

# Kitsap County Council for Human Rights MINUTES

Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 6:30-8 PM Meeting

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84625513217> Meeting ID: 846 2551 3217 By phone: 253-215-8782

The **Mission of the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights** is twofold:

1. To advise county government and Kitsap County community on issues related to discrimination, violence and harassment based on race or national origin, religion, age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or economic status, and
2. To promote equitable treatment of all people and reduce prejudice through education, resource referrals, and advocacy.

**Attendance:** P – present T – present by technology E – absent excused U – absent unexcused

?	Name	Position*	?	Name	Position*
	Vacant	D1 – P1	P	Heather Moritz	D3 – P1
P	Erin Lanum, <i>Secretary</i>	D1 – P2	P	Darrell Thomas	D3 – P2
P	Dionne Deschenne, <i>Chair</i>	D1 – P3	P	Elizabeth Holmes	D3 – P3
E	Jim Cash	D1 – P4		Vacant	D3 – P4
E	Beth Barron	D2 – P1	P	Teresa Swope	At-large
E	Janae Jenkins	D2 – P2	P	Marcie Mathis	At-large
	Vacant	D2 – P3	P	Susie Beil, <i>Vice Chair</i>	At-large
P	Christina Barone	D2 – P4	P	Rebecca Pirtle	County Admin.

\***Note on Positions:** Commissioner for District 1 Rob Gelder; District 2 Charlotte Garrido; District 3 Ed Wolfe.

**Guests in attendance:** Ginger Vaughn, Janel McFeat, Cristina Roark, Brenda Calderon, Carolyn Hartness, Sophie Morse, Airen Lydick, Danielle Rueb-Castillejo, Laurie Dawson, Sophie Bonomi, Alex Jacobson, Diana Frazier, Maria Fergus

- 1) **Called to Order** at 6:31pm
- 2) **Approve Agenda** – Chris motioned; Marcie seconded. Unanimous approval for 2021.08.17 Agenda
- 3) **Land Acknowledgement Statement** (see below) – read by Dionne
- 4) **Group Agreements** (see below) – read by Dionne
- 5) **Centering moment** provided by Marcie – Read an excerpt from Rev. MLK Jr. speech at Birmingham
  - **Who will provide for next month?** – Erin will provide September centering moment
- 6) **Approval of Minutes** from previous meetings of June 15, 2021 – Marcie motioned. Susie seconded. Unanimous approval by the Council.
- 7) **Guest introductions, comments, or announcements** (three minutes each) – The Council had over a dozen guests that came to the meeting. These residents, former church members, protest organizers, concerned citizens, and representatives from local organizations came to share their concerns and educate the Council regarding Joseph Backholm, a contentious figure who participates in prejudicial viewpoints, hate speech, and sometimes aggressive tactics to make his point, who is set to speak at Gateway Fellowship Church in Poulsbo the following Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Many of the guests, including the protest organizers (members of the Church) made it clear that they are not in opposition to the Church itself, but rather the ideology of the guest speaker. Nearly all of the guests in attendance requested that the Council make a statement of objection to Backholm spreading his messages within the community and of affirmation for the kind of inclusive community that we envision Kitsap to be.
- 8) **Council Member introductions** and information regarding the other work that we each do in the community – **POSTPONED**
- 9) **Old Business - ALL POSTPONED**

- *Bremerton Race and Equity Advisory Committee* meeting attendance (meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month). More information at <https://www.bremertonwa.gov/1232/Race-Equity-Advisory-Committee-REAC>. Who will be attending their September meeting?
- Future meetings – when to resume in-person and location when we do

**11) Committee and Forum Planning Reports - *POSTPONED***

**12) New Business** – The Council deliberated how to respond to requests made by multiple guests in the first hour of the meeting. After considerable research and discussion focused largely on: Backholm's ideology and history; Gateway Fellowship church members' attempts to directly prevent the speaker's presentation; Kitsap County officials' recent statements regarding racism; and the role of freedom of speech as opposed to the crime of hate speech, Chris motioned and Susie seconded that the Council approve issuing a public statement objecting to Joseph Backholm's ideology and spreading of it on a speaking platform within our community. Darrell recused himself because of a conflict of interest resulting from his relationship with the host church. The remaining Council members unanimously voted in favor of issuing a public statement. The Outreach Committee will write a draft statement and email it to the Councilors on August 18 for final review and edits. Once there is consensus, the statement will be sent to the Board of County Commissioners with the hope of its being approved for release no later than Thursday morning, August 19, so that it precedes the scheduled presentation.

**13) Check-ins** (if time allows) – ***POSTPONED***

**14) Next meeting:** 6:30 PM on Tuesday, September 21

**15) Adjourned** at 8:26pm

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Erin Lanum