

Observed Meeting: Access, Advocacy, Equity & Engagement Commission Date : May 12, 2026

LWV Observer: Ramona Bryant Time : 3:00 pm

	Yes	No	Comments
Members			
All members present?		x	Kandee Cleary, Nancy Goodlow absent
Members attentive & involved?	x		
Members courteous to each other and public?	x		
Any members recuse themselves?		x	
Agenda			
Agenda available prior to and during meeting?	x		
Agenda followed?	x		
Agenda amended?	x		
Non-agenda items discussed?	x		
Was time given to public input?	x		

Action:

Please provide a brief, impartial summary of the meeting, including key issues discussed, significant actions taken, and other observations:

5.A Rhonda Schmidt, liaison with Ellensburg School District presented the DOJ settlement agreement.

In 2023 the US DOJ investigated concerns related to student harassment by students and staff and found the the District systems and responses to harassment needed to be strengthened. The District agreed to improve systems to ensure safe and equitable learning environments. The agreement requires:

- Strong reporting and tracking systems
- Clear procedures
- Training for staff and students
- Ongoing assessment and community engagement

To date, the District has put into place a harassment reporting system and reporting procedures. They have enhanced training for staff, completed surveys with students, staff and families, conducted Listening sessions and have filled both a Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator and Latino Family Liaison position.

Having consistent documentation of incidents will reflect improved awareness and clearer expectations to the District. This will hopefully lead to confidence of consistent and meaningful follow-through of incidents and communication with families

5.B Stacy Henderson, Planning and Development staff member reviewed an evaluation of the City's comprehensive plan Chapter 9 (Access, Engagement & Belonging). The City has engaged SCJ Alliance as consultants who have reviewed how the concepts of Chapter 9 are being addressed in other other Chapters of the comprehensive plan and identifying opportunities for improvement.

SCJ recommends how AAEE policies can effectively be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan to improve clarity and overall implementation. The review looked at where similar policies already exist, where overlap or redundancy occurs and where opportunities exist to integrate equity and belonging concepts throughout the Plan. Suggesting that a standalone chapter may not be necessary to achieve the City's goals related to access, equity and belonging.

Planning and Development recommends placing measurable actions in existing chapters, i.e. Facilities and Utilities - equitable service delivery, language access, or Parks and Recreation - inclusive programming, cultural events. The underlying intent of Chapter 9 can be retained and integrated into a new "guiding principles" section located in the Community Voices chapter. These recommendations allow the concepts that were in Chapter 9 to inform all elements of the plan rather than being addressed in a standalone chapter.

Public comment was made by Kathryn Martell opposing the elimination of Chapter 9.

5.C Heidi Behrends, City Manager, presented a summarized work plan for the Commission to develop for 2026. Judd Grey, Phil Backlund and M. Eliatamby-O'Brien will form a sub-committee to develop the work plan further.

If minutes were posted online, please provide a link:

If a vote on an ordinance will be taken later, please provide the name or number of the ordinance and the date of the vote:

Do you recommend local League action on any of these issues?

What action do you recommend, i.e., support, oppose, study, inform the community, other (please specify):