Cleary seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 6-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes from June 10, 2025 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Divine moved to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2025 DEI Commission Meeting. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 6-0.**

4. New Business

A. Study Session Follow Up

Goodloe asked for reflections on the June study session with City Council. Goodloe reported receiving a positive response about the conversation and information provided.

Carnell said it was a good conversation that could have gone longer. Hoefer expressed gratitude for the space and time, and said the Councilmembers did a good job participating and hopes to continue the conversation. Eliatamby-O'Brien said the conversation gave insight into how to build communicative relationships and areas for clarity.

B. Discuss Opening Future Meetings With Reading Definitions

Staff provided an update. In previous meetings the DEI Commission discussed a proposal to open meetings with a grounding exercise that includes definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging.

Commissioner Cleary moved to accept the statements and to start future commission meetings by reading the statements. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. Discussion included to read them in full with the examples, that the examples could be

expanded over time, and that they could be updated to include the business case for economic impact of DEI. **Motion approved 6-0.**

C. Comprehensive Plan Update

Goodloe provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan process. The July 21 meeting is when City Council will consider whether to docket the request to eliminate Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan. Goodloe said, if docketed, there will be a series of community meetings and opportunities for community feedback on the amendments.

Hoefler asked if the DEI Commission can request a study session to discuss this with the City Council if it is docketed, so the Commission can figure out how to respond and support Council. Goodloe will discuss with the Mayor and City Manager.

Carnell asked about the July 7 study session and how that tied in with this update; staff clarified the study session was for the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update.

The Commission requested the City Manager and Community Development attend the August DEI Commission meeting to provide an update.

D. Retreat Planning

Staff asked for feedback for agenda topics for the upcoming retreat.

Topics the commission wishes to discuss include:

- Reflection on what they are hearing and talking about the 2026 work plan, what to do differently, add, or make adaptations, accomplishments
- Update on the Comprehensive Plan and community discussions
- Supporting each other on projects, how to assist each other and get things done
- More discussion on what the block party idea would require putting together to take to City Council
- Review long-term and short-term goals and see if commission wants to change them
- How to work with liaisons better (possibly put at beginning of agenda so they can attend)
- 15 minutes to review the Council's strategic vision

Staff requested facilitator suggestions. Commission members requested a facilitator that could build on last year's session and is familiar with the DEI Commission in Ellensburg.

E. Discuss Block Party Idea

Divine gave a brief introduction to the block party idea, of helping create a program to help neighborhoods in Ellensburg host block parties. The Commission could possibly help offset costs for noise waivers, street closures, and permits. The idea is that it would apply equity to the community because not every child can afford to go to summer camps, but everyone could attend the block parties. The goal would be that eventually neighborhoods would do this themselves without assistance.

Staff said the idea would likely require vetting from legal, special events, and other City departments. It should go to City Council first to see if the Council wants to pursue the idea because they could direct staff to do the research. The Commission will discuss this further at the retreat to determine if it should go on the 2026 work plan.

5. Previous Meeting Motions And To-Do List Review

Carnell reported reaching out the multicultural day organizer in Tri-Cities. Eliatamby-O'Brien also reached out to folks involved in multicultural day events. They plan to set up a meeting to discuss if the event is possible this year and to look at dates in the early fall.

6. Liaison Reports

- Ellensburg School District liaison Rhonda Schmidt reported: The district is looking at doing a Belonging in the Burg event in the fall and another event that is related to the new strategic plan. ESD submitted their first report to the Department of Justice. ESD is holding professional development for staff including a speaker focused on inclusion of kids with IEPs in mainstream classes.
- CWU liaison Ruben Cardenas reported: The construction of CWU's new multicultural center is progressing in Black Hall. The goal is to open part of it this fall/winter.

6. Subcommittee Reports

Goodloe said the Juneteenth event was well attended and had good music.

Backlund wants to discuss the future of the listening tours and what is next. Goodloe requested a subcommittee meeting.

7. Commission Member Reports

Goodloe reported that Council is making changes to their rules regarding:

- additional time for public commenters utilizing language interpreter services;
- additional time for public commenters who may require an ADA-related accommodation;
- additional time at the end of Council agendas for continued public commentary

Goodloe reported there are conversations happening around parks and recreation in the community and the Parks Department is working to update the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Sustainable Funding Plan.

Divine reported APOYO has lost a lot of its funding so there is a GoFundMe open.

8. Staff Report

Staff reported:

- Ellensburg Academy is on July 29 at 6 p.m. at Hal Holmes.
- Summer Concerts in Unity Park are happening on Thursdays in July and August at 6:30 p.m.

- Coffee with City Council is 9-11 a.m. August 13 at the Adult Activity Center.
- A couple of members are due to renew their OPMA/Public Records training and notifications have been sent.

9. Public Comments

Chair Goodloe called for public comment.

Lisa James, Ellensburg, provided public comment.

William Coleman, Kittitas, provided public comment.

Next Meeting July 8, 2025

Topics: Possible proposal for reallocation of spending plan, Comprehensive Plan process update from Community Development and/or City Manager

Meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Nicole Klauss

Drafted: 7/9/2025

Approved: 9/9/2025