

## Committee Meeting 3/28/22

### Attendees

Committee: Diane Albino, Thom Barr, Melissa Davis, Iana Harris, Brook McLain, Britania Poulson-Nicastro, Emma Raven, Ann Rogers, Jon Silvermoon,

Board Liaisons: Sam Rutledge

Others: Dani, AJ, Steven, Klaus, Sandra, Norma Jean, Amy Cory, Tina, Michelle, Cassie, and numerous others

### Draft Agenda

- Agree on facilitator and note-taker and stack
  - Facilitators: Iana (Britania and Melissa as/if needed)
  - Notes: Britania and Brooks
  - Stack: Ann
- Ground rules for meeting: these are in progress and what we have for now
  - Attendees must identify themselves with real name/known Fair name and where they get their wristband to participate in the meeting. If the attendee refuses to be identified, they will be removed from the meeting.
  - Speak Your Truth: Share from your own experiences
  - Seek to Understand: Actively listen, before responding
  - Respect Others' Experience: We may have different OR similar stories to share, and contexts to draw from. All are legitimate.
  - Disagree Without Discord: Disagreement is expected. HOWEVER,
    - Approach unexpected ideas with curiosity, not argument.
    - If you disagree, debate and challenge ideas. Don't attack the speaker.
  - Share the Air: Make room for all voices to be heard, and don't dominate the conversation.
  - Confidentiality:
    - Share stories and experiences, but don't identify individual people or provide details that would allow someone in your story to be identified.
    - Do not share the experiences you hear in this space outside this space.
  - Board liaisons participate just as other committee members do.
  - Non-committee members who have been working on a subject or participating with a subcommittee may take part in discussions on the appropriate agenda topic. Once the committee has finished their discussion, other non-committee members may indicate in chat that they want to comment and time permitting, they will be given an opportunity to offer comments pertaining to the agenda topic. At its discretion the committee may have additional discussion after those comments.
  - Guests who violate ground rules will be removed from the meetings
  - To be in alignment with our integrity we would like to make it clear that there is little anyone on this committee can do to ensure that this is a safer space for marginalized people. We believe in informed consent, so with that in mind, do what you need to do to care for yourself. You can message a co-host directly to make them aware of harms happening and ask for it to be addressed or just make the report, or if leaving is the best way to protect yourself emotionally and mentally you have our solidarity and support.
- Agenda review and priorities for today's meeting (5 minutes)

- Brooks:

AJ and I agreed to share this Resolution Agreement with the Board and Diversity Committee. I'd like to read it at tonight's DC meeting, and AJ would like to read it at the next board meeting. We will also submit this to FFN. Our hope is that this begins to turn down the temperature in our meetings and online. Here is the agreement:

*On this date, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, we, AJ and Brooks, reached the following understanding. We understand that this document is not confidential unless agreed to in writing by all parties involved. We agree that this document is a fair and satisfactory resolution of the issues we have discussed in mediation. We agree to perform the actions and adhere to the intentions written here. If we encounter further issues that we are not able to resolve between ourselves, we agree to contact Barbara Daté and/or Mark Roberts for further assistance.*

*We, Brooks and AJ, met today for three hours and had a respectful sharing of perspectives. We affirm each other's mutual humanity and agree that much work is needed on our relationships and structures at the Oregon Country Fair. We support the work of the Diversity Committee and the JEDI work that is needed structurally and systemically at OCF. We cannot do this work alone, and we invite you to join us in that repair.*

*Signed,*

*Brooks McLain, Anthony Jackson, Mark Roberts (mediator), Barbara Daté (mediator)*

- Approve meeting notes
  - Everyone look at and approve via email or at next meeting
- Board Liaison report and committee feedback
  - No update from liaisons. Liaisons didn't prepare anything
  - Jon: committee needs to be included in discussions about facilitation process and fact finding. Frustrated by lack of communication from liaisons. Liaisons should be communicating that there is no update in the very least
  - Thom: bod behavior looks punitive. This goes back two years. BOD appears to not support and be actively against us. Needs to acknowledge we exist
  - Sam: no updates.
  - Iana: message for liaisons is that she, her family, and others in committee have experienced a lot of disrespect in public OCF spaces. Wondering what as an org we can do about this. Getting nipped before our bud has had the opportunity to exist. Crying out for liaison support. Has been asking for original email about n-word from Mario's guy and still hasn't gotten response to that request
  - Ann: left elders list because of disrespectful environment. Problematic game of telephone. Unhelpful. Forces her to be less effective as Elders Committee member
  - Britania: not appropriate to have back and forth with liaisons here
  - Brooks: years of action blocked by bod. Curious if there will be movement on our work. What is purpose of committee if everything we do is disregarded. We get excuses rather than clear no. Feels like committee is kept around for cover. Would like to see special board meeting to deal with issues DC has raised. Reports of vandalism, trans youth violated, wrist bands cut from BIPOC, for example. These things have been swept under rug and yet the subject of how we

run our meetings is an emergency all the sudden. Work has been ongoing. We're professionals. We're not taken seriously. What does Sam see as how we can function moving forward? We shared we have strong reservations to being recorded based on online harassment. It's intimidating. We need to codify the realities of the harms inherent in serving on the diversity committee

- Sam: this is awkward. Would like to be having this discussion in a more intimate space where he can be vulnerable. Doesn't know how he's harmed. Not helpful to have same conversation. Board liaison brings committee recommendations to board and board stuff to committee. Recognizes frustration in needing to go back to the drawing board when things don't get passed. Nothing he can do to help with that. No updates on anything we're asking for. Difficult communication in informal online forums including elders list and fb pages. Not under control of committee or board member. Can't fix that. Wants committee to focus on the positive. Acknowledges need for healing. Wants conflict resolution outside of meeting
- Diane: liaisons owe it to dc to share about facilitation planning. Elders list upsetting. Gaslighting, personal attacks. Wants the board to support committee.
- Britania: we had a lot of discussions around what the point of this meeting will be, should we have it, and how we can keep it a safer space. She thinks it's not appropriate to be in the space with liaisons until a facilitated meeting can occur. Sam has voted for the motion that has us supervised by a mostly cis/straight/white board. Where can committee members go to express frustration? It's a lot of we can't help you rather than trying to figure out ways to help. She would also love for this to not be happening in a public meeting, but there is nowhere else to go. The grievance process is flawed and has been causing more harm. Not frustration with going back to the drawing board. It's one thing to get creative in ways to collaborate with the board. Instead, it's a lack of access to repairing relationships - there's no format or system to fix that.
- Ann: agrees with Diane. Some of the folks doing the gaslighting are at this meeting now. One of the people said "well we were all raised racists." Shared a story about growing up in a space that was not majority WASP despite being told that was what this country was.
- Lana - it's an awkward situation. We can't ignore what's happening and just get back to work. Perhaps it would be helpful to have guidance in how to navigate OCF's system. She does not feel welcome at this event that she was brought to in the womb. IF the committee is a "racist committee," then we should not be putting forward motions. OCF shouldn't have a racist committee! How do we move forward when this is the narrative? The n-word motion is a great example. There is no collaboration with the committee. We cannot move forward in a toxic environment. We are being called sociopaths and worse, and that's acceptable it seems. How do we move forward?
- Sam wants to clarify that the motion on hate speech is AJ's motion. He provided feedback, but it's not his motion. Bad facts make bad law - goes into case law being used to create laws. A board member feels like the word is really harmful and it needs to be addressed. It's not the most important conversation. It seems like we are on our way to resolution. We won't use these words in our meeting spaces. Doesn't see why it's important to reserve right to say ni\*\*a when AJ has shared that he doesn't like it.
- Britania wants to respond to the n-word discussion. There's a bunch of non-Black people in unofficial OCF forums thinking they have a place in this discussion. We should be engaging Black consultants. It's been really harmful, this whole

discussion, to people of color and Black folks. When there's closeness across difference and oppression, people will inevitably get hurt. We have the opportunity to transform and deal with where the hurt actually came from. That's what we are asking for in this facilitated process. She doesn't think it's appropriate for the people in positional power who have done harm having control of the process. She would like to see an outside facilitator control the process. She agrees with what Lana - what's the point of trying to proceed until these things are worked out.

- Lana doesn't feel supported by liaisons at all with the n-word conversation. She has no problem not using this word in board meetings. This has been distorted and taken out of context. There are differences of opinion about language within communities.
- Member input:
  - Dani has been trying to attend committee meetings and find where she fits. She is curious what the criteria is for joining this committee. Jon responded that this is being worked on by a sub-committee.
  - AJ - the motion has been adjusted to incorporate feedback of all kinds. He was hoping after mediation that we could find more common ground. He was hoping the word with such history would not be used in meetings. He's curious how we can take the temperature down. There's a lot of hurt and pain. Is this what we want us to be, a constant circle of destruction? His motion is not about policing language in people's social circles but in our meeting spaces.
  - Steven has been listening the whole time. There's a lot to say. You can't find common ground if you think everything you do is virtuous. When it comes to these discussions, you need to be specific about what happened. There needs to be respect for disagreement.
  - Klaus wanted to say that open meetings on Zoom are helpful for the opportunity. He appreciates getting to hear everyone's perspective.
  - Sandra wanted to speak to how the board hasn't responded to the diversity committee's work. In the workshops we were in, there were proposals that we could have implemented right away. There was pushback from the committee unless we hired two full time consultants. There was a lot of interest in hiring some people. DC has to take responsibility.
- Old Business: Facilitated discussion with Board (30 minutes)
  - Jon: agrees with Britania and has conveyed this to Lily. Part of facilitated discussion needs to be education about CRT and cancel culture. The session should be used to determine a way forward on these issues and resources need to be allocated to make this a successful effort.
  - Britania is unsure how this can proceed without resource allocation. It will be time consuming and expensive. It's too important to shortchange. Not doing this right could be ruinous to the organization. What she heard in Sandra's comment is a dismissal of our concerns and a statement that what we are experiencing isn't real. It was a mischaracterization of our conversation in stating that we couldn't do anything until folks were hired. We were trying to help the org by advocating for a DEI staff person. Many of the harms and difficulties with this facilitation and grievances with board members could have been avoided if we had someone in this role.
  - Ann would like to add the March 22nd elders email to the record. She has this come up at the grocery store. It's a generational thing.

- Sam doesn't know anything that has happened with this. The ball is in Lily's court. Nothing is being held back from us. This is in the control of the board president. This is the nature of the organization.
- [Emma We have to be able to talk about White Supremacy
- Iana: not bringing Inspire or attending this year. We need a timeline for this process.
- Britania wanted to respond to Sam's statement. We have grievance administrators; we could hire consultants or mediators. Hearing we can't do it because of the structure is the same problem we keep describing. It's not a "we hear you how we can help?" It's "we can't do because xyz."
- Jon wanted to clarify that Sam isn't withholding information and he didn't mean to imply that. The DC is only asking to be involved and consulted in this process, not just handed something after it's already been decided.
- She wanted to distinguish between being consulted versus being centered. She is asking to be centered and asking the marginalized committee members to be centered.
- Thom is hearing that we want to be heard. The board has all of the power. Board members treat the committee as if we are trying to power grab. We are not.
- Melissa really wants to have some sort of facilitated discussion. We need that. When she joined the committee, she thought we were working on these issues together. That has not been her experience. She does not recall the committee stopping the board from moving forward on some of the board recommendations.
- Member input:
  - AJ doesn't see how we move forward. It is your way or the highway.
  - Norma Jean is grateful to be here. It's the board's job to listen and to take action on committee recommendations. We are not here for the board; the board is here for us. OCF is behind the curve.
  - Amy: questioning process and who created it. DC asking for process to be accessible to us. It's board's responsibility to bring people into conversation who don't have access.
  - Cory: bothersome to make changes. Just because this is how it's always been, doesn't mean it's how it has to be. Shouldn't ignore hurts. Important to talk about them until we can find a creative way to address them. We as white people shut down voices all the time and don't realize we're doing it or aren't willing to listen when people tell us we're doing it.
  - Tina: board is there to listen. Facilitated discussion important. Hasn't heard my way or the highway from anyone. Grievance process has been arduous and unsuccessful, asking to be centered and heard. When having a facilitated discussion, facilitator makes rules, not us.
  - Michelle: fully supports us. Wants to keep paying attention and have our backs. Asks us not to give up and assures us there are members who support us.
  - Cassie: responding to AJ about us being demanding on facilitated discussion. Disagrees with that characterization. Heard that it's 100% Lily's decision and that committee doesn't get a say. His comment is strange
- New Business: Safe space for people to speak their Truth (30 minutes)
  - Iana: we need a space where we can speak and be vulnerable. Hearing inappropriate associations with hip hop as harmful gangsters, called a sociopath

with no empathy, she and Ishi called a whining kid, lack of consequences for DC racist behavior, reference to Chewy situation as lynching. Black people have been lynched recently. Ishi using the n word in board meeting compared to physical violence and abuse. Every year there's a group of white people that ask surrounding booths if it's ok for Inspire to do hip hop because they're against the music, not volume. There are more People of Color in Inspire audience than anywhere at Fair. Things written about her are hate speech much more than us saying the n word and queer.

- Melissa: wants to acknowledge everything that has been said about the hate directed at us, including someone saying they did the research and that overrides an entire culture's lived experience. It's hard and weird to have these conversations with strangers. She has seen many hateful and mean comments, people who are non-Black weighing on stuff that is going on with an in-group. She is glad to talk to AJ about this - that's a different conversation. She feels like her voice has been silenced. It's scary to speak up because of the vitriol that comes at folks when you do. She was raised by a Black man who identified as an American Negro. She feels like her family is not welcome at OCF. It shouldn't be an either/or. It's her home too. Her kids are Indigenous, too. It's not my way or the highway. No JEDI work can be accomplished without everyone doing it. There is no power held by the committee to make decisions. There is nothing to be had power-wise at the fair. She is feeling very conflicted about how to move forward with OCF.
- We agreed to do next steps over email.
- Britania wanted to talk a little bit about transformative justice and facilitated healing processes and how that's different from mediation. Mediation is equal footing for everyone. TJ and facilitated healing process is when harm has been done and power is imbalanced. If we went through with this process, marginalized folks need to be centered, whether on the committee or the board. She keeps hearing that we need to figure out how to get everyone to the table. We clearly have limits on who is not invited, i.e. we don't want people who do physical harm at the table. We need to define our values. She would like to see TJ be one of those values. It's not my way or the highway. Not fair to not have limits on which board members can attend. Last time AJ participated in our meeting, he was verbally abusive towards me and he's been harassing us online and there's no way to address this.
- Ann thanked Melissa and thinks we need to recognize the big and small barriers. The hip hop is wonderful, Lana. We have this problem with people's perceptions. Someone said "my Mexicans" at Fair - it's inappropriate. She has worked with Indigenous people and the tribes since 1978. We have a real problem with cultural appropriation.
- Review next steps (5 minutes)
  - Everyone look at and approve via email or at next meeting
  - Continue via email
  - Sam wants committee report by morning of next board meeting
  - Emma send recording to office
- Next meeting (5 minutes)
  - Will discuss via email
- Meeting evaluation (5 minutes)
  - Melissa thanked Lana for holding the space. She did a great job. Good conversation through some hard conversation. Please stay in contact via email or other means if you didn't get a chance to engage.

- Emma noted that there are a lot of people who haven't been to a DC meeting before. We do 3-4 hour meetings when there are 14 of us. There were 60+ people tonight. It's hard to fit all of this in with how we work.
- Britania thought lana did a great job facilitating in an equitable way. Welcoming, compassionate attitude. She appreciates the way the committee works together.
- Sam has been thinking about the term brigading in online spaces. He's noticed this tactic has been used in physical spaces at OCF. He appreciates the way the committee handled this issue and gave members an opportunity for input without letting the meeting get taken over.
- Jon hopes that those who are not speaking during meeting evaluation do not go post their feedback on social media.
- lana was sorry to cut off people when they were sharing their stories.
- Steven felt stifled.
- lana emphasized that marginalized folks have that feeling all of the time.
- Lisa appreciates the Black and brown women who spoke and appreciates the committee.