

CLAYTON  
COMMUNITY EQUITY COMMISSION  
2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## **OVERVIEW**

The Community Equity Commission (**Bill No. 6759**) was established to provide the Mayor and Board of Aldermen with insight and guidance on matters of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Ordinance creating the Commission provides it shall serve in an advisory role to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen on ways to:

1. *“Promote community awareness and education on the value of diversity to the community;*
2. *Promote equity on the basis of 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;*
3. *Evaluate and develop actionable equity recommendations to be used to examine and strengthen policies, practices, services and programs, which will establish the Commission as a community resource and regional leader;*
4. *Promote responsiveness of government to concerns of all minority groups and others that may be subject to bias or discrimination in the community; and*
5. *Encourage the creation and continuation of community equity, diversity and inclusion awareness efforts, programs, and activities that are available and accessible to all community members.”*

## **COMMISSION MEMBERS**

The Ordinance provides for 7 Commissioners. During 2022 they were: Ben Uchitelle, Chair; Frances Pires, Stuart Berkowitz, Christine Schmiz, Ted Wheeler, Lauren Rodriguez-Goldstein, and Shantay Bolton.

### **Ex-Officio and Aldermanic Liaison Members**

The Ordinance further provides for the appointment of Ex-Officio and Aldermanic Liaison Members. During 2022 Ex-Officio Members were Cameron Poole of the Clayton School District, JoAnna Schooler of Washington University, Rob Whitney of the Clayton Chamber of Commerce, and Kenneth Murdock of St. Louis County Government.

Alderwoman Susan Buse and Alderman Gary Feder were the Board of Aldermen Liaisons.

## **2022 Activities**

\* Continued the CEC reflection tradition: CEC opens its meetings with a land acknowledgment and reflection to give consideration and appreciation to individuals who contributed to equity and diversity and inclusion efforts throughout American history. In 2022 CEC recognized:

- Black History Month: The Resurrection of Henry “Box Brown”

- Women’s History Month: Marian Anderson
- AAPI History Month: Grace Lee Boggs, George Takei, Ang Lee, Jerry Yang, Kalpana Chawla
- Gay Pride Month: Harvey Milk, Martha P. Johnson, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy
- Transgender Day of Remembrance: Rita Hester
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Judy Heumann

\* Neighborhood Indentures – A thorough review of all neighborhood Indentures in Clayton was conducted to remove racially restrictive language. Of the 39 neighborhoods in Clayton, nearly all included racial restrictions in their indentures. Although no longer legal, words matter and the fact that such hateful language was handed down unknowingly generation-to-generation in legal documents was untenable. Following a recommendation by the CEC, the Board of Aldermen adopted Ordinance No. 6783 on November 8, 2022. This ordinance declare invalid and void any declaration, indenture, or other governing document applicable to any dwelling or area in the City of Clayton that includes a discriminatory restrictive covenant or provision in violation of the City’s housing discrimination regulations.

\* Preserving existing duplexes – A recommendation was made to the Board of Aldermen to allow existing duplexes that had been grandfathered in neighborhoods that has since been zoned single-family to enjoy the same right to be improved and replaced as single-family homes. The Board unanimously adopted the recommendation.

- Granny Flats- The CEC recommended and the BOA changed the use of the pejorative words “granny flats” in its housing ordinances to “Accessory Dwelling Units”. A seemingly small but important change in housing matters.

\* Faith Based Meeting – In late 2022 the CEC invited Faith Based Leaders of the Clayton community to attend our regular Jan. 2023 meeting. The purpose was to learn from these Leaders what their houses of worship are undertaking in the areas of DEI.

\*Affordable Housing – A Housing Subcommittee was established in 2022 to consider the many aspects and challenges of providing affordable housing in Clayton. Several CEC members attended the important Wash. Univ. program: “*Welcome Home: How Thoughtful Housing Policy Promotes Thriving Communities.*” The CEC shall continue to focus on these important areas of concern for our City.

- Clayton Connection – On a weekly basis the CEC provides important information for the Clayton Connection publication relating to areas of equity, diversity and inclusion in our community. The CEC also prepares and furnishes DEI articles and information to City Views and other media.
- Meeting with Kirkwood Human Rights Commission – The CEC hosted an informative meeting with members of the Kirkwood Human Rights

Commission to exchange mutual ideas and activities. From this meeting the CEC is starting work on recommending to the BOA an annual Essay and annual Person of the Year in the areas of DEI.

- Municipal Courts Subcommittee – During 2022 this Subcommittee spent considerable time studying Clayton’s Municipal Court system for handling the various traffic violations that are brought before it. In 2023 recommendations were made to the BOA to ensure that defendants continue to be treated on an equitable basis.

Working with Chief Smith – During 2022 Chief Smith continued to meet with and furnish helpful information to the CEC on his officers’ activities. In addition, the CEC continued to work with Chief Smith on traffic stop analysis to ensure that stops are based on objective standards. Chief Smith has been extremely helpful in all these activities.

\* Citizen Survey: CEC continued to review and offer suggestions for the Clayton Citizen Survey for the residents to answer on the City’s ongoing equity efforts.

In summary, the activities of the Community Equity Commission are ongoing. We look forward in 2023 and the years ahead to continuing our efforts toward making Clayton a truly just and equitable community.

Respectfully Submitted

Clayton Community Equity Commission

Ben Uchitelle, Chair

Stuart Berkowitz, Frances Pires, Christine Schmiz, Ted Wheeler, Shantay Bolton and  
Lauren Rodriguez-Goldstein.

And

Cameron Poole (Clayton School District), JoAnna Schooler (Washington University),  
Rob Whitney (Clayton Chamber of Commerce) and Ken Murdock (St. Louis County).  
Ex-Officio

And

Susan Buse and Gary Feder – Aldermanic Liaisons