

Racial & Ethnic Equity Commission
Draft Minutes of Meeting
July 20, 2023, 6:00 pm Kenosha County Board Chambers

Committee Members Present: Brian Thomas, Justin Crosby, Brian Gonzales, Xavier Solis, Alayna Arrington (6:09p), Cortney Marshall, Duane O’Keefe, Andy Berg, Elizabeth Garcia

Excused: Brian Gonzales

Others Present: Kelsey Huebler, Jennifer Kopp

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order/Roll Call –Chair Solis called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with roll call.

6:01 PM

2. Approval of Minutes- July 7, 2023. Minutes Moved by Supervisor Berg, Seconded by Supervisor Brian Thomas. All Aye Motion Carried.

6:01 PM

3. Citizens Comments – Comments limited to 3 minutes and up to 45 minutes. Comments made by:

Laura Belsky- Speaks about the Resolution she helped draft Declaring Racism as a Health Crisis in Kenosha County as well as the Resolution creating the commission

#2- Speaks about sterilization between 1921 to 1981. She believes Racism exists, but it is not a public health crisis.

Terri Roth- Feels they have disparaged the work by the previous County Executive by changing the name of the award. She gives background on all of Jennie Tunkieicz accomplishments.

Adeline Green- The Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis was approved by the majority of the County Board. This resolution outlines exactly why there is a Public Health Crisis. She feels there has been no improvement since this Resolution was passed. She gives statistics to supporting her claims that the numbers have not improved, but worsened.

Tim Sanborn – Speaks on the Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health crisis with his background in this field.

George Arf- Speaks regarding the meeting on July 7th and his thoughts on renaming the award.

Veronica King- in 2020 Served on the speaker’s task force for racial disparities of Wisconsin. In 2022 released the data and recommendations to end racial disparities. Areas of focus includes policing, Education, Childcare, Professional Licensing, Health care disparities. This report was distributed to Governor Evers. She will email the report to the Commission.

Charmaine Harris- Explains Systemic Racism. For the past 7 years he's ran a fatherhood program; this program was cut, and the funds sent back to the state. This is systemic racism. Urges the Commission to refocus.

Mary Kay Slider- Recounts a story from her past regarding racism. There are beliefs we all share that are emotional, but please put Kenosha County first and do not touch the resolution

Joel Trudell – Speaks about a trial and the special REEC meeting last week.

Sandy Wedmeyer- Lack of respect of the commission to the volunteers is appalling. Speaks regarding the Jennie Tunkieicz award and how it ties to the REEC. She speaks of her concern of doxing by the members of the Commission.

Gail Clark Taylor- Asks the commission to extend the length of time for citizen's comments. Apologizes for last weeks word choices. She feels the Commission needs to all be in the same boat rowing in the same direction. Get on with the business of making Kenosha County better and benefitting the citizens of Kenosha.

Marie Hoff- recounts a personal story. Believes local mental health needs to be a priority in this community. She believes there is a crisis of health for people of Racial and Ethnic minorities

Yvonne Bessek- She believes we need everyone on the Commission and asks them to consider what it is they each bring to the table and come together to use the expertise they have to make the community proud.

Pauela – Urges the commission to deal with racism issues.

Sabrina Landry- Speaks regarding the statistics of races and arrests. She believes the new appointments on this commission are here to tear it down from the inside.

Troy Landry- Speaks regarding growing up as a biracial child. Strongly believes racism is a public health crisis in Kenosha County. Urges the commission to research systemic and institutionalized racism.

Sue Grace Krokosz- Thanks the citizens for coming. Speaks regarding open meetings laws.

6:54 PM

4. Subcommittee Reports-

Housing has nothing to report at the moment but working on gathering data.

Health Subcommittee- did not meet as Supervisor Berg was removed from this Committee

Law Enforcement- Supervisor Thomas speaks regarding the report from the last submission to the Executive Committee. Sheriff's Department authorized a data analyst in the new budget for 2023-2024. Almost 50% of the people arrested for traffic related violations do not reside in Kenosha County. He discusses the reports and the statistics within the reports.

Supervisor Berg requests that in the future that when subcommittee issues are discussed that the individual that distributed the report can be present to answer questions and discuss.

Race/Type/Group- break down into race and ethnicity.

Once all the data has been gathered, and the report is ready for the Executive Committee- the Commission will bring the data analyst in to speak regarding the reports.

Supervisor Berg requests the data be broken down further. Supervisor Thomas has requested that information.

Chair Solis recognizes Supervisor Belsky- She asks how the data will be applied and addressed towards the REEC.

Supervisor Thomas explains how he plans to use the data to further the Commission and the report to provide the Executive Committee a more granular report regarding the arrest data.

7:25 PM

5. Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution Declaring Racism as a Health Crisis in Kenosha County:

Supervisor Thomas clarifies that he requested the information on the research of this Resolution solely to better understand what was researched to adopt this resolution. **Supervisor Thomas makes a motion that the REEC requests all reports, research data, and minutes from meetings from the County Health Department, Directors Office, County Executive's Office, and County Board and any related County Board Committee or Organizing Group that was used to determine that Racism was a Public Health Crisis in Kenosha County and Kenosha County Government's Policies, practices and procedures.**

Seconded by Commissioner Garcia

Commissioner Garcia asks why we are focusing on this data if the REEC is not focusing on health. So much time has been wasted already.

Supervisor Berg does not support this motion as he feels it is an attempt to discredit the work done previously. He feels the commission needs to move forward.

Commissioner Marshal asks what the purpose of the data, Supervisor Thomas feels this data is helpful in moving the commission forward. He feels each subcommittee could use this data and build on it to move their subcommittee along.

Commissioner O'Keefe supports this motion as this is educational for the Commission.

Commissioner Garcia agrees that if this is solely for educational purposes, then she supports this.

Supervisor Belsky requests to be recognized. She sent all the links and resources to Supervisor Thomas and Berg and Chair Solis for all the data sources the used for the resolution. Kenosha County Website contains all the information the Commission is looking for. She encourages the Chair to send the links on to the Commission for educational purposes.

Thomas- aye

Arrington- abstain

Okeefe-Aye

Marshall- Aye
Crosby- Nay
Berg- Nay
Garcia- Aye
Solis- Aye

Motion carries.

7:40 PM

6. Discussion and Possible Action on Reallocating Members on Subcommittees:

Chair Solis would like to focus on education. He would like to appoint Commissioner Arrington as the chair of this Committee and Co-Chair as Commissioner Garcia. He would also like Supervisor Thomas to also be on this subcommittee. Commissioner Arrington will sit on both the health and education subcommittees.

Supervisor Berg confirms that he will not sit on any subcommittees. Chair Solis confirms.

7:50 PM

7. Discussion on the nominations for Jennie Tunkieicz Award for Gender and Racial Equity and Possible Action:

Chair Solis asks for an update on nominations. Kelsey states there has not been a nomination that she has received thus far.

7:52 PM

9. Future Scheduling: August 17th at 6:00pm. Supervisor Thomas feels this is the best location to hold future meetings as there is a large turnout. Chair Solis would like to continue to meet at Kenosha County Center for all future meetings.

7:55 PM

10. Adjourn- Supervisor Thomas makes a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Marshall seconded. All Aye. Motion Carried.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Peralta**