



TOWN OF
BRECKENRIDGE

Breckenridge Social Equity Advisory Commission

August 19, 2024, 7:30am

Breckenridge Town Hall
Council Chambers
150 Ski Hill Road
Breckenridge, CO

*Striving for racial and social equity for all by removing barriers and
facilitating opportunities to thrive*

I. Call to Order

Chair Jordan Burns called the meeting to order at 7:33am.

Roll Call

Present: June Walters, Laurie Moroco, Jotwan Daniels, Isaura Cirillo, Carol Saade

Virtual: Jordan Burns,

Absent: Silvia Vicuna, Ujala Vatas, Tahja Grier,

Discussion/Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Commissioner Walters, Seconded: Council Member Saade

Discussion/Approval of the Minutes

Motion to Approve: Commissioner Walters, Seconded: Commissioner Moroco

II. Staff Summary

i. Town Mission Statement Verbiage Change

Flor Cruz shared with the Commission a potential revision to the wording in the Town's mission statement. Town Manager, Shannon Haynes, asked Flor to gather feedback on the proposed change that would replace the word "citizen" with "community" to ensure inclusion of all types of community members. Commissioner Walters stated that the change would be wonderful. Chair Burns also liked the change and stated that that it promotes to everyone who lives in Breckenridge. Council Member Carol Saade also stated that it would be a great change, and it would align with previous initiatives from the Town. Flor Cruz also stated that this change also highlights the Town's and Commission's commitment to inclusivity and ensuring everyone can feel like they can be part of the community.

ii. Centro Recreativo Para Todos / Rec Center for All - Event Update

Flor Cruz gave a summary of the event held by the Immigration and Advocacy subcommittee on August 12, which was well-received. Thirty-seven families obtained 3-day passes to the rec center, and five families actively used the center's facilities that day. The event was a learning experience, revealing that afternoon timing and more childcare options might increase participation. The ADA compliance team also surveyed community members during the event and had great success, with over 100 responses. Notably, a few non-Spanish-speaking families who were new to the area also attended despite the event being primarily advertised in Spanish.

Council Member, Carol Saade, asked Flor if this event would be worth replicating to which Flor responded with a yes. Cruz stated that the families who attended the event benefited greatly, especially appreciating the 3-day passes, which made them feel excited about coming back. Flor believes the event is worth replicating, emphasizing the importance of continuously gathering data from participants to better tailor future events to their needs. Chair Burns also suggested trying the event on a different day of the week to reach more people. Flor also stated that the rec center suggested the next event focus on afterschool and summer camp registration. Lastly, Flor Cruz thanked Commissioner Vicuna for all her help and work during the event.

III. Presenter

Laurie Best & Darci Henning – Town Housing Update & Discussion

Laurie Best, who has managed the Town of Breckenridge's housing program for nearly 24 years, shared her experience and insights into the town's affordable housing efforts. She began in 2000 as a special project planner, initially managing 85 homes restricted to locals. Over the years, the town has increased its inventory to nearly 1,600 affordable units, including both for-sale and rental properties, ranging from studios to four-bedroom homes.

Laurie emphasized the importance of providing a variety of housing types and price points to meet the community's needs. She discussed the challenges of limited land availability and the risk of locals being priced out of the housing market. The town has addressed these challenges through a combination of new construction and programs that preserve existing neighborhoods. The upcoming project, called "Runway," will focus on home ownership and offer at least 100 units on a town-acquired property, with prices ranging from \$300,000 to \$700,000. Laurie highlighted the significance of providing opportunities for residents to move from rental to ownership as the Town has been focusing on rental properties over the past 5 years. Laurie also expressed enthusiasm to ensure that housing meets the needs of residents, recognizing that stable housing is fundamental to community well-being.

Commissioner Walters asked about rent raises and how they were monitored and updated to ensure income requirements were also updated. Laurie discussed the complexities of building affordable housing, emphasizing that no single model fits all situations. It requires various partnerships to bridge the funding gap between construction costs. The town relies heavily on a dedicated sales tax for funding, supplemented by partnerships with private developers and grants, while generally avoiding federal funds due to the restrictive conditions they often impose. Laurie also highlighted the challenge of managing rent increases, which are necessary to cover rising costs like utilities and insurance, while striving to keep these increases as minimal as possible. Some projects like Vista Verde, the town owns the land but not the apartments, which limits their control.

Laurie also stated that the rise in HUD's Area Median Income (AMI) data, which has increased by 10% annually over the past two years, is a challenge for our community. While HUD's AMI is used to determine community income levels, there's concern about whether this reflects the actual income growth of local residents. Laurie acknowledged the need for ongoing efforts to work closely with developers and apartment operators to ensure that rents remain affordable for tenants.

Commissioner Cirillo asked if affordable housing was accessible to all community members regardless of immigration status to which Laurie answered yes. Laurie stated that FIRC helps a lot of the potential buyers with the financing process and lenders like FirstBank and Alpine bank both offer programs for individuals with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers. Commissioner Cirillo stated that this part of our community struggles the most with housing, but they are the backbone of our Town workforce. Flor Cruz added that although lenders provide financing, they require a 25% down payment for such individuals rather than the average 3% - 10%. Council Member Carol Saade suggested that a on local down payment assistance program might be helpful.

Carol also acknowledged the work the Housing Division has done with outreach and ensuring all community members received information about Town housing projects. Laurie emphasized the importance of collaborating with community partners to ensure that the Town reaches those who can benefit most. Before launching new projects, Laurie and her team consult with organizations like FIRC and Mountain Dreamers who already have a relationship and connections with the families in the community.

Darci Henning highlighted the "Housing Helps" program as a pathway to homeownership, particularly for those who struggle with the financing challenges of a 25% down payment. The program allows buyers to use funds for up to 25-30% of the purchase price, making it easier to buy a home. However, it only applies to market homes, not those already deed-restricted. The program is versatile, covering various types of homes, including condos. Darci also noted that the program could benefit from more advertising in Spanish and other languages, and long-term Spanish-speaking renters have already successfully used the program to purchase homes.

Council Member Carol Saade asked the Commission to provide feedback on the composition of units for the Runway project. Laurie stated that the Town is currently thinking about more single-family homes and duplexes but could consider multifamily units or townhomes to meet the high demand. Laurie also noted that the neighborhood may include two- and three-bedroom units, with the possibility of adding accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to the single-family homes. These ADUs could serve as affordable workforce rental units and help homeowners generate income to offset their mortgage costs. Chair burns added that the opportunity to purchase a house would be nice for families who have been surrounded by roommates and are ready to live on their own.

Commissioner Moroco asked if there was a plan for infrastructure updates on Airport Road to address the increase in density. Laurie stated that there is significant upgrade to Airport Road, included in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan for 2026-2027. This upgrade will address increased population in that area and include enhancements such as sidewalks, improved drainage, turn lanes, and better traffic management.

i. Yesenia Silva Estrada – Bell Policy Center Housing Research

Yesenia expressed enthusiasm about the Commission's work and provided an update on a research project aimed to address affordable housing issues in Colorado's Central Mountain region. This project seeks to create an equity-focused blueprint to tackle the affordable housing crisis and provide information for the decision makers and legislators across the state.

The research involves interviewing housing authorities across the region and collecting community data through surveys and focus groups. Preliminary findings indicate significant income discrepancies and challenges in the Latino community, especially the undocumented population. The research has also revealed gaps in federal data like the U.S. Census and income thresholds that do not accurately represent our community population. Yesenia also mentioned that this research could provide valuable insights to guide legislators and housing authorities on how to better align income thresholds with the specific needs in Colorado's Central Mountain region.

Yesenia highlighted that many community members face significant challenges in navigating the administrative processes required to access affordable housing. These challenges are heightened by a lack of education and financial literacy, which are crucial for economic mobility and home ownership. As a result, individuals often rely on informal support from outside parties to navigate these processes.

Commissioner Cirillo asked Yesenia how the research would represent other minority community members who maybe spoke another language besides Spanish and were still greatly affected by the housing crisis. Yesenia emphasized that while they did not intentionally exclude other communities, the primary focus was on Latinos due to their significant presence in the Central Mountain Region and has been under-researched from a regional perspective. Yesenia also acknowledged that other communities also deserve inclusion and should be part of the equity work. She hopes that this research will encourage the different communities to lead with equity first and include community voice at the beginning. Yesenia also discussed the importance of conducting community outreach with an equity perspective, focusing on culturally and linguistically relevant communication methods, and properly assessing the housing projects by understanding who is benefiting from them.

Commissioner Cirillo emphasized the significance of educating the community about this research and ensuring they understand its importance and potential impact. Yesenia stated that the research group is also considering accountability and has found that there could be room for regulatory components to ensure language accessibility and education are part of housing projects. Yesenia also mentioned that she hopes to present the research findings in a webinar to decision-makers and legislators in mid-November and encourages the Commission to share the community survey. Yesenia also offered to return and present specific findings from the research, especially those related to Summit County.

IV. Social Equity Discussion

I. Land Acknowledgement Discussion

Commissioner Walters expressed her excitement to have Ernest House and highlighted that this work will take time and commitment. She also informed the Commission about the Annual

Southern Ute Tribal Fair on September 6th in Ignacio Colorado which could be a great opportunity to experience the Ute culture. June also stated that at some point in the future it would be good to return to Tribal Lands to meet with the Tribal Council and Elders to start building relationships.

Chair Burns also expressed his excitement about deepening the relationship with those who have been on the land long before us. He emphasized the importance of learning from this community and fostering a connection that honors their presence and history. Burns also highlighted the importance of taking concrete actions to build trust rather than just seeking approval for initiatives.

II. CMC Mini Grant Request

Chair Burns introduced the first BSEAC Grant request from CMC who has been working with the Immigration and Advocacy Subcommittee on hosting the Mexican Consulate. He highlighted the value this initiative would bring to local community members from Mexican origin who could obtain passports and other identification documents. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the grant.

III. Subcommittee Updates

*Celebrate Diversity / Community Outreach & Engagement /Community Education & Influence
Immigration Rights and Advocacy
Civic Engagement*

Commissioner Daniels mentioned receiving an email from the South Branch Library about opportunities to volunteer and support youth in their after-school programs. He stated that this could be a good opportunity for the Commission to not only be visible but also to give back, particularly to the younger members of the community. Daniels plan to follow up on this lead.

V. Upcoming Council Items

Deputy Town Manager Reid asked the Commission if they had any questions on the upcoming council items from the agenda packet. Council Member Carol Saade also emphasized her availability as a resource for further discussion on any council items outside of the meeting.

VI. Upcoming Agenda Topics

Chair Burns notified the Commission of a typo on the agenda. Flor Cruz will update and correct.

VII. Other Matters

VIII. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

There was no public comment.

Chair Burns adjourned the meeting at 8:57am.