



[Home](#) / [Browse Council Documents](#)

737-2021

Communication

Requested Agenda Type

Communications

Request of Tristan Sakamoto to address Council regarding equity and diversity in the City

Placed on File

A brief description of Communication: Equity and diversity in the City

Agenda Items

737 Communications in [October 13, 2021 Council Agenda](#)

Placed on File

Hello Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners. My name is Tristan, and I am an employee of the City of Portland (although currently off the clock). Today I am here for myself, as a concerned and aware fellow human. What I say today might be difficult to hear and may even trigger some feelings that you have. I simply ask that you listen with an open mind and heart. My intentions are good, and I believe that together we can make a more equitable city, state, and country. We can stand knowing that we not only speak the words of inclusivity, but show others how committed we are.

I want to begin by recognizing the time and effort that is put into equity and diversity trainings, committees, meetings, and resources around the City so employees can learn and grow for themselves and the community we serve. I completed a four-hour equity training a couple of weeks ago and one key phrase that stuck with me was: intent vs impact. While I recognize the City's dedication to education; I do feel the City is lacking in being fully committed to creating a diverse and equitable City.

In June of 2020, The City of Portland passed Resolution 37492, which states, in short: Adopt Anti-Racism, Equity, Transparency, Communication, Collaboration, and Fiscal Responsibility as the Core Values of the City. I think there are several things the City can do to put these core values into action because this Resolution is not just what City Council interprets it to be, but rather the impact it has on those it is meant to serve. Are we collaborating with the community and providing an equitable City for all?

Nearly a month ago, City Council made it a condition of employment to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. For the first time ever, a medicine's ineffectiveness is being blamed on those who have not taken it. The vaccinated can still contract and transmit COVID-19; therefore, the vaccinated and unvaccinated should be treated equally. How can we achieve our goals of equity and inclusion when every barrier that is removed is replaced with a different barrier?

Shouldn't we allow people to make their own medical decisions without government interference? Last year many marched the streets proclaiming Black Lives Matter as an act of unity and inclusion but today there is a toxicity on our nation, it is creating segregation and division. An equitable society is fair inclusion into a society in which all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Mandating people and their children who have consciously chosen not to get vaccinated is a recipe for creating new and deeper fractures within our society, the kind of fractures we may profoundly regret in hindsight.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Resolution 37443, which was passed in July of 2019. The resolution begins: Supporting the right to bodily autonomy...this Resolution was written in support of abortion, but those words lead the impact statement, and it seems intent vs impact is quite lost on this. Roe vs Wade wasn't about a woman's right to abortion, it was about her right to medical privacy. All of us should have the opportunity to choose what is best for ourselves and our families through research and education, particularly against a virus that most healthy individuals can and will survive. The COVID vaccination is a matter of personal health, not public health as the benefits rest primarily with the individual, not society, government officials have no greater moral authority to mandate a vaccination as they do to mandate chemotherapy.

You have tasked us with identifying and eliminating barriers and we are working so hard to accomplish this task. I think we can do more to make our city and state more equitable and welcoming for all. You have a platform to take a powerful stance and stand for freedom on behalf of the American people, but I wonder if you have the courage. City Council, do you believe we are all equal and we should

collaborate to create a country that is welcoming for all individuals and their personal choices?
Contractors, volunteers, employees, students, and others around the City are counting on you to live up to the core values they have set in place. Thank you for listening with an open mind and heart.