



**Town of Portola Valley
Equity Committee
Tuesday, July 13, 2021 – 7:00 PM**

Special Videoconference Meeting via Zoom

VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING AGENDA

Remote Meeting Covid-19 Advisory: On March 17, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-29-20, suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. Pursuant to the statewide Shelter-In-Place Order issued by the Governor in Executive Order N-33-20 on March 19, 2020, and the CDC's social distancing guidelines which discourage large public gatherings, Portola Valley Town Council meetings are being conducted electronically. The meeting is not available for in-person attendance.

Members of the public may attend the meeting by video or phone linked in this agenda.

Join Zoom Video Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85463642757?pwd=eFNyOXV6TmFmak13eStpQWcydSt4UT09>

Phone into Zoom Meeting:

1-669-900-6833

1-877-853-5247 (toll-free)

*Mute/Unmute – Press *6 / Raise Hand – Press *9*

Meeting ID: 854 6364 2757

Password: 551820

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call –
Committee members: Ali Aalaei, Kim Acker, Patt Baenen, Johnathan Clark, Judith Murphy, Lucy Neely, Andrew Pierce, Gwendolyn Stritter, and Karen Vahtra
Council Liaisons: Maryann Derwin and John Richards
3. Oral Communications for Items not on the agenda
4. Presentation by Town Attorney – Introduction to the Brown Act
5. Approve Meeting Minutes for June 29, 2021
6. Old Business
 - a. Review and continue Subcommittee's work on the Committee's Charter: Mission, Duties, and Functions

7. New Business

- a. Name of Committee: Race & Equity or Equity
- b. Housing Element Committee: Representative from Committee
- c. Facility Rental – Resident Requirement. Subcommittee to research:
 1. Formal report on all nearby towns
 2. Report on usage of PV Town Facilities
 3. Propose a Non-Resident Surcharge, if desired
- d. Support for AB118:
 1. <https://theappeal.org/politicalreport/california-crises-act-2021/>
 2. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB118

8. Adjournment



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
Equity Committee Meeting (FIRST EVER!)
June 29, 2021, 7:00 PM
765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA

EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Roll Call:

Committee members: Ali Aalaei, Kim Acker, Patt Baenen, Johnathan Clark,
Judith Murphy, Lucy Neely, Andrew Pierce, Gwendolyn Stritter, and Karen Vahtra

Council Liaisons: Maryann Derwin and John Richards

Guests: Besty Morgenthaler, Cole ??

New Business:

a. Nomination of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary: Gwen Stritter nominated Kim Acker to be chair and Johnathan Clark to be vice chair. Patt Baenen seconded. The group voted unanimously in support. Lucy Neely volunteered to be secretary. Judith nominated Lucy to be secretary, Gwen seconded. Group voted unanimously in support.

b. Schedule a regular meeting date and time: Concerns about staffing availability depending on timing, but Maryann assured it would be fine. Proposal of meeting at 7 pm second Tuesdays of the month. Unanimous vote in favor.

Discussion of regular meeting end time. Andrew commented that having a hard end time means you need to be willing to cut off the agenda or people who want to talk, and that sometimes people will want to discuss beyond a certain time, especially with the subject matter at hand.

c. Discuss and start work on the Committee's Charter including developing the Mission Statement: Discussion of how to brainstorm on mission of committee without violating the Brown Act. Discussion of possibility of having a public, virtual place to deposit idea; agreement that this would still violate Brown Act.

Judy Murphy suggested that we have a brain storming session during this meeting and each member can suggest whatever ideas they like. Group supports.

Karen Vahtra wondered about possibility of influencing schools, eg with critical race theory curriculum. Mary Ann noted that the town has no jurisdiction over schools but can offer ideas.

Andrew suggested we look at what happens to people who don't live in this town who come into the town to work. How are police treating them? How is the community treating them? The majority of people of color in the community don't live here but work here.

Karen noted that it's not just about race, but also about caste. Workers vs residents. Suggesting to open discussion up to caste and not just race.

Judy noted that in regard to objectives we've been given some lead by the town already: developing community awareness around equity, coordinating with other town committees, influencing town processes to be anti-racist.

Gwen noted interest in seeing if there are avenues to diversify schools in PV, where enrollment is low. Cole (guest) agreed.

Judy suggested increasing diversity in town. Karen suggested racial diversity as well as economic diversity.

Pat wondered whether something could happen at the corner of Alpine and Portola. Something visible to show where PV stands regarding equity. Judy noted this would fall under awareness. Johnny agrees.

Johnny would like to hear from younger people of color in town. Cole agrees.

Karen wonders about PV, as a wealthy town, engaging in reparations. She also wondered about the town giving land to indigenous people. Or creating a physical symbol to represent. Pat summarizes this as 'visibility'.

Pat suggests a speaker series — there is already energy and organization there. Kim summarizes as education.

Ali wondered to what extent our objectives are limited to just PV? Or to what extent are we trying to influence other nearby towns? Whether just by acting as an example or more direct. Are we focused just on our town? Are we trying to go bigger and make change in nearby towns? PV is relatively small. Starting small is meaningful, but do we want to aim to cause change beyond PV?

Pat suggested having a liaison to connect with neighboring communities.

Andrew noted that we are tied at the hip with Woodside and that we're not important to Palo Alto. Suggested working with other towns in southern San Mateo county. Judy noted that we are in the county of San Mateo so that might be a natural community.

Kim wondered about process, how long is the charter relevant for? How long are objectives relevant for? Kim called attention to the sustainability charter as what felt like most relevant of the examples provided, noting that #1, 3, and 6 seem most relevant. Kim noted that an annual rhythm of goals seems like a good idea.

Develop policies to suggest to town council. Ask other committees to create annual DEI objectives.

Karen suggested framing as intersectionality with other committees, to see how our work is related.

Lucy noted that we can play a committed role in the conversation about housing in PV instead of leaving that advocacy work on the shoulders of select council members.

Ali noted that housing conversation is an elephant in the room. Very important if we are trying to diversify the community. Seems like a very big issue, if not the biggest. Barriers to entry are so great. How can this committee influence housing and zoning? Is one of our objectives to increase diversity of residents? Or are we just trying to be more aware as a community? More open to ppl coming in to work. Alice noted the distinction of public and private schools. Are we trying to influence residency?

Karen mentioned truth and reconciliation. How do we not mince words? How do we confront history in an honest way? Engage in reparations?

Kim suggested visioning work around the question of 'what kind of community do we want to create?' Kim wants to see an objective of uncovering the processes of whiteness in our own meetings, and to see it on the agenda every month.

John Richards mentioned reviewing policies, procedures, ordinances and the way the town is set up.

Judy mentioned curiosity about data around diversity in local schools.

Karen noted reviewing, policies, procedures, and language in town documents and processes.

Kim articulated the desire to create safe space in the environment of the committee to be able to address challenging issues as they come up.

Judy noted that the town is starting through major reviews of the general plan and housing element. Judy suggested that language could be reviewed by this committee (ie general plan, etc), similar to how projects are run through conservation committee.

Karen noted committee could assist town council in drafting language to acknowledge issues of equity.

Johnny and Pat discussed dynamics of police ticketing in PV, related to bicycle committee.

Maryann noted that PV contract with sheriff is coming up in a couple of years and that council would like to create a subcommittee hopefully with members of equity committee to engage in that process.

Kim added that we need to move beyond education. Many people are over educated but not skilled. Moving into skill building.

Karen wondered about experience sharing, a la sister city.

Johnny noted having difficult experiences in a local school around issues of race.

Discussion of mission vs objectives. Are they the same or is there a use for both? Subcommittee will explore.

Ali circled back to the visible demonstration and suggested an event like a play or musical that is educational and brings in members of neighboring communities. Johnny would like to see multiple manifestations.

Karen suggested offering public spaces (such as town center facilities) to diverse populations at lower cost. Kim described this as 'access'.

Betsy Morgenthaler (guest) suggested the committee find well-resourced/experienced communities to ally with. Suggested playing the role of bringing people/organizations together to share resources, eg East Side Prep and Corte Madera.

Ali echoed the importance of data to support the work and suggested the importance of the committee deciding what data would be useful in terms of starting out.

Lucy noted that we are an extremely wealthy community and wondered how to skillfully proceed with that awareness. Also wondered about how to possibly leverage the wealth of this community to do this work. Karen noted that we could acknowledge that context as a part of our committee's language, in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

Group moved to formation of subcommittee to develop a draft charter. Pat volunteered. Karen volunteered herself and suggested one of the two lawyers be on the committee. Ali volunteered. Judy volunteered. Andrew volunteered and noted ambivalence in that time spent in process is time spent not doing the work. Subsequently Andrew removed himself from committee.

Kim wondered about the process. Judy summarized that subcommittee would meet, draft up a charter, that draft would be included in the packet for the next meeting.

Judy, Karen, and Ali are subcommittee.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Date & Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday July 13th, 7:00 pm

Proposed Equity Committee Charter

MISSION

The Portola Valley Equity Committee's mission is to create a town where people of any race, color, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, socioeconomic status, or any other identity encounter no barrier to inclusion and feel welcome here regardless of whether they are a resident, a person who works in town, or a visitor.

DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

Identify systemic barriers to inclusion that may exist within the town's policies, regulations, and practices.

Recommend changes to policies and propose actions to the Town Council related to race and equity focused on but not restricted to activities within the town.

Develop programs that inform residents on race and equity.

Proactively communicate, cooperate, and coordinate with the Town Council, town committees and commissions, staff, residents, people who work in town, and visitors as well as other local municipalities and outside organizations.

RESPONSIBLE TO:

The Town Council

COORDINATION

Town Council Liaison(s)

MEMBERSHIP

No more than nine members, each appointed for one-year terms by the Mayor with Town Council concurrence. Rotating Chair and Vice Chair selected by Committee.

MEETINGS

Regular meetings are to be held the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

Housing Element Committee

The Housing Element Committee will begin meeting in June/July 2021 and serve through December 2022. Committee members are anticipated to:

- Provide recommendations to the Town Council on an updated Housing Element that provides means to accommodate additional housing units
- Explore options to minimize the impacts of additional housing units on the Town's character, safety concerns, and traffic.
- Maximize public participation in the update by encouraging residents, business owners, and the Town's diverse workforce to attend meetings and share ideas
- Communicate information on the Committee's progress and recommendations to residents

The Town Council created a subcommittee to manage the interview process. The subcommittee will also establish roles and responsibilities of the Committee, using adopted Town policies as a guide.

The Housing Element Committee's charge is to develop a Housing Element that complies with State law and will be certified, while maintaining Town values. Meetings would be held monthly at a set time. Additional meetings or variation in the schedule may be necessary. Agendas would be structured to facilitate completion of the Housing Element on the timeline required by the State.

Composition of the committee could include 13 members as follows:

- Two Town Council Members (same as the Council Subcommittee)
- Two Planning Commission Members, appointed by the body
- One ASCC Member, appointed by the body
- One Member of the newly-formed Race/Equity Committee
- Seven members of the community

Community members must be residents of Town. They may own or rent their residence.

For selection of members for this committee, staff suggests the following:

- The Council Subcommittee would review the applications (and narrow them down if a large quantity is received), conduct interviews, and make recommendations to the full Council on appointments.
- Selection criteria should be established that provides a diversity of viewpoints. The Council may wish to consider the following:
 - Residency in different neighborhoods of the community
 - Residents that have lived in the community for a long time and residents that are newer
 - A diversity of ages, gender identity and backgrounds
 - Connection to the business community
 - Connection to a profession related to home development and/or sales (such as architect, developer, or real estate broker)