

**NOTE: THE COMMUNITY EQUITY COMMISSION MEETING WILL BE HELD  
IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM (link is below).**

Please note, individuals may attend in-person or virtually via Zoom. Doors will open 30 minutes prior to the start of each meeting.

When: July 13, 2023 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Community Equity Commission

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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**Persons interested in making their views known on any matter on the agenda should send an email with their comments to the Assistant City Manager at [amuskopf@claytonmo.gov](mailto:amuskopf@claytonmo.gov). All comments received will be distributed to the entire Commission before the meeting.**

**Community Equity Commission  
July 13, 2023 at 5:30 PM  
City Hall, 10 N. Bemiston Avenue  
Clayton, MO 63105**

Agenda

1. Welcome and Roll Call
2. Approval of June 8, 2023 Minutes
3. Reflection: South Asian Heritage Month
4. Review and Discussion on Guiding Principles and Initiatives for Coming Year
5. Update on Status of DEI Summit
6. Subcommittee Updates
  - a. Communications
  - b. Municipal Court
  - c. Housing
7. Old Business
  - a. Public Comments from June 8, 2023 Meeting
8. Public Comment
9. Comments from Members
10. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 10, 2023 at 5:30 pm
11. Adjourn

**The City of Clayton  
Community Equity Commission  
Virtual Zoom Meeting  
June 8, 2023**

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.

**Roll Call**

Present: Ben Uchitelle, Chris Schmiz, Ted Wheeler, Frances Pires, Rob Whitney (ex officio), and JoAnna Schooler (ex officio).

Additional: Alderwoman Becky Patel, Alderman Gary Feder, City Manager David Gipson, and Assistant City Manager Andrea Muskopf.

**Approval of June 8, 2023 Minutes**

Chris Schmiz moved to approve the minutes. Stuart Berkowitz seconded the motion. Minutes accepted and approved.

**Reflection: Pride Month**

Chris Schmiz led the Reflection.

**Presentation by Commemorative Landscape Task Force**

Chris Schmiz moved to support the recommendation by the Mayor's Commemorative Landscape Task Force to commemorate former Philippine Village at the 1904 World's Fair and present-day Philippine Village Historical Site by placing a permanent historical marker in Clayton. Ted Wheeler seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Discussion on Citizen Survey**

City Manager David Gipson reviewed the results from the Citizen Survey. Staff will request a cross tab of data for multi-family housing and demographic information to share with the Commission.

**Update on Housing Meeting with Webster Groves**

Kathleen provided an update on the sharing session with Webster Groves.

**Update on Meetings(s) with Members of Faith-Based Community**

Ben Uchitelle provided an update on Tom Albinson's meetings with members of the faith-based community.

**Update on Status of DEI Summit**

Rob Whitney provided an update on the DEI Summit.

**Election of Community Equity Commission Chair**

Ted Wheeler moved to appoint Chris Schmiz as Chair of the Community Equity Commission. Frances Pires seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Subcommittee Updates**

City Manager Gipson shared an update on the selection processes for Municipal Judge and Prosecuting Attorney.

**Comments from Members**

Stuart Berkowitz shared update from his ride along with the Clayton Police Department.

**Public Comment**

No comments from the public.

**Comments from Members**

No comments from members.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

**Adjourn**

Ted Wheeler moved to adjourn the meeting. Chris Schmiz seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

DRAFT



Clayton Community Equity Commission  
July 13, 2023  
Reflection

*We begin this meeting by acknowledging that we are on the traditional homelands of Osage Nation, Missouriia, and Illini Confederacy.*

*We pay respect to elders both past and present, and we thank them for their hospitality and stewardship of this land.*

July 18th – August 17th

South Asian Heritage Month

The South Asian community in the United States comprises of individuals with ancestry from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The community also includes members of the South Asian diaspora – past generations of South Asians who originally settled in many areas around the world, including the Caribbean, Africa, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia and the Pacific Islands.

While South Asians are noted to have been in the United States since the 1700s, the road to citizenship for South Asians in America has been a long and difficult one.



In 1917, the US Congress passed an immigration act which restricted migrants from the "Asiatic Barred Zone" -- a region that included the entirety of the Indian subcontinent.

In the landmark 1923 case of *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, the U.S. Supreme Court found that Bhagat Singh Thind was also ineligible for citizenship even though as an Asian Indian, he would have been categorized as Aryan or Caucasian, according to the prevailing racial science of the time. Although Thind was racially white, the Supreme Court found that he would not be considered "white" in the eyes of the "common man."

The Thind decision led to the denaturalization of sixty-five Asian Indian Americans who had earlier successfully applied for and received U.S. citizenship.

One of those whose citizenship had been stripped from him was Vaishno Das Bagai.



Vaishno and his family came to the United States in 1915, wanting to escape British rule in India to raise his children in a free country. Vaishno arrived with \$25,000 in gold, enough to open his own import business and general store in San Francisco.

Vaishno relished his new life in America. He wore American suits, spoke English fluently and adopted Western manners. In 1921, he applied for and became a naturalized U. S. Citizen.

After the Thind decision when Vaishno was stripped of his U. S. citizenship, he was legally deemed *persona non grata* since he had renounced his British citizenship to become an American. Without the protection of U.S. citizenship, Vaishno was also subjected to California's alien land laws. He was forced to liquidate his property, including his general store.

The final insult came in 1928 when the government refused to grant Vaishno a U.S. passport to visit family and relatives in India. They suggested that he reapply for a British passport, but due to his allegiance to a free India, he vowed he would never become a British subject again.





Feeling trapped and betrayed, Vaishno went to San Jose alone on a business pretext, rented a room there, and took his own life by gas poisoning. He left behind a letter to his family, and another addressed to the San Francisco Examiner explaining he had no alternative but to take his life in protest:

*I came to America thinking, dreaming and hoping to make this land my home. Sold my properties and brought more than twenty-five thousand dollars (gold) to this country, established myself and tried my very best to give my children the best American education.*

*In year 1921 the Federal court at San Francisco accepted me as a naturalized citizen of the United States and issued to my name the final certificate, giving therein the name and description of my wife and three sons. In last 12 or 13 years we all made ourselves as much Americanized as possible.*

*But they now come to me and say, I am no longer an American citizen. They will not permit me to buy my home and, lo, they even shall not issue me a passport to go back to India. Now what am I? What have I made of myself and my children? We cannot exercise our rights; we cannot leave this country. Humility and insults, who is responsible for all this? Myself and the American government.*

*I do not choose to live the life of an interned person; yes, I am in a free country and can move about where and when I wish inside the country. Is life worth living in a gilded cage? Obstacles this way, blockades that way, and the bridges burnt behind.*

The *Thind* decision would stand for the next two decades, until President Truman signed the 1946 Luce-Celler Act which provided naturalization rights to both South Asians and Filipinos, but still limited the number of migrants allowed into the country. While small in number, the South Asians who immigrated in the following two decades started the community's major presence in motels, in medicine, and in engineering.

In response to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and international critiques, the U.S. passed The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished immigration quotas based on national origin and led to an increase of migrants from South Asia. Because this Act prioritized immigrants with either direct family ties to current Americans or with high levels of scientific educations, most South Asians allowed to immigrate at that time were professionals.

Since then, the demographics of South Asian America have also become more diverse with new immigrants, refugees, and second, third, and fourth- generation South Asian Americans now comprising the community of Americans with South Asian heritage.

## Guiding Principles – 2020 Clayton Community Equity Commission

The Clayton Equity Commission was formed by Bill No. 6759. The body provides guidance to the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and the Clayton community on the issues pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion. In June 2020, the CEC decided to begin its broader equity work by addressing racial equity with the goal of advising elected officials on how to prioritize and enact system change to reduce the impact of racism in our community. (see “Why are we leading with race?” below)

The CEC recognizes that racism is ingrained throughout all facts of life in our nation and region, and that racial disparities define Black St. Louisans’ quality of life across a range of indicators. Clayton is not immune to these problems, as both data and anecdotal evidence of Black residents’ and visitors’ experiences in our community makes clear. The CEC seeks to ensure Clayton is a community where St. Louisans of all backgrounds choose to live, work and play. To accomplish that purpose, CEC will focus on identifying policies and practices currently in place that reinforce inequities, and propose solutions to close these gaps.

### Why are we leading with race in 2020?

The CEC leads with race, with the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities are of urgent priority to our region and the nation at this current moment as protests of racial injustice continues in St. Louis and across the country. We further recognize that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive.

It is also true that inequities exist across other identity factors, including those based on economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Prioritizing racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other area of marginalization. In our formative meetings, we reviewed recommendations of the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity and several case studies of other cities who have used an equity commission to great effect. It became clear that when a local government makes policy and practice changes to reduce racial inequity, it improves the city’s functioning for residents and visitors of color, as well as, residents and visitors with other marginalized identities.

### CEC Values

Impact, Community, Courage

**From:** [CHRISTINE SCHMIZ](#)  
**To:** [Stuart Berkowitz](#); [Shantay Bolton](#); [Gary Feder](#); [David Gipson](#); [Ken Murdock](#); [Andrea Muskopf](#); [Becky Patel](#); [Frances Pires](#); [Cameron Poole](#); [Lauren Rodriguez-Goldstein](#); [JoAnna Schooler](#); [Ben Uchitelle](#); [Ted Wheeler](#); [Rob Whitney](#)  
**Subject:** Activities for our upcoming sessions  
**Date:** Saturday, June 24, 2023 6:15:57 PM  
**Attachments:** [Diversity Awareness Calendar July-Dec 2023.docx](#)

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[CAUTION – EXTERNAL EMAIL]

NOT FOR DISCUSSION

Hello everyone,

First, thank you for your support. It is a privilege to be serving with you on the Community Equity Commission, one that I do not take lightly and pledge my best to honor.

Recognizing that circumstances may change, I thought it would be helpful to recap the topics/activities we already have planned for the upcoming year. We can discuss this further at our July meeting, adding anything that you feel might be missing and establishing the point person(s) and timing for each project. This will allow us to put together a tentative calendar to keep us on track.

- Collaboration with Clayton School District to establish some kind of student initiative focused on being a welcoming community to all
- Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and business community to create a DEI Summit
- Continuing the dialogue with Faith Leaders
- Continuing the to review data from CPD and Municipal Courts
- Continuing dialogue with Webster Groves and potentially other communities on housing & equity issues
- Monthly Reflections working from Annual Diversity Awareness Calendar (see attached)
- CEC Participation on Mayor's Commemorative Landscape Task Force
- CEC Participation on City Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

While I suspect most of you are already familiar with this quote from Margaret Mead, it seems worth repeating here as we consider our efforts going forward.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

Thank you for your consideration.

[Chris Schmiz \(she/her\)](#)

[chris.schmiz@mac.com](mailto:chris.schmiz@mac.com)



# DIVERSITY AWARENESS CALENDAR 2023

## July

Disability Pride Month

French American Heritage Month

7/2 – Birthday of Thurgood Marshall (Black American): well-known as a civil rights activist who served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court

7/18 – Birthday of Nelson Mandela (South African): civil rights leader for South Africa, and the country's first black president

7/18 - South Asian Heritage Month begins

7/26 – Americans with Disabilities Act anniversary: outlawed the discrimination against people with disabilities

## August

8/9 – International Day of the World's Indigenous People (United Nations): created by the UN, celebrates the cultures of indigenous peoples around the world

8/24 – Birthday of Marlee Matlin (People with Disabilities): Marlee Matlin is the only hearing-impaired actor to win the Oscar for best actor/actress

8/26 – Women's Equality Day: commemorates the American women gaining the right to vote in 1920

## September

Suicide Prevention Month

National Recovery Month: This month helps to educate all Americans on treatment and mental health services for those with substance use disorder

9/8 – Moms' Equal Pay Day

9/11 – National Day of Service

9/15-10/15 – National Hispanic Heritage Month: This month honors the culture and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans

9/20 – HeForShe (Women): initiated by the UN to promote gender equality

9/21 - Black Women's Equality Pay Day

9/22 American Indian Day

## **October**

LGBTQ History Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: advocates for people with disabilities, and their inclusion in the workforce

National Polish American Heritage Month: dedicated to honoring Polish heritage

10/10 – World Mental Health Day (People with Disabilities): promotes mental health awareness and education, and advocates against social stigma relating to mental health

10/11 – National Indigenous Peoples' Day honors the indigenous people of North America

10/11 – National Coming Out Day

## **November**

Native American Heritage Month: celebrates the culture and heritage of individuals who deeply enrich the United States

Military Family Month

11/1 – Military Family Appreciation Day

11/16 - International Day for Tolerance (United Nations): founded by the UN to promote respect for various religions, languages, ethnicities, and cultures

11/13-19 – Transgender Awareness Week

11/20 – Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBTQ+): seeks to remember those who were murdered due to transphobia

11/30 - Native Women's Equal Pay Day

## **December**

Universal Human Rights Month

12/1 – World AIDS Day: helps raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and money to cure it

12/3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations): raises awareness for the rights and well-being of those with disabilities

12/8 – Latina’s Equal Pay Day

12/10 – International Human Rights Day (United Nations): adopted by the UN in 1948, celebrates the day it the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

12/26 – Kwanzaa (Black): 8-day holiday inspired by African harvest celebrations