

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Equity Board

6:00 PM
April 8, 2026

MINUTES

Gibson Hall, 105 Newport Way
SW, Issaquah, WA 98027

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Board members:

Lesley Millender-Irwin, Chair
Karthik Kashinath, Vice-Chair
Heather Youngs (excused absence)
Priti Mody-Pan
Varnika Dokka*
Lorna Gilmour
Chris Ziade
Oscar Montano (excused absence)
Quan Palmer

Kelly Munn – Alternate
Nisha Nair – Alternate (unexcused absence)
Kunal Srivastava* - Alternate (unexcused absence)

Administration/Staff:

Gillian Straub, Management Analyst
Andrea Lehner, Deputy City Administrator
Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Millender-Irwin called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Serena from the Garage welcomed Equity Board members to attend a community panel on 4/13 at 6 pm at the Garage. The panel will focus on trusting teens.

Bahai's welcomed Equity Board members to attend a talk from the Mona Foundation, focused on girls' education. The talk will occur on May 2, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of the October 2025 Meeting and February 2026 Meeting
Lorna Gilmour moved to approve the minutes of both meetings as presented, Quan Palmer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR REPORT

- a) **Opening Question**
Presented by:
Lesley Millender-Irwin, Equity Board Chair
Chair Millender-Irwin posed the question: what is something that felt dormant over winter that you are excited to see come back to life this spring? All staff and board members present answered the question.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) **Equity Impact Assessment - Community Engagement Plan (D)**

Presented by:

Gillian Straub, Management Analyst

The Equity Board reviewed and provided input on a proposed community engagement plan to support the City's Equity Impact Assessment. The proposed approach includes multiple phases, with initial funding allocated for consultant support and early engagement activities. Planned engagement methods include a public survey, targeted outreach to cultural and faith groups, tabling at events, and a community leadership workshop, all designed to gather diverse and representative input across Issaquah's population.

Board members emphasized the importance of thoughtful survey design and inclusive outreach strategies. Key themes included ensuring demographic questions capture meaningful representation (e.g., race, age, neighborhood), improving language accessibility by offering surveys in multiple languages, and strengthening the credibility of feedback by linking responses to demographic groups. Members also encouraged expanding outreach beyond existing networks to include underrepresented and less-connected populations, such as seniors, youth-focused organizations, service providers, and individuals connected to Issaquah through work or services. Additionally, the board discussed logistics for their involvement, highlighting the need for training, clear expectations, and pairing with city staff during engagement activities to create a welcoming and effective presence.

A brief recess was called to allow for the Straub to be replaced by Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator, as staff liaison. This motion was made by Priti Mody-Pan and seconding by Karthik Kashinath. The meeting was then called back to order at 7:31 PM.

b) **Parks Rules and Regulations (D)**

Presented by:

Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator

Assistant to the City Administrator Markey-Crimp led a discussion with the board on the proposal to consolidate, update, and clarify Issaquah's park rules and regulations into a single chapter of the municipal code, drawing on examples from Redmond and Kirkland and emphasizing collaboration across city departments. Board members raised concerns about the complexity of code language, recommending that the new chapter be written at a 4th to 8th grade reading level to ensure accessibility for all community members, including those for whom English is not a first language. Additionally, the Board discussed key topics for inclusion in the updated park rules, with input from members on issues such as gatherings, litter, noise, trail use, speed limits, cultural practices, and pet policies.

The board reviewed current and proposed methods for engaging the community in the park rules update process, including surveys, outreach to local groups (specifically Friends of Lake Sammamish State Park and the Issaquah Alps Trail Club), and plans for future data collection on park usage. Members suggested setting up tables at local events, such as the sustainability fair and farmers market, and leveraging walkable areas like Front Street to reach more residents. Suggestions were made to involve youth advisory boards and summer camp counselors in the implementation process, recognizing that educating children can help disseminate information to adults.

Lastly, the board discussed potential enforcement mechanisms for park rules, emphasizing education, equity, and discretion, and reviewed examples from other cities while considering impacts on vulnerable populations. Markey-Crimp outlined options for enforcement, including education, verbal warnings, temporary bans, and fines, referencing Kirkland's model of escalating penalties based on severity and allowing for petitions to dismiss bans. The board

discussed the importance of regular audits and reviews of enforcement practices to ensure fairness and transparency, with suggestions for compliance reporting and ongoing evaluation.

c) **2025 Year End Report (A)**

Presented by:

Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator

Markey-Crimp presented the 2025 year-end report for the Equity Board, which was reviewed, discussed, and unanimously approved by voting members, including Kelly Munn acting on behalf of Heather Youngs. The board confirmed minor edits from previous meetings, held a vote, and approved the report for submission to the City Council, with Gibson committing to notify the board when it is scheduled for Council review.

d) **2026 Work Plan (A)**

Presented by:

Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator

Markey-Crimp re-presented the proposed 2026 Work Plan, noting the addition of Culture Fest and the continued omission of the council vacancy process, which the Board had asked to have added to the Work Plan. After extensive debate, the board voted not to approve the work plan, prioritizing further discussion on equity in council vacancy appointments. Some Board members shared concerns about the lack of transparency, guidelines, and equity in the Council vacancy appointment process, citing personal experiences and the need for clear measures of success and communication. The board discussed drafting a letter to the mayor and Council expressing concerns about the appointment process and advocating for its inclusion in future work plans, with consensus to address this at the next meeting.

e) **Subcommittee Work Approach**

Presented by:

Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator

Markey-Crimp proposed changes to the board's meeting structure to facilitate more effective subcommittee work, suggesting that future meetings allocate time for subcommittees to meet and coordinate tasks. Markey-Crimp noted difficulties in coordinating subcommittee work via email and recommended shortening regular meetings to allow subcommittees to meet during board time, with board members expressing support for the idea.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for May 13, 2026.