

Harada, Patricia

From: Weaver, Tracy (City Clerk)
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 5:34 PM
To: Harada, Patricia; Sandoval, Lili
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment for 01/17/23 City Council Meeting - Non-Agenda Item

Please post the email below on the website under Jan 17 meeting.

Thank you,

~Tracy

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Weaver, Tracy (City Clerk)" <tweaver@elsegundo.org>
Date: January 17, 2023 at 5:32:26 PM PST
To: "George, Darrell" <dgeorge@elsegundo.org>, "Hensley, Mark" <mhensley@hensleylawgroup.com>, "Voss, Barbara" <bvoss@elsegundo.org>
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment for 01/17/23 City Council Meeting - Non-Agenda Item

FYI

~Tracy

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Holop <dholop@gmail.com>
Date: January 17, 2023 at 5:05:11 PM PST
To: ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS <ALLELECTEDOFFICIALS@elsegundo.org>
Subject: Public Comment for 01/17/23 City Council Meeting - Non-Agenda Item

Dear Council,

I write again today about the City's DEI Committee and the way it continues to be handled by Council.

First, there seems to be a major disconnect that still has never been explained by anyone on the Council as far as I know, and I don't suspect it will be tonight either but I'll implore you again tonight, and into the future, until the right things are done. The City's Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2023 through FY 2025-2026 was approved by you last September, and contains only five (5) broad goals. This would lead one to believe that each of these five goals would be very important to the City. Goal one now reads "Enhance Customer Service, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Communication," incorporating the prior goal that was "Enhance Customer Service, Engagement, and Communication; Embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." Based on this goal and the existence of the City's DEI Committee,

one might reasonably believe that the City is committed to DEI. And yet, other than funding for the initial DEI consultant Jimmy Pete to help set up, select, and get started the Committee (whose role ended over a year ago), the DEI Committee has had no funding and no budget to carry out its work. Government budgets reveal a municipality's true priorities. A budget of \$0 speaks for itself. Moreover, if the Council really thought this was an important goal, one would expect Councilmembers to take an active role in working on the Goal and working with the City's DEI Committee. Myself and other community members have been active participants in the DEI Committee and have rarely (or for some, never) seen Councilmembers at the meetings. Again, time and effort reveals priorities. Lip service does not achieve a goal. It would be great if the Council could put its money where its mouth is in 2023 and walk the walk instead of just talking the talk.

Second, and this goes to the point of Council and community participation, is making these meetings live-streamed on YouTube and then available online there, as City Council, Planning Commission, and Rec & Parks Commission meetings are. This is a request that has been made by community members and DEI members since the Committee's work began but has been ignored time and again, without any explanation or justification for why it won't be done. Certainly the technology exists and is quite inexpensive at this time; it's used for the other meetings that are live-streamed already. Doing this (for the DEI Committee as well as the other Committees and Boards) would be a simple, cheap, and effective way to achieve City Strategic Plan Goal 1 of Enhancing Customer Service, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Communication. Honestly, what could do that more than making meetings that are already public easier for community stakeholders to access and participate in by allowing the meetings to be viewed live online or at a later date? This is Inclusive, as it allows more community members to participate in the process who might not otherwise be able to, like people with disabilities or the elderly for who it might be difficult (or even not possible) to make the meetings in person, especially today those are immunocompromised for who still may feel safe to attend; and those with other obligations at the 6pm time of the meetings, like parents (often mothers), who have to care for their children at that time, and those who work outside typical business hours (outside 9am-5pm), which is typically those whose voices are already historically underrepresented. Not recording the meetings only continues these issues - recording allows a more Diverse group of community members participate and is more Equitable. It's antithetical to the mission of DEI that it hasn't been done and indicates a real lack of actually caring about the Goal. Many of us continue to wonder why the City won't take this simple step to enhance DEI?

And last, what is the criteria for selecting DEI Committee Members? As I understand it from those with knowledge of the process, a Member was appointed in the most recent round in late 2022 who had *not even applied in this round*. Mr. Hill had applied in the prior round in March 2022 but not this time, yet was selected over other seemingly qualified applicants - and apparently at the recommendation of departing Committee Member Mr. Wood, so that the Committee could keep a "conservative" voice on the Committee. At the same time, I understand that another applicant was not chosen because of his affiliation with SEA Change (of which I am also a member), a local community group that was described as a "political action committee," which a) it is plainly not; and b) even if it were, why would such an affiliation alone be disqualifying? If this is all true, it is quite troubling that you are choosing Committee members based on their political and/or civic affiliations, rather than their qualifications and

commitment to the mission, values and goals of the DEI Committee - and of the City's Goal of Enhancing Customer Service, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Communication. This Committee does not have to be political but it seems you are intent on making it so and I have to question why. Is it based on your own views of DEI? If so, the community deserves to know that. Is it to appease a certain segment of the community - your electorate, your supporters, people you may know in the community? If so, it is troubling that you would appease those who seek to undermine the goals of the Committee itself. Because what is the ultimate effect of this decision? The DEI Committee was created to address Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in terms of groups that have not historically and traditionally been INCLUDED and treated EQUITABLY in our City because of their DIVERSITY. It's not me saying this - go back and watch the City Council meetings where the Committee was created and your own words. So when we talk about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in this way - the way the Committee was viewed at its formation and by its members and supporters today - who does this include? I think an easy and obvious place to look first is discrimination law. Generally, under federal law, protected categories include race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age (40 or older), disability and genetic information (including family medical history). California law is more inclusive and explicitly adds categories like gender expression, Marital status, and Military/veteran status. What is not included here? Political affiliation or ideology. And for good reason. Now, I am NOT suggesting that anyone *should* be discriminated against based on their political affiliation. What I am pointing out is how absurd defining the group to be understood to be created to make sure to be Inclusive of Diverse voices such as conservatives (not a historically or traditionally discriminate against group) is - and to discriminate against others because of their political ideology. Moreover, do you even know the political affiliation of any other members or applicants? Or do you just assume it? And what is the 'conservative' view on diversity, equity and inclusion you want to be sure is Included in the discussion? I think the community deserves an explanation of why you made this odd choice to go *out of your way* to appoint somebody who didn't even apply for the current open positions when their qualified applicants who had applied and were ready, willing and able to contribute.

If the concern is that the DEI Committee will be too 'radical,' or you get worried about what it looks like you're supporting, again, your constituents deserve an explanation. What has the DEI Committee done or suggested that has been so radical? From where I sit, the Committee hasn't come close to doing anything radical - specifically because you've hamstrung it with no budget, no active Council interest or participation, and a Member in Mr. Wood who sought to throw sand in the gears at every opportunity - and have now appointed his recommendation on a replacement in Mr. Hill. It seems you are so afraid of what some *might* think or what *might* happen that you are willing to allow the goal of DEI - one of the City's five goals! - to fail before it even has a chance to succeed.

Yesterday was of course Martin Luther King Jr. Day and I'm sure you or others will cite him at tonight's meeting for his courage and efforts. But nothing is more frustrating than when he is cited by those who oppose today's DEI efforts in his name. And so if you do nothing else, I implore you to read his Letter from Birmingham Jail and consider whether you are living MLK's vision or not. I hope that you do live his vision going forward - otherwise his dreams and ideals will never have any chance of being realized.

<https://www.csuchico.edu/iege/assets/documents/susi-letter-from-birmingham-jail.pdf>

Thank you,
David Holop
El Segundo resident/parent; member of SEA Change