



POULSBO CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP October 20, 2020, 6:30-8:30 PM M I N U T E S

The meeting was held virtually.

Community Panel Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Introduction

Councilmember McVey shared the goals and protocols for the discussion and introduced the Councilmembers who will be listening to the panel discussion. He introduced Housing, Health, and Human Services Director Kim Hendrickson who will be the event's moderator.

Ms. Hendrickson introduced the panel participants: Sandra Allen, Client Services Manager at North-Kitsap Fishline; Della Crowell, Suquamish Tribal Elder and manager of the Tribe's Elders Program; Charmaine Doherty house manager for a Kitsap Homes of Compassion; Alexis Foster, City of Poulsbo Prosecutor and Risk; Paul Morris, Outreach Coordinator for Coffee Oasis; Irene Moyer, Director of Membership for the Poulsbo Chamber of Commerce; Shannon Turner is a Legislative Aide to Representative Sherry Appleton (23rd District) and President of the Kitsap Community Resources Board of Directors. Kim Hendrickson, Housing, Health, and Human Services Director with the City of Poulsbo, will moderate the discussion tonight.

The Poulsbo City Council, Mayor, and City Clerk were also in attendance.

2. Panel Discussion

Ms. Hendrickson moderated the panel discussion that started with the first two questions with each panelist sharing their perspective on the following:

- ***How, in your work or personal experience, do you see the current environment for people of color, low income, or other marginalized people in Poulsbo-North Kitsap?***
 - Allen shared her observations from working at Fishline
 - Demographics of clientele
 - Most marginalized clients are homeless
 - Need food, laundry, clothing, showers
 - Don't feel welcomed in the community after a period of time
 - Many struggle with mental health or addiction
 - Access to affordable housing is struggle
 - Feeling of hopelessness
 - Transportation is an issue once you leave Poulsbo and get into the outer areas.
 - Crowell shared her personal experiences as a tribal citizen
 - Many don't feel safe or welcomed in Poulsbo
 - Treated with suspicion in stores and followed
 - Tribal history is not taught in the NK schools

- Totem pole destroyed with explosives
- Racist graffiti on a rock at the school
- Killing of Stonechild Chiefstick and the officer still being on the force, and the memorial being vandalized twice (and the second time by an elected official), Poulsbo City Council has not take action to express remorse to the family or community
- Black Lives Matter rally led to a response by heavily armed people
- The Suquamish People have been on these lands and water forever, and their story is not recognized
- Welcoming resolution did not mention the Suquamish Tribe
- Would like recognition that other ethnic groups live here. She said a Latino representative needed to be on the panel tonight.
- Doherty shared the challenges experienced with Kitsap Homes of Compassion clientele (homeless housing):
 - Financial challenges with the assistance not being enough to cover normal expenses (especially when they have children); food availability (Fishline has been generous to the Poulsbo house); transportation to health care; feelings of not belonging to the neighborhoods they live in.
- Foster spoke on her personal experiences of being black and living in Poulsbo:
 - Poulsbo has changed over the last 13 years – diversity is starting to increase, seeing more black families moving into the area (it is encouraging)
 - Challenges include racism against them, not same levels as 13 years ago, but had police called on her husband while he was taking out the garbage in the past 4-5 years.
 - There is some hope, as diversity increases and we continue to have these conversations and people in the community learn about their neighbors and each other, we'll have an increased understanding of where we come from and who we are.
- Morris shared his experiences with the homeless youth:
 - In 2017, 88 youth identified as being homeless (ages 13-25)
 - Most haven't finished school or are not in school
 - COVID has amplified the challenges this year, especially for the young homeless community, a lot of instability, fear, and anxiety
 - Disconnected from the mainstream culture
 - Struggling with undiagnosed mental illnesses and a lot of trauma is happening
- Moyer spoke regarding her personal experiences as a mixed-race individual (Caucasian and Filipino):
 - She shared that people she knows have been followed because they look suspicious or are ignored because they cannot be bothered by business owners
 - She is honest with folks who ask about what it is like to do business in Poulsbo. She is honest with her own experiences, but also share that Poulsbo is not perfect.
 - The number of minority business owners in Poulsbo is low. Business owners want to see themselves in their customers, so it can be hard to

- draw minority business owners to Poulsbo.
 - Affordable housing is not available in Poulsbo, and that effects the make-up of a town.
 - We need to embrace all the people who live in this area and their cultures, and it cannot be a one-day celebration. It needs to be engrained in the community.
 - Turner spoke regarding his personal experiences as a black man in an inter-racial marriage
 - He did not feel like he belonged here when he came to Poulsbo
 - He felt youth needed to be on the panel
 - He shared he used to be homeless and had to fight and sacrifice to be where he is today. Minorities are faced with the sacrifice, frustration, and challenge to allow themselves to grow, live, and accommodate everyone else just so they can get ahead.
 - Nothing is welcoming to him in Poulsbo. There are no multi-cultural events. Nothing during Black History month. And the Tribe is next door.
 - The community is looking to their leaders. Something should have happened a while ago. He is scared for his kids. He has to pay attention to every aspect in his life.
 - He shared he has had the cops called on him as well.
 - He shared he has lost two family members to COVID, because they had to go to work, they didn't have a choice.
 - Kids have to go out and get minimum wage jobs to support their families and still try to get an education.
- ***What can we do as a City and community to help people of color, low-income or other marginalized people feel more welcome, equal, and included?***
 - Turner said to reach out to the organizations and bring different minority groups in, learn their history and struggle, get a youth group going and hear what they are struggling with. Poulsbo needs to welcome everyone, networking out and bringing different minority groups in (everyone thinks Poulsbo is only white). To proceed forward, they need to get input from everyone else. Need to understand what they are going through, ask the youth, or ask those who are not coming in and find out why not.
 - Morris said we need to have youth on boards and councils as representatives. Half of their youth are part of LGBTQ community, and it is helpful to have representation for their issues. Having different voices in powerful positions is helpful, and it helps remove stigmas. Need to have a better understanding of what trauma is, and Kitsap Strong provides ACEs training (Adverse Childhood Experiences).
 - Allen agreed we need a panel of people with more diversity, and include the youth, and more Native American culture in Poulsbo. She recommended the City to participate in the year-long training from Kitsap Strong. If we don't learn and grow, we can never change. Even if it is one person from each department to learn the training and share it.
 - Crowell said the City needs to be more inclusive and encourage more diversity in Poulsbo. She must go to Seattle to experience diversity. She would like to see more gatherings and sharing of our different cultures (dancing, music, foods); add the Suquamish history in the Poulsbo museum; having the Suquamish

history taught in the NKSD; have speakers and workshops to address unconscious bias; support a permanent memorial for Stonechild Chiefstick; and she loves the idea of including the youth. Our communities can be better and heal, and it is going to take time.

- Foster said it needs to be acknowledged that racism exists in Poulsbo. Then we must listen to stories of people of color in the community, hearing their life experiences and understand the perspective of their experiences. It is important to understand their experiences are different, it is okay not to be color blind and recognize the differences, and we need to recognize there is a genetic trauma in their DNA with slavery, and it continues to this day. She said things cannot just be prettied up by saying we are open, welcoming, and diverse; in her past experiences in Seattle, they did that, but it is very close minded and white-led in what diversity and open-mindedness and woke-ness is. Stereotypes are perpetuated, because people of color are not at the table and in leadership roles explaining their experiences. It does not make that hard-core change. We have to start engaging people, acknowledge racism exists, and listen to their experiences, and then start taking proactive measures.
- Moyer said business owners who want to establish themselves in a community must feel welcomed and see themselves in their customers. That takes change on a whole other level of diversifying a geographic area. Forums like this are great and are the first steps that show the council are interested in these topics and interested in change. It is so hard to engage people. First and foremost, a community wants to be heard. The community needs to see action taken. People want to know what the results are. If we want to say we are inclusive, the public needs to receive responses. There has got to be a way to let our community know that conversations are happening. They must be vocal and willing to take a stand, state what you stand for and what you don't stand for. They could also consider creating memorials, having buildings and parks named after others, and having celebrations for different ethnic groups.
- Doherty said it is a failure of imagination. We need to use our imagination, get out of our shells of privilege, internalize the experiences of these people, and use our imagination to provide solutions. Lack of funding is the basis for a lot of issues the women and children are facing.

3. Questions to the panelists from community members

- **What can we do to engage with people who don't see racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc., as a real issue in Poulsbo? What can we do to make sure our experiences are known to the community and to government and to people that are skeptical that these problems exist?**
 - Ask the question to those individuals why they don't believe this exists? And ask them where have they been? No matter where you go, it is there and relevant.
 - Carrying on face-to-face conversations. Start with your next-door neighbor. Have those conversations and be transparent about what the issues are and what we can do to be a genuine neighborhood.
 - We need to continue to try to cultivate a safe space for these stories to be shared and use social media to our advantage to talk about it. Deep down people know it exists, but they want to keep their heads in the sand. We need

to keep talking about it and have real people share their experiences. Putting a face to a name does wonders.

- It is exposure and education. Don't be afraid. Talk to people and ask questions and be open. Love your neighbor and stop being so mistrusting.
- Personal relations – each one, teach one. Take that personal relationship and pass along your experiences.
- Have the courage to call people out on racist remarks that might be made in ignorance and educate them. Don't be a silent stand-by when you hear the comments.
- Don't try to change them. Get educated yourself and then challenge those things that you know are false.

The list of all questions received from the community which were not asked are attached to these minutes for reference.

4. Questions to the panelists from the Mayor & City Council Members

Not asked and discussed due to time constraints.

5. Next Steps

McVey thanked Hendrickson for facilitating and the panelists for their honesty and commitment to our community and sharing their thoughts and experiences. It was a very engaging, constructive, and productive panel discussion.

We will be posting a summary of the meeting on the city website, as well as sharing all the questions that were received by the community and Council.

McVey summarized what he heard as the personal experiences and challenges people of color, low income, or other marginalized people, and what Poulsbo and the community can do to make them feel welcomed, equal, and included.

Hendrickson added that this is the start of a conversation, and that nothing was finalized, and people are looking forward to this being carried forward.

McVey said they will be discussing these issues further and taking actions at the appropriate time. This is the council's second workshop on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. They have created a committee of the whole of the council that is addressing these issues, rather than forming a new committee. They all want to be part of the conversation in coming up with solutions. There is a lot here to think about tonight, a lot of terrific ideas. He thanked all the panel members for joining them. It has been an engaging and invigorating conversation. It is important work they are doing here.

On behalf of the Poulsbo City Council, he thanked the members of the community for joining them this evening.

Rebecca Erickson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Rhiannon Fernandez, CMC, City Clerk