

Minutes of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Commission Meeting

Date of Meeting

February 3, 2026

Time of Meeting

3:00 PM

Place of Meeting

Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Nancy Goodloe called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. and welcomed the new commission members.

Roll Call Present: Phil Backlund, Kande Cleary, Amber Darting, Nancy Goodloe, Judd Ike Grey, Amber Hofer, Cody Natland, and M. Eliatamby-O'Brien.

Also present: Nicole Klauss, staff member assigned to the DEI Commission; Heidi Behrends Cerniwey, City Manager; Ruben Cardenas, CWU Associate Vice President liaison; Mayor Rich Elliott; and 3 members of the public (2 in person and 1 online).

2. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Kande Cleary moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Phil Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 7-0.**

3. Approval of Commission Minutes from January 13, 2026 Meeting

Commissioner Phil Backlund moved to approve the meeting minutes from the January 13, 2026 DEI Commission meeting. Commissioner Kande Cleary seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 7-0.**

4. New Business

A. The Commission reviewed the notes from the dot exercise that took place at the January 20 City Council meeting. Commission members recapped what was discussed at the study session and called out some areas that will need further discussion such as leveraging groups the commission partners with and formalizing the process, reaching out to a broader audience, being intermediaries rather than event planners, addressing who is not in the room or at the table, expanding the scope of the listening tours and making updates to the listening tour policy. The Mayor participated in the discussion.

The Commission discussed formal versus informal feedback to and from Council. One way to get informal feedback is to work through staff to get a note on a Council agenda in the City Manager's report. That would provide transparency and also a method for getting informal feedback.

The Commission discussed how to get the information from the study session into a work plan. Chair Goodloe said she will work with the executive committee to provide advice on next steps and bring a work plan to a future meeting.

The Commission asked about Chapter 1.88. The City Manager said the plan is to bring recommended changes to Chapter 1.88 to the City Council at the second February meeting and then provide a briefing to the DEI Commission at the March meeting.

5. Liaison Reports

CWU liaison Ruben Cardenas reported:

- Jennifer King will be doing a presentation at CWU on Feb. 5 in the SURC Ballroom. King was the first black female coach in NFL history. The presentation is free and open to all.

6. Subcommittee Reports

The interview committee's recommendations were accepted by the City Council on Feb. 2.

7. Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Backlund received a briefing from Community Development staff regarding housing affordability. Community Development staff will be invited to the March meeting to provide some background.

8. Staff Report

Staff Reported:

- Staff will reach out to new members to schedule onboarding, get emails set up, and provide mentor matches.
- Registration for the Ellensburg Academy is open. Limited seats, please register and plan to attend both dates – March 11 & 18. Please share with your networks.
- City facilities are closed on Monday, February 16, 2026 for Presidents' Day. The City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

9. Public Comments

Chair Goodloe called for public comment.

- Theresa Plue provided public comment.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Nicole Klauss, staff member assigned to the DEI Commission

Drafted: 1/14/26

Approved: 3/10/26