

**DRAFT -- WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary – FINAL
September 25, 2019 Noon to 2:00 pm, WMSWCD Office**

Attending: Scott Gall, Susan Weedall (Co-Chairs); Michael Ahr, Jim Cathcart, Indi Keith, Mary Logalbo, Sam Mularz, Randi Razalenti, Laura Taylor.

Welcome/Check-In/Equity Shares -- The following announcements were shared.

- Mary - Weston Miller plans on working with City of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights to conduct Equity 101 training for Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener volunteers. It will be five trainings in 2020 for 700 Master Gardner volunteers. Recall, we worked with Koffi Dessou and Judith Mowry from this Office to conduct our own, very successful, Equity 101 training for Board and staff.
- Sam – Will be starting a new job at City of Portland Oregon Community Gardens – a subdivision of Portland Parks and Recreation. Equity has become a focus for this program – the need to establish community gardens in historically underserved areas. Excited about this work.
- Susan – In Susan's world of physical therapy, more and more conversations are being held around gender, LGBTQ and cultural awareness training. Susan is a member of the Oregon Physical Therapy Association's Cultural Minority Affairs committee and will be attending a Cultural Competency discussion forum on Saturday, September 28th – which will prevent Susan from being at the Sauvie Island Jubilee in the morning.

Approval of the August 14, 2019 Meeting Summary – Mary referenced that she has more detail about the Long Range Business Plan Update process exercise the Committee went through at the August 14th meeting than what was captured in the meeting summary and wants to know if that detail needs to be captured and made part of the public record. The Committee agreed that it did as an attachment to the final meeting summary. With this addition, the summary as distributed for this meeting was approved.

Review of Organizational DEI Goals and Provide Recommendation to the Board – See attached 3 page original document, *“WMSWCD Diversity, Equity & Inclusions Goals, Strategies & Objectives Explained”*. These were developed by a sub-group of the Committee during a Committee organized “special meeting” on February 19, 2019. The goals were first presented to the Board at their May 8, 2019 meeting. The feeling is that the goals did not get much traction with the Board and as such the goals need to be resubmitted and more space provided so the Board could take ownership of the Goals. Given that, the question now is to confirm whether the Committee is comfortable with the goals? Scott drew attention to the Overarching Goals and then the goals specific to race – which come across very similarly. The Committee discussed whether these two sets of goals could be streamlined. The Committee agreed to introduce the Overarching Goals first and then introduce the emphasis on centering on race initially when addressing these goals. Given this change, one could interpret that the overarching goals would first be applied to race without having to explicitly modify those goals to address race.

The Committee felt the overarching goal for equity accountability should be modified to include an introspection component that would explicitly include the “Whose Land Is Our Land” work to be featured at the Sauvie Island Jubilee. **Action:** *Scott to update the “WMSWCD Diversity, Equity & Inclusions Goals, Strategies & Objectives Explained” document to reflect the needed changes identified by the Committee.*

Discuss “Literature Review: Historical Barriers/Issues around Landownership & Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)” – See attached, *Executive Summary – Whose Land is Our Land?* The District has a responsibility to understand these issues because their impacts are still present today and understanding this information helps us not repeat the mistakes of the past. Also, more importantly, what is it the District can do to reverse these impacts? Our actions need to be just as deliberate and impactful so as to stem this inertia. The outcome of these policies was to force communities of color to live in the least desirable areas in terms of environmental health and ownership. Basically, now that we are aware of what happened, the concern is that business as usual for the District may result in reinforcing these disparities. The question then is how does the District respond to this and what to do differently? The timing is good because the conversation should enter the discussions around updating our Long Range Business Plan.

Present Updated WMSWCD Equity Lens – Susan and Jim gave the Committee a rundown on why the lens needed to be updated and presented a new version of the lens being proposed (copy attached). The updated lens is organized around 5 components: (1) Identify Issue, (2) Evaluate, (3) Reassess/Analyze, (4) Confirm and (5) Reflect. It is very likely that most applications of the lens will go through the first 3 components only as the evaluation component will likely identify needed changes in the policy, program, practice and/or decision the lens is being applied to. For example, perhaps not all voices have been heard and need to be heard. Perhaps the assumptions

brought to the table are leading to unintended consequences. If these outcomes are identified, then there will be a need to revisit and make changes to the policy, program, practice and/or decision being evaluated. Once this is done, then the lens is structured to evaluate the amended policy, program, practice and/or decision using the fourth component of the lens – Confirm. Component 5 – Reflect – can be run through more than once. For example, the group applying the lens could reflect after completing components (1) through (3) and recognizing the need to revisit the policy, program, practice and/or decision being evaluated; and again after the application of component (4) – Confirm - to the modified policy, program, practice and/or decision.

Equity Lens Exercise – Hiring Practices: Value of Lived as well as Professional DEI Experience when Evaluating Candidates – The decision on which the Committee applied the lens to was focus on how we don't explicitly call for candidates sharing their lived experience in our hiring process, but we have valued this experience in our scoring of the strengths of intern candidates in reference to a desired experience criteria focused on one's "experience interacting with historically underrepresented communities and/or individuals in a welcoming and respectful way." Some listed professional experience within this realm and others highlighted lived experience. In scoring professional and lived experience for this criterion there was a lack of clarity on how to value professional versus lived experience. One assumption is that candidates will be comfortable with sharing this information. A fear could be is that by sharing, the District could discriminate against them based on what was shared. Another assumption is that the candidate wants their lived experience to be part of their experience with the agency. That may not be the case. The desired equitable outcomes from including lived experience in the hiring process is to promote a more diverse applicant pool and achieving a greater likelihood of hiring a diverse candidate. The Committee recognized that the proposal to include lived experience in the selection of candidates needs to be reassessed and analyzed further. **Action** – *Laura to develop a complete proposal for if and how to include and score lived experience in the hiring process (in general – not just with respect to the filling of the Field and Field/GIS positions) and then schedule an off-line meeting to apply the lens to that complete proposal. Participants to be determined.*

Long Range Business Plan (LRBP) – Update on Community Engagement Plan and Placement of Equity Pauses – The initial focus of the Committee's discussion was on identifying the equity pauses throughout the process and identifying where the District might wish to have a facilitator for application of the equity lens. Mary explained that she had a preliminary conversation with Scott and Susan that led them to collectively agree that it would be best if Mary proceeded in drafting a more solidified plan for this that's then vetted through a hired consultant versus the committee spearheading the same. The committee agreed that this would be the best path forward and that following up with Cliff Jones of Capacity Building Partnerships for our consultant, given Cliff's familiarity with the District and our staff and board's enthusiasm in continuing to work with him given his skillset and past quality work with us, would be ideal. The Committee also discussed the idea of hiring Cliff to hold a train the trainer for facilitating the application of the lens to the key pauses in the update process where an outside facilitator would not be used. The audience for this training would be the Planning Team Members for each of the conversations – Scope, Financial Sustainability and Organizational Structure. The Committee agreed that this would be a great model to pursue with Cliff in addition to him vetting the overall equity lens pause plan and facilitating 1-2 conversations at key decision points. The Committee then reviewed of the LRBP Update process as documented in "WMSWCD Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Goals, Strategies & Objectives Explained". Mary updated the Committee on the Community Engagement Liaison (CEL) process. PKS International is now under contract and is in the process of solidifying the CELs and scheduling their orientation.

Action Item Review –

- Rework the goals document – Scott Gall
- Schedule more time to discuss response to Indi's work – Scott Gall and Susan Weedall
- Laura to move forward with developing the lived experience proposal for the District's hiring practices and scheduling a second application of the equity lens to this proposal off-line from the Committee.

Next Meeting: Next regular meeting is Noon to 2:00 pm, October 23rd (LRBP focus). November meeting is November 27th (day before the Thanksgiving Holiday). The December meeting is December 18th (LRBP focus).