



AGENDA
Equity Commission
In-Person / Electronic Meeting

New Brighton City Hall; 803 Old Hwy 8 NW
Upper-Level Conference Room
March 16, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

- **Attend the meeting in Person:** Members of the Equity Commission and the public may attend the meeting in person. Attendees who are ill are asked to wear masks and practice social distancing.
- **Watch the meeting electronically:** To observe the meeting electronically, visit [the City website](#) or tune into CTV Channel 8023 (CenturyLink) or Channel 16 (Comcast).
- **Join the meeting electronically:** Members of the Equity Commission may also attend the meeting remotely under MN Statutes 13D.021. Suppose you need to interact with our public officials or staff but are not comfortable or able to participate in in-person conferences. You may click the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89862402361?pwd=MWtPeIRNTGt2RmR2TktwSkM0R1VHdz09> (no app needed) or use your Zoom app to join by entering: Meeting ID: 898 6240 2361 and Passcode: 867530.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chair Lindsay Spooner | <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Carlos Herrera |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vice-Chair Kami Miller | <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Ellen Weber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Sanja Obradovic | <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Jason Steffenhagen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Jonas Lim | <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Kristin Lau |

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Approval of February 16, 2022 Minutes

V. Business Items

- a. Race to Zero Education Campaign
- b. Juneteenth Celebration

VI. City Staff Update – Hue Schlieu, DEI Coordinator

VII. City Council Update – Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, Mayor

VIII. Adjournment – Next meeting: April 20, 2023

** A quorum of the City Council may be present.*



MINUTES
New Brighton Equity Commission
Regular Meeting – February 16, 2023
6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Commissioners Carlos Herrera, Kristin Lau, Kami Miller, Lindsay Spooner, Jason Steffenhagen, and Ellen Weber.

Members Absent: Commissioners Jonas Lim and Sanja Obradovic.

Also Present: Assistant City Manager Jen Lehmann, DEI Coordinator Hue Schlieu, Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Ben Gozola, Technician Carl Gillies, and Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas (attending remotely)

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Weber to approve the agenda as presented.

Approved 6-0

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Weber to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2022 meeting.

Approved 6-0

V. Introduction of Hue Schlieu, DEI Coordinator

Lehmann introduced newly hired DEI Coordinator Hue Schlieu to the Commission. She explained Ms. Schlieu was hired at the end of January and comes to the City from the St. Paul Public School District.

Hue Schlieu stated she was really happy to be working for the City of New Brighton. She appreciated all of the passion the City brings and she was looking forward to join the efforts of the community.

The DEI Commission members introduced themselves to Ms. Schlieu and welcomed her to the City of New Brighton.

VI. Business Items

A. Ramsey County Critical Corridor Grant: Banner Discussion

Gozola stated in October of 2022, New Brighton Staff applied for and received two (2) Critical Corridors Initiative Grants through Ramsey County. One of these grants allows for creation and implementation of two sets of banners for use along the Old Hwy 8 Corridor. Gozola explained that \$32,600 is available to fund the development and production of new light pole banners to create a sense of place along the Old Highway 8 corridor. The grant allows the Economic Development Commission (EDC), with the support of the Equity Commission, to be involved in the process of banner design, selection, and creation of two (2) decorative/commemorative banner sets for the ninety-two (92) light poles that are located along Old Highway 8 in front of City Hall and beyond. These new banners will supplement the City's existing banner inventory, and will aid in celebrating events and creating interest to the Old Highway 8 corridor at different times of the year.

The Equity Commission is asked to participate in this project by informing Council what (if any) topics you would like one or both runs of signs to focus on. Your feedback, along with feedback from the City's EDC, will be provided to council for consideration, and Council will make final the determination on focal points for each banner run.

Gillies commented on the proposed timeline for this project. He reported the EDC recommended staff work with the local schools to provide design ideas for the banners. In addition, a website will be created to allow residents in the community to submit banner designs. He discussed how the project would commence over the summer months, noting it was his goal to have the banners installed this fall. Staff reviewed banners that were posted in other communities and asked that the Commission make recommendations on one or two themes for the banner runs.

Discussion included:

- Potential themes for the banners.
- An "I Am New Brighton" campaign to showcase the growing diversity in the community.
- The Commission supported the community being asked for design ideas. These ideas could be dropped off at the winter farmers market, at City Hall or the library, and when making decisions on idea solicitation.
- The Commission recommended the signs be printed in different languages that represented the diverse residents in New Brighton with a welcome theme.
- The Commission suggested one run of banners highlight the City sponsored events such as Chalk fest, the car run and stockyard days.
- The Commission did not support putting old buildings on the banners.
- The Commission supported city layout/key corridors.
- Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested the banners not focus on any specific holidays. She recommended that conversations be held with the Stockyard Days committee before any banners be considered naming that event.
- Chair Spooner encouraged the Commissioner members forward any other thoughts or ideas regarding the banners to staff.

B. Continuation of Racial Covenant Restriction Discussion

Lehmann reported that at the November 17, 2022, Equity Commission meeting, Commissioners received a presentation by Kiarra Zackery and Maria Cisneros about Just Deeds, a coalition of community stakeholders committed to acknowledging and addressing systemic racism in housing in Minnesota. At the time of the presentation, there were 7 identified racial covenants in New Brighton. Since then, more documents have been uncovered and there are currently 52 *[prior count of 53 was updated to 52 post-meeting based on updated data from Mapping Prejudice]* identified racial covenants in New Brighton, including 4 city-owned parcels at Hidden Oaks Park. Historical racial covenants are clauses embedded into property deeds to bar certain groups of people from buying or even occupying the parcels of land to which they were attached. Although racial covenants were made illegal by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, their legacy continues today in the Twin Cities. Staff provided a brief update and asked the Commission to provide guidance on what next steps should be, what steps would Commissioners want to take on, what efforts feel feasible, what efforts should the City pause, how should the City communicate this topic more broadly within the community and to affected property owners, how will our actions impact the legacy of the city and what would you consider a success.

Schlieu discussed the next steps in addressing racial covenants in the community. She explained Ramsey County has removed the filing fee and can provide attorneys to support the effort at no charge to residents. She commented further on how racial covenants shaped access to property, home ownership and access to generational wealth. She explained discharging the racial covenants would address systemic racism, discrimination in housing, focuses on welcoming and inclusive communities, and improves housing opportunities for all. Staff reviewed a map of the community showing the 52 properties in New Brighton that had racial covenants in place. She inquired if the Commission supported New Brighton's "Race to Zero" and commented on the next steps in this process.

Discussion included:

- Commissioner Herrera commented on how residents in the manufactured home community have been discriminated against when trying to seek housing because they were language burdened.
- Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas encouraged residents with perceived human rights violations to report this incident to City staff.
- The Commission supported educating residents regarding the "Race to Zero" cause.
- Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented further on how volunteers were reading through each deed in Ramsey County to find the properties that still had racial covenants in place.
- Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained she supported the City participating in the "Race to Zero" campaign.
- The Commission supported the City pursuing an educational awareness campaign with the public when changing the Hidden Oaks deed.
- The benefits of becoming a partner with Just Deeds was further discussed.
- The Commission supported creating a city webpage as an educational tool for residents.
- The Commission supported the City pointing questions to Mapping Prejudice versus creating pages on the City's website in regards to identifying which homes had discriminatory covenants.
- The Commissioner discussed how important it would be to deal with fears and shame when it comes to addressing this topic in the community. The Commission commented on how important it would be to educate the public and to empower property owners to make a change.
- The Commission discussed the potential of printing signs for the property owners that remove their racial covenants.

Motion by Commissioner Spooner, seconded by Commissioner Weber to approve the “Race to Zero” vision, with a commitment for staff to come back to the Commission with a more comprehensive plan to inform and educate residents.

Approved 6-0

VII. City Staff Update – Jen Lehmann, Assistant City Manager and Administrator Services Director

Spooner reported in January she attended a League of Minnesota Cities Racial Equity workshop with several staff members. She explained the themes were education and discussion with the goal being to have a life long journey when it came to racial equity. She commented on the statistics that were provided at the workshop for the State of Minnesota and suggested education be a topic of discussion at a future meeting. The Commission supported this recommendation.

Lehmann stated 23 residents attended the Totem Pole Park neighborhood meeting last month and the key takeaway was interest in maintaining the staking rink. She reported an update to the November conversations regarding the statues outside of Cowboy Jacks. She explained City Manager Massopust had a conversation with the Cowboy Jacks owner and they had a different view point. Cowboy Jacks views the statues as a symbol of pride and view them as peace and protection. The information has been shared with Christ the King Lutheran Church and has brought closure to the concern.

Lehmann reported the City Council would be holding Commission interviews in February and March and appointments would be made by April.

VIII. Report from Council Liaison

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas provided the Commission an update from the City Council. She commented on the Equity Commission the school district has in place. She noted she attended a Regional Council of Mayors meeting last week and this group focused their discussion on equity. She reported a presentation was also provided from Twin Cities Habitat that focused on access to housing. She explained she was active in a subgroup of the regional mayors that was focused on equity initiatives in the Twin Cities. She stated she participated in a Climate Action Day at the Capitol. She stated the community bonfire was held and she thanked all of the members of the community that were able to participate. She commented on the joint City/school board meeting that was held. She discussed the joint meeting the City Council held with local legislators to address the City’s legislative priorities for 2023. She noted one of these priorities included creating a quiet zone in New Brighton.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hue Schlieu

DEI Coordinator



Item: 1
Report Date: 3/8/2023
Commission Meeting Date: 3/16/2023

REQUEST FOR COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Race to Zero Education Campaign
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:
CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:
No comments to supplement this report ____ Comments attached ____

Background:

At the February 16, 2023, Equity Commission meeting, Commissioners approved the Race to Zero vision, which set the following in motion:

- City Council consideration of a resolution for New Brighton to join the Just Deeds Coalition
- New Brighton commits to discharging restrictive covenants from City-owned properties, namely Hidden Oaks Park
- City staff informs and educates residents about racially restrictive covenants
- City staff supports residents in removing racial covenants from their property deeds

Additionally, Commissioners asked City staff to bring back a more comprehensive plan to inform and educate residents. The goal of the Race to Zero education campaign is to help residents understand the legacy of discriminatory covenants and provide a bridge toward healing through learning and action.

The educational components include a webpage dedicated to Race to Zero and the history of discriminatory covenants, staff presence at local events, educational flyers, and letters sent to 50 property owners.

New Brighton City Council will be considering the resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants, discharging discriminatory covenants on City-owned properties, and approving participation in the Just Deeds Coalition at the March 14, 2023 City Council Meeting. Any updates to this business item to incorporate their feedback and action will be shared during the Equity Commission meeting.

Task Overview: Review and provide feedback on the proposed educational pathways to ensure respectful and effective community engagement

Financial Impact: There are no financial impacts other than staff time. The filing fee (currently \$46) is waived for Ramsey County property owners, using sufficient County funds. The City's attorney will provide pro-bono legal services related to discharging discriminatory covenants for residents and the City.

There will be a small budget for flyers and postage for 50 letters.

Resources:

- March 16, 2023 Race to Zero Education Campaign Presentation (attached)
- [February 16, 2023 Equity Commission Materials](#)
- [Justdeeds.org](https://www.justdeeds.org)

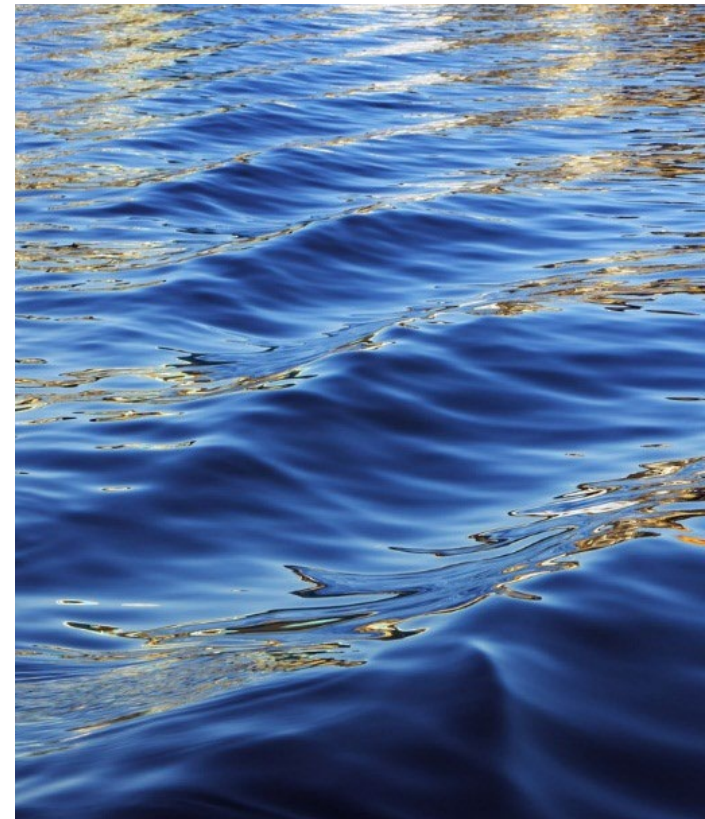


Hue Schlieu
DEI Coordinator



Race to Zero Education Campaign

Equity Commission
March 16, 2023



Tonight's Goals

- **Review and provide feedback** on proposed educational pathways to ensure respectful and effective community engagement
- **Align efforts** with direction provided by City Council

Background

- Discriminatory covenants are **clauses embedded into property deeds** to prevent properties from being sold, leased, or occupied based on race, religion, and ethnicity.
- Discriminatory covenants **resulted in segregated communities**, which negatively impacted BIPOC's access to quality education, parks, public transportation, housing, and so much more.
- The Fair Housing Act of 1968 has made discriminatory covenants unenforceable, but the language still remains in the deeds and legacy of discriminatory covenants **continue to bring harm and trauma** to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
- Race to Zero provides bridge toward **healing through learning and action**.

Considerations

- Property owners are NOT REQUIRED to discharge discriminatory covenants
- There is no financial responsibility for the City of New Brighton to join Just Deeds or to discharge the discriminatory covenant
- There is no financial responsibility for property owners in New Brighton that choose to discharge their discriminatory covenant
 - Legal process is provided pro-bono by attorneys in the Just Deeds Coalition
 - Ramsey County filing fees have been waived
- Process to discharging covenants
 - Complete Interest Form to initiate verification process
 - New Brighton's City Attorney will provide pro-bono legal services
 - Submit filing form to Ramsey County

General Residents

- [Website Information](#)
 - Brief history of discriminatory covenants
 - Overview of Mapping Prejudice and Just Deeds
 - Action taken by City of New Brighton
- Flyers for Social Media and In-Person Events
- Resident Newsletter
- Tabling at Events
 - Farmers' Market
 - Juneteenth
- Lawn Signs

Join New Brighton's Race to Zero

Building a more inclusive City, one property at a time.

Our Timeline

- 1/8/2023 52 properties in New Brighton have discriminatory covenants based on Mapping Prejudice.
 - 3/14/2023 New Brighton City Council approved a resolution to join the Just Deeds Coalition.
 - 4/1/2023 New Brighton discharges the discriminatory covenant on two City-owned properties at Hidden Oaks Park.
 - 4/16/2023 New Brighton launches an effort to inform and educate residents about discriminatory covenants.
 - 4/16/2023 Property owners are invited to Race to Zero with us by discharging their covenants at no charge.
- All residents are invited to learn more about the impacts of discriminatory covenants.



Scan QR code or visit
www.newbrightonmn.gov/racetozero

What are Discriminatory Covenants?

Discriminatory covenants are clauses embedded in real estate deeds intended to prohibit the sale, lease, and occupancy of property to individuals based on their race, religion, and other protected characteristics.



Examples of Lawn Signs



Properties w/ Discriminatory Covenants



- Direct Communication via letter
 - Interested Form and Brochure included
 - Further conversation via phone call or in-person discussion with DEI Coordinator is available
- Website Information
 - Fill out interest form online
- City staff connects property owner with City Attorney for legal portion
- Property owner directed to the form that needs to be filed with Ramsey County Recorder's Office
- Tailored Lawn Sign for those who complete the process

Engagement Regarding Hidden Oaks Park

- Notify residents through social media platforms, resident newsletter, and on-site signage.
- Other available actions:
 - Connect with PREC (Parks, Recreation, & Environmental Commission) to explore interest in collaborative effort hosting an educational event
 - Educational information at Farmer's Market booth and June 8th concert

Discussion

- What suggestions or questions do you have regarding ways to communicate with residents?
- In what capacity would you like to support the effort (e.g. tabling at events)?
- What are strengths or areas of growth for the Race to Zero education campaign?



Item: 2
Report Date: 3/9/2023
Commission Meeting Date: 3/16/2023

REQUEST FOR COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Juneteenth Celebration	
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:	
CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:	
No comments to supplement this report	Comments attached

Background: Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved Black Americans in the United States. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1863, it wasn't until June 19, 1865, that the final enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas, received news of their freedom.

Juneteenth became a federal holiday on June 17, 2021, but has been celebrated as Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day since June 19, 1866.

On June 14, 2022, the New Brighton City Council voted to declare June 19, 2022, as Juneteenth Day in the City of New Brighton. [The proclamation \(PDF\)](#) encourages residents to reflect, learn, understand, participate, and celebrate in community-based events to celebrate Juneteenth and its meaning in our region.

Juneteenth is a state holiday in Minnesota, effective August 1, 2023, which means Juneteenth 2023 will still be a workday for New Brighton City Staff. On Juneteenth, New Brighton plans to focus on providing City staff with celebratory and educational opportunities.

New Brighton plans to celebrate Juneteenth on June 8, 2023, as part of the Parks and Recreation concert series, sponsored by the New Brighton Lions Club. We will promote the event for residents as part of a potential nineteen day celebration leading up to Juneteenth across the region.

Task Overview: The Equity Commission is tasked with:

- Providing feedback on current plans for Juneteenth

- Offering suggestions on ways to engage staff and community members

Financial Impact:

The June 8th concert is part of the series being planned by New Brighton's Parks and Recreation Department and sponsored by the New Brighton Lions Club. With the current scope of activities, there are no additional financial impacts other than staff time.

Resources:

- March 16, 2023 Juneteenth Celebration Equity Commission presentation (attached)
- [New Brighton Proclamation Declaring June 19, 2022, Juneteenth Day](#)
- [Concert Series Musicians/Artists Interest Form](#)

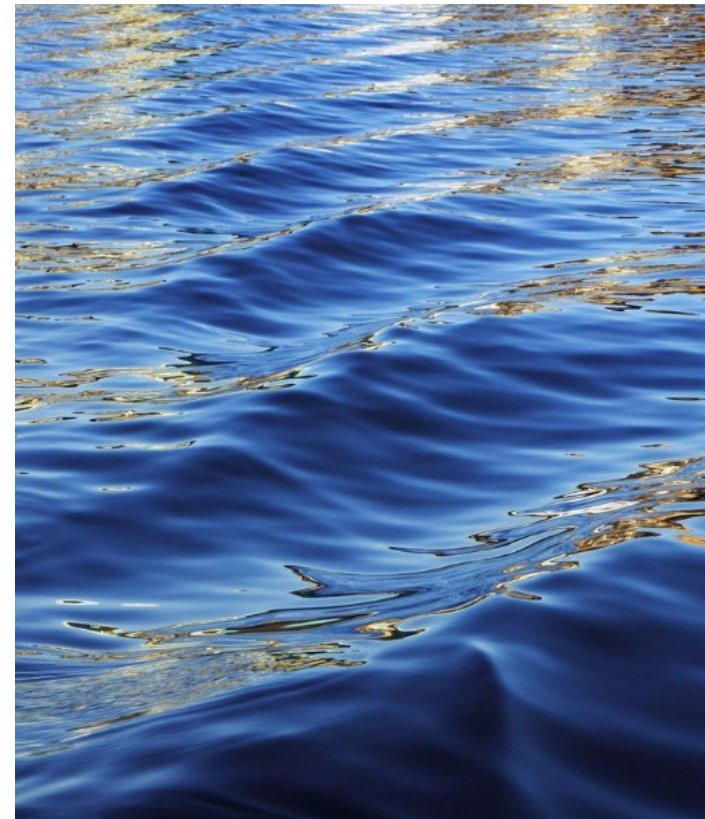


Hue Schlieu
DEI Coordinator



Juneteenth Celebration

Equity Commission
March 16, 2023



Tonight's Goals

- Understand the origins of Juneteenth
- Provide feedback on current plans for Juneteenth
- Offer suggestions on ways to engage staff and community members.

Juneteenth Background



Juneteenth flag – the design reflected the celebration's slogan, "a star of Texas bursting with new freedom throughout the land, over a new horizon"

- Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved Black Americans.
- Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863, but it took two years for word to get around to all enslaved people. June 19, 1865 marks the final date the news reached Galveston, TX.
- Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021 and a state holiday in 2023 (effective August 1, 2023), but has been celebrated since 1866.

Staff Celebration

- Juneteenth 2023 will still be a workday for government staff
- Equity Strategic Action Team (ESAT) will lead efforts to support education and celebration for City staff.
- ESAT's first meeting to discuss this will be Thursday, March 23, 2023.
- What suggestions/ideas would Commissioners like ESAT to consider?

Community Celebration Background

- Bloomington DEI Coordinator invited municipalities to take part in a 19-day Juneteenth celebration by committing to leading events one of the days leading up to Juneteenth.
- Parks and Recreation will be hosting a concert series Summer 2023 (second Thursdays, May-Aug and Friday, September 15), sponsored by the New Brighton Lions Club
- June 8th was identified to be the best concert series day to align with Juneteenth celebration efforts

Community Celebration

- Juneteenth Concert
 - June 8, 2023, 6-8 PM
 - Veterans Park
 - Free Event, Sponsored by New Brighton Lions Club
- Black Artists (musicians, spoken word, etc.) are invited to perform – Compensation will be provided
- Booths will be set up to provide education and conversation for interested residents/event participants.
 - Booths may be run by City staff, community organizations, or community volunteers

Discussion

- Do you have feedback on the community celebration for Juneteenth, happening on June 8th?
- Do you have additional ideas or suggestions on for the staff celebration/education, happening on Juneteenth?