

Oregon Country Fair Diversity Committee

1/11/2021 Meeting Notes

Attendees: Brooks, Britania, Ayisha, Melissa, Jon, Ann, Mary, AJ, Mark, Palmer

- Brooks arrived at 6:15 and started taking notes
- Jon: the next agenda item is the **meeting with the board to discuss communication.**
- AJ: will email the diversity committee and confirm a date with the board. It's likely during our next regularly scheduled meeting. He would like to see the agenda come from the committee, but we can develop the agenda in consultation with the board.
- Jon: Do we want to talk about this tonight?
- Brooks: I think we can discuss tonight. One issue is the lack of taking our concerns seriously.
- Jon: sees two issues. One is communication, going back to the BLM statement. The second issue has to do with follow up when the board received our feedback. We would like to see better dialogue rather than one way communication.
- AJ: He would like to see us move past the last board but not dwell or get stuck there. The new board is moving in a new direction.
- Palmer: He seconds AJ. He is finding that communication is much better now.
- Melissa and Mary agree via chat.
- Jon: He agrees other than that we want to make sure that the board knows this has been an issue. He also wants the board to make sure that the people this affects (BIPOC/LGBTQ) are represented and considered.
- AJ: He notes that he is the only person of color in a meeting last night. We are not an inclusive organization.
- Thom: he seconds what AJ said. He thinks its important that we and the board have continued dialogue. We are a white organization, and it will be easy to slip back into complacency. He sees parallels to the national environment. He wants things to be dealt with appropriately and quickly.
- AJ: He thinks it's important to acknowledge the harm that's been done, especially in relation to the statement.
- Ann: Agrees with everything that has been said. She thinks keeping open communication is important because we have a lot of cumulative experiences that would bring a helpful perspective. She thinks the consultants will be a big help.
- Brooks: Talked about harm that has been caused for decades – to the tribes, to communities of color, to Fair family. This is not separate from what's going on in the outside world. We need to make sure that Fair leadership is speaking consistently and intelligently about these issues so as to not cause more harm, rather than having a defensive posture.
- Jon: He agrees and talked about issues around cultural appropriation.
- Melissa: One of the top things on Melissa's list is representation in leadership. The board needs more than AJ as the only person of color. There are enough people of color We need to incorporate DEI into all levels of the Fair.
- Ayisha: Spoke with Colleen about having a DEI as an either crew or staff that is always focused on this.
- Melissa: that is the fourth board motion and super important, having paid staff.

- Jon: He's hoping with the new interim ED that we can move forward with seeking grants for that position. It will be hard to find internal funding given the lack of an event.
- AJ: He wants to make sure we avoid the trap of having on Black people deal with Black issues (if we have a crew). He wants to make sure that we have solutions, and not just discussions.
- Iana: is writing a list of what we are talking about. We're dealing with balancing the past and the present. She has a list divided into past harms and present actions that can be taken.
 - o Past: Totem Pole, Lack of Hip Hop, Racist Actions (Sherry's story, AJ & Mark "find the Black guy", wristbands cut off, guy tackled, white supremacists tattoos) the statement, the public meeting accountability issue.
 - o Action: The work we are doing addresses these issues. The board motions, consultants, training. Perhaps we could have a way to air past grievances to address them and move forward with the action that needs to be taken now to address these grievances.
- Melissa: Rather than having a crew, we could transform the current crews (like mediation) so that everyone is part of DEI and it's not separate.
- Ann: She thinks the education component is very important. We must acknowledge white privilege.
- Mary: She remembers an interaction with the board about the membership issue. CEDAR was brought up, and the idea of Fair Family who were trained in arbitration were going to be selected to mediate our issue. She wonders why the Diversity Committee would not be consulted when issues arise.
- Ann: CEDAR is not great with these issues, going back to the totem pole situation. They didn't really have a concept of cultural appropriation and could only see that someone was being told they couldn't do something (raise a totem pole).
- Mary: CEDAR is grounded in white hippie culture and does not have a cross-section of cultures represented in order to do culturally competent mediation.
- AJ: has to leave early (7pm). He appreciates the group and the conversation and is excited for the consultants so that he's not the only person in the room of color.
- Jon: he thinks culturally competent mediation is the exact thing we need to be discussing with the board.
- Brooks: he will be on the ad-hoc committee that is dealing with the member issue. Colleen is great and is really excited to work with the diversity committee to implement a training program.
- Ann: it's important to share our knowledge. We're not critiquing them, we are expanding their universe.
- Mark: through Burning Man, he found out about a thing called the "Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso." They have free trainings that you can sign up for.
- Jon: how should we structure the meeting?
- Brooks: liked the way the board motions were discussed. Perhaps we could use Iana's suggestion and have a presentation on past grievances followed by breakout discussion, then come back together and share key learnings. Follow up that with a presentation on present actions to address these harms, breakout to smaller discussion groups, then come back together to share. Brooks will synthesize notes into a tentative agenda and email it out.
- Ann will work on getting Zoom set up and loop Brooks in to help with hosting the meeting.
- Jon: sounds like we will have 3-4 breakout groups based on the group size.

- The group likes this structure for the meeting.
- Jon: next **agenda topic is Craft Committee** meeting this weekend and the Town Hall on the 24th. He thinks Britania was planning to attend. Mary and Jon might attend, as well. He was hoping we might decide what message we would like to send to the crafters. He thinks they need to know about the consultants. Also, how can we get more diverse crafters? How can we start to address cultural appropriation?
- Brooks: I think we need to establish good rapport, relay the work we're doing (board motions), and let them know about our meetings and diversity email to ask questions. We are not trying to brainwash anyone - we are here to help!
- Mary will attend the Craft Committee Meeting and Crafter Town Hall. Jon might attend. Britania is planning to attend. Ann will try to attend the Town Hall, as well.
- Jon: we will have a better idea about the Town Hall after the Crafter Meeting on Wednesday.
- **Next agenda item – scenario planning for next summer.**
- Jon: he hopes that we can incorporate DEI goals into the planning process, in selection of the entertainers, for instance.
- Britania: let's move through the proposal scenario by scenario.
- Option A-1: scaled down version of what we have done in the past.
 - o Brooks: maybe we do this option and give preference to BIPOC fair family. There would be space to create and model an inclusive event. Others could work on getting this out via virtual fair.
 - o Jon: reviewed non-conforming use restrictions.
 - o Our recommendation: give preference to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ fair family.
- Option A-2: Three-day weekend of daytime events: vendors in the lots, entertainers in the 8
 - o Britania: this adds an extra living expenses. People would have to get a hotel room or find other accommodations.
 - o Our recommendation: give preference to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ fair family.
 - o A barrier to diverse populations would be housing for a daytime event.
- Jon: For both options, how would we get new people if it is scaled down
- Ann: we have some BIPOC crafters
- Britania: one concern is budget. If we can identify the lowest cost, highest revenue option so that we can better fund DEI.
- Ann: will we still get diversity passes as we have in the past?
- Suggestion for all scenarios – keep diversity passes. This has been successful in beginning to build relationships with the tribes, LGBTQIA+, and Latinx communities.
- Britania: she thinks this is a great opportunity to show diversity and keep the size/cost smaller.
- OPTION A-3: Series of one-day events spread over time or presented consecutively or in combination
 - o Our recommendation: give preference to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ fair family.
- OPTION A-4: Series of small events held on the winery property
 - o Ann: there is an irony in that we're a drug and alcohol-free event. Maybe there is a winery that meets those criteria that could be a host for the event?
 - o Our recommendation: give preference to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ fair family.
- Jon: he doesn't think any of the onsite options will happen.
- OPTION B-1: Downtown Eugene Street Fair

- We can't imagine this would be feasible
- Our recommendation: give preference to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ fair family.
- A barrier to diverse populations would be housing for a daytime event.
- OPTION B-2: Indoor concerts at partner venues
 - Recommendation: feature a diverse array of performers.
 - Make sure diversity passes are given to encourage attendance from diverse communities.
- OPTION B-3: Cuthbert "Country Fair in the City"
 - Recommendation: feature a diverse array of performers.
 - Make sure diversity passes are given to encourage attendance from diverse communities.
- Brooks will synthesize feedback to give to the board.
- **Next agenda item – 2021 work plan.**
- Jon: working with the consultants will be a big priority.
- Ann: crisis management (culturally appropriate) should be on the work plan.
- Britania: she would like to see us working with Fair Cares to develop policies and procedures around grievances – to create more support for diverse identities to be able to rectify harm.
- Jon: getting the diversity census done.
- Britania: specialty training for crews, staff, crafters, and others.
- Jon: important to make sure all crew leaders, BUMs, etc. is trained this year. Also, working with the Fair to find funding for a DEI staff positions.
- Britania: secure funding for consultants for the year. DEI fundraising. Also, revitalize the guidelines and handbook to have a more expansive process identifies for dealing with harm related to -isms.
- Jon: Same with cultural appropriation
- Ann: recommendations should be blunt, not soft. "Doing X is an instance of institutional racism."
- Jon: working with Craft Committee so that by 2022 there is a mechanism in place to increase the diversity of crafters.
- Brooks: keep alive the idea of an African Market and inviting the tribes in, as well.
- Britania: Reparations to the Kalapuya and seeing how we can make the land right with the tribes. At least begin the conversation.
- Mary: we could invite the tribes to open the Fair as a replacement for our Opening Ceremony.
- Ann: she gives diversity passes to several different tribes. The tribes have their own things happening during and around fair.
- Iana: have the organization make a goal to diversify Fair leadership. We could help develop that goal.
- Jon: looking at the By-Laws with a DEI lens.
- Britania: create a streamlined process for how to deal with member issues. Restorative Just process, what to do if it fails, make sure diverse identities are represented on any hearing committees.
- Brooks: virtual fair/stream of diverse consciousness. Work with Rainbow Connection & BIPOC sanctuary on this.

- Brooks will make a list and send to the group. We will discuss at our next meeting and agree on which (or all) that we will work on. We can assign committee members to each topic to make sure that nothing fall through the cracks.
- **Next agenda item: Food Booth Town Hall**
 - Jon: we should attend, just as we are with the crafter town hall.
 - Sherry plans on being there.
 - Thom will find out if the committee can have five or ten minutes at the Town Hall.
- **Big Boy Discussion:**
 - Britania: they are on board with changing the name. They would like to make sure it sticks so that they don't have to change it again. Big Friends or Big Family. Something that works over the radio. Regarding culture, there is a prior culture of them trying to outdo each other, but this has changed somewhat recently. They are open to meeting with the committee. As far as increasing diversity on the crew, one barrier is that not a lot of people know that they exist. Part of that is the history of the crew being secretive because they are a last resort option. Another barrier is that it is a hard job – you are signing up to put yourself in harms way. You have to shadow for five years, and you do not get a pass during that time. They are open to training/education.
 - Suggest names: boss bitches, beignets, big buds, big help
- Jon reviewed the discussion with Liz about the contracts. He emphasized that contract execution and monitoring is important. It's unclear who will take on the work plan, but the committee can assist with that. Liz is putting \$100/hour in as a rate for all of them so that it is transparent and fair. Contract should be sent out today or tomorrow. The contract ends on August 15th with the final report due at the end of July.
- Next meeting:
 - Finalize census questions so that we can send it to the survey committee
 - 2021 Work Plan
 - Jon will do a Doodle poll to set it up.