



Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity



Information and Technology Sub-Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, June 15, 2023 @ 5:30pm

Lincoln Public Library

(Hybrid Meeting w/Zoom Access)

Members Present:

Shawn Johnson	Jenny Replogle
X Theresa Koehler	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
X Dan McCloud – Co Chair	X Jamiel Shelton (via Zoom)
Jessica McKean	Datikka Wright
Sunny Pearson	

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm by Lisamarie Schultz

2. Approval of Minutes

There being no quorum, minutes were not approved.

3. Informational Items and Reports

4. Discussion

The committee members present agreed that virtual attendance is allowed and shall count toward the quorum.

Lisa and Dan presented information from the last Co-Chairs meeting with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee thought that each sub-committee would benefit from having a liaison from the Steering Committee. Our Steering Committee liaison is Heather McMeekan . County liaison is Andre Allen. (One of

Andre's colleagues will cover for when he has County Board meeting conflicts.) City is hiring someone to do liaison work.

The Steering Committee noted that sub-committees are having difficulties getting a quorum, so they are considering rewriting the Charter to turn the "sub-committees" into "working groups", in which case the Open Meetings Act would not apply to the working groups. This would allow work to get done faster since we wouldn't be stymied by lack of a quorum. Working groups would still make recommendations to the Steering Committee who would move those recommendations on to City Council, Mayor, & County Board. There was some discussion about possible lack of transparency due to change in charter.

Peoria JCRJE has a webpage on Peoria County Government website. Each sub-committee has a section within the webpage. Hopefully one person will be managing that, and there will be one consistent voice on our webpage sections.

The Steering Committee is meeting with the NAACP, along with other partners on June 15. There is also potential for a partnership with the United Way.

Our subcommittee needs to be acknowledged as a partner in broadband but is having problems connecting with people, especially in City/County Government. Lisa will email Andre Allen to ask about access to county meetings and individuals involved.

Lisa reminded subcommittee that Kathie Brown (Greater Peoria Economic Development Council) suggested that a grant financing the creation of a comprehensive list of organizations/individuals working on broadband issues would be a benefit to our work and to our community partners.

Discussed what we learned through Illinois Office of Broadband listening sessions, which many of us attended. Manual High School has created a digital equity lab to prepare students to get internships in the field. Denise Moore has some digital equity classes at the Minority Business Development Center. We will reach out to her.

LM met with Kiersten Sheets, a board member from Peoria Farm Bureau. She indicated that they are looking into internet accessibility in rural areas and have interviewed 5 ISPs. Farm Bureau did a broadband feasibility study last year. Installing buried fiber cable is considered the best way to future-proof digital access, but it's expensive -- \$480,000 per mile. With satellites there are line-of-site issues caused by weather or other interference, plus cost issues, so they're looking for alternatives. There is hesitancy on the part of land owners to allow cable to be buried as they've been burned in the past -- led to believe cable would help them and their neighbors but they can't access the cable that's laid on their property as it's for a specific (corporate) use. (e.g. OSF has fiber going through properties, but residents cannot attach to it because it is only used by OSF.) Pleasant Valley School has terrible internet service which may disrupt the students' education.

It was interesting to note that the Farm Bureau has 10,000 city members and only 1,500 county members.

The Benton Institute selected Peoria/Woodford County for the second cohort of the Accelerate Illinois Broadband Infrastructure Planning Program.

5. Recommendations to the Steering Committee

6. New Business

There was some discussion about wire mesh network, especially Project Waves in Baltimore. They are using wire mesh, point-to-multi-point networks, and other ways to connect. Service is free to residents in low-income neighborhoods. LM will contact Project Waves to see if we can speak to them about their program.

Next Meeting July 13, 2023

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 6:11 pm