

**Racial Equity Advisory Panel (REAP)**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**  
**Minutes**  
**September 21, 2022**

PRESENT: Panel members: Andrea Brett, Chair, Karen Richards (minutes), Clarence Davis, Nancy Waples. Guests: Catherine Russell, Panel Assistant, Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity (EDRE), Shalini Suryanarayana, Racial Equity Education and Outreach Associate, Rev. Mark Hughes and Isaac Owusu, Racial Justice Alliance.

**BUSINESS MEETING:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brett at 6:04 p.m.

- A. Panel Introductions: Panel members and guests introduced themselves.
- B. Agenda approval: Agenda was approved with the addition of an announcement by Richards, which was placed before public comment.
- C. Approval of the Minutes: Clarence Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the 6/22/22 meeting. The motion was seconded by Andrea Brett. Vote: 3:0
- D. Ongoing Business

1.a. Racial Equity Staffing Update- EDRE Davis reported that she is working with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) and Dept. of Human Resources to create job specifications that will reflect the duties of the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) data analyst positions approved by the Legislature. They will recruit for all positions at the same time but will focus on hiring the lead person first. The ORE also has had a summer intern, who has been a great deal of help. They hope to continue having interns throughout the year. The Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Council, which will assist in identifying data for collection has a deadline of 11/1/22 for the statutory entities to appoint their representatives.

1.b. IDEAL-VT- This is a municipal level program for town leaders. It will be launching on October 26, 2022. Ten municipalities have applied to date. They will be vetted by the ORE staff. The governor will highlight the initiative in his weekly address following the launch.

1.c. Policy Priorities for 2023- The ORE has identified a number of broad areas of impact as legislative priorities for the 2023-25 biennium. Some are reintroductions of items that did not get out of committee last biennium.

E. New Business

2a. Committee/Workgroup overlap. Panel members reviewed a list provided by EDRE Davis of all of the workgroups, task forces, committees, [hereinafter groups] on which the ORE is listed as a participant. While there was general agreement that the topics of these groups have some need of a racial equity lens, there was equal agreement that the sheer number of these groups is too much for the ORE (not to mention the state as a whole). The question raised is how to have the necessary voices at the table without creating additional groups. Suggestions for addressing included the following:

- Discussion with legislative leadership about the need to reduce reliance on groups like these and to look hard at where new issues might be placed in existing groups before creating yet another;

- Elimination of areas of overlap that are at best inefficient and at worst counter-productive;
- Summer studies and reports are used by the legislature to continue the work while the legislature is out of session. This creates administrative burdens and tends to tap the same groups or individuals as members, without adequate financial compensation for serving;
- Reports provided by these groups are often not read nor do recommendations result in legislative action;
- One approach would be to review each groups' charge and determine what has been accomplished to date, what open tasks remain, whether the problem or issue is subject to a resolution or recommendation, whether the group needs to continue to exist (or are there tasks folded into other groups that could be rolled into it to reduce overlap).

2b. Report review and discussion. At the last meeting the Panel agreed to divvy up the various reports and recommendations from the groups concerned with DEI. This discussion was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

2c. Richards announced that her term ends on 9/30/22 and that she is not seeking reappointment to a third term. The Human Rights Commission is appointing a new member.

- F. Future Meetings: The Panel will continue with regular meetings on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:00-8:00 PM. Unless members not present have a conflict, in which case the schedule will be revisited via email.
- G. Public Comment: Rev. Mark Hughes indicated his agreement with the Panel's observations about the various groups.

## II. Adjournment

Waples moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:15.

**III. Next Meetings:** October 19, 2022 from 6:00-8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Richards*

Panel Member