

CITY OF SHORELINE
SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES OF SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Held Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: Mayor Hall, Deputy Mayor Scully, Councilmembers McConnell, Chang, Roberts, and Robertson

ABSENT: Councilmember McGlashan

STAFF: Pollie McCloskey, Executive Assistant; Suni Tolton, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator

GUESTS: DarNesha Weary, Racial Equity Consultant of Let's Do Work

Planning Commission Members: Chair Laura Mork, Vice Chair Jack Malek, Janelle Callahan, Mei-Shiou Lin, Julius Rwamashongye, Pam Sager

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services/Tree Board Members: Bruce Amundson, John Hoey, Sara Raab McInerny

At 7:00 p.m. the workshop co-facilitators, Suni Tolton and DarNesha Weary, welcomed the participants and invited those absent from the first session to introduce themselves, share their experience with racial equity work, and identify what they need to increase their ability to advance racial equity. Participants who attended the first session were invited to type their introduction in the chat to save time. There was a range of experiences shared with some having had no training previously and others who have been engaged in racial equity and advocacy work in other roles.

Ms. Tolton provided a recap of the first session's content that was held on October 21, and reviewed the training values and assumptions, which include 1) race matters; 2) we are not just talking about individual acts of bigotry; 3) institutions and systems maintain and perpetuate racism and inequities; 4) government has a responsibility for ending inequitable outcomes and advancing racial equity; and 5) early experiences with race impacts our interactions.

Ms. Tolton reiterated that this training is adapted from the Government Alliance of Race and Equity's (GARE)'s foundation training and is focused on the "normalizing" component of the best practice model. Normalizing is focused on sharing definitions, terms, and analysis. Ms. Tolton explained the definitions and concepts of diversity, inclusion, equity, and racial inequity.

Ms. Weary led the next part of the training which focused on learning more about the brain and the concepts of conscious, or explicit, and unconscious, or implicit, bias. Ms. Weary explained

that the brain works at both the conscious and unconscious levels and has three processes to make sense of information: 1) sorting into categories; 2) creating associations between things; and 3) filling in the gaps when we only receive partial information. These three processes together add up to “schemas” or the frames through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world. Schemas play a particularly significant role when there is:

- Ambiguity (including lack of information)
- Stress from competing tasks
- Time pressure
- Under-representation of the group in question (when the group does not reach critical mass)

Ms. Weary explained how our thoughts and feelings are commonly thought of as our own unique individual thoughts and feelings, but the reality is that our “collective” meaning is also at play. Brain research shows that only 2% of emotional cognition is available consciously, and almost all our thoughts are playing out unconsciously. Racial bias tends to be in the unconscious network. We unconsciously have “tapes” about race playing in the background, even when we are not discussing it. Ms. Weary provided definitions of implicit and explicit bias and gave examples, including an example about gender bias in symphony orchestra auditions and racial bias in resume rating and in housing opportunities.

For the last piece of the training, participants were asked to discuss five individual strategies for reducing implicit bias, which included 1) stereotype replacement; 2) counter-stereotypic imaging; 3) individuation; 4) perspective taking; and 5) increasing opportunities for contact with individuals from different groups. Participants were then divided into groups of five and were sent to breakout rooms to discuss a negative bias or stereotype and how to apply each one of the strategies.

At 8:25 p.m. breakout sessions were closed and Ms. Tolton informed participants that the third and final workshop session will take place on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. and will focus on putting ideas into action.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Suni Tolton, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator