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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, January 17, 2022 2:32 PM  
**To:** citycouncil  
**Subject:** RE: 18 January 2002 Agenda Item 10-2. Community Satisfaction & Racial Equity Survey Services Contract Award Follow Up

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Finance/MUNIS

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Dear City Council Members:

The Adoption of Resolution 2022-02 to execute Contract No. C2201 with Probolsky Research should not be approved. It is clear after reading the Probolsky Research's proposal and reviewing statements from knowledgeable members of the public who are familiar with projects like this that this firm does not have the depth of experience nor the appropriate staffing competency to be approved for this contract.

Regarding the establishment of a council subcommittee to create a more extensive racial equity engagement survey and program: I support this plan as long as it includes council member Gary as one of the subcommittee members.

David Danby

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, January 17, 2022 7:58 PM  
**To:** citycouncil;  
**Subject:** Contract for Probolsky Research/ equity issues for Albany

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Finance/MUNIS

Dear Albany Council members,

I am a long time Albany resident and I am very concerned about the direction the council is taking, concerning creating an equity survey. Not only is the amount of money you seem willing to spend on this (\$57,000) of great concern but also the firm that you have chosen seems absolutely not up to the task in providing quality and hence useable data. I do not understand why you would choose a firm based in Irvine CA, which has no Bay Area employees (looking at their website) or a sense of local knowledge and experience to conduct this survey and that the city of Albany should look elsewhere to contract for this service.

It seems to me that this money could be much better spent in actions, supporting serious programs, of which there are plenty of local experts to educate people in promoting racial equality. You could for example begin by consulting with the Othering and Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley (<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>) to find more appropriate opportunities for both surveys, programs and speakers.

I am also very disheartened that for the subcommittee which is being proposed, council member Ge'Nell Gary is not one of the members of this subcommittee. We are talking equity and diversity here and as a demonstration of how the council is viewing the changes we absolutely need to make as a community, extremely discouraging. Diverse representation is surely what should be uppermost in your mind and the first step you should take on any committees which you form is to make the best use of the diversity you actually have on the council.

I am also very sorry that this item will appear only very late on the agenda, which also makes public comment very difficult. I do appreciate all the hard work and effort that you put into being council members but it feels like when it comes to DEI issues, that significant and real change has still not sufficiently permeated your practises.

Sincerely  
Caroline Lehman  
1010 Santa Fe Ave

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022 11:11 AM  
**To:** citycouncil  
**Subject:** Item 10-2 January 18 2022 Council meeting

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Hello,

I encourage you to **NOT** execute contract No. C22-01 with Probolsky Research but to instead send out a new RFP to a wider and more diverse group of potential firms. According to my research and that of others, a racial equity survey is not something this firm has much experience in doing and the lack of diversity in their own staff certainly raises the question of how racial equity is a key component of their work and their commitments. I did see the new document they posted includes a new diversity officer who appears to be Black and is a disabled veteran (why that's relevant I don't really understand), so it certainly looks like they're trying. But is that enough to warrant awarding them the contract?

I also looked at their DEI studies, but most of them are only titles and not results. The ones with results seem very superficial, with an emphasis on Spanish-speakers as examples of diversity, and as they point out, most of the surveys were done online, which of course limits who sees the survey and who feels comfortable filling it out. They also didn't seem to really speak to real racial equity - the questions seemed perfunctory and general. I know they stress they're only there to gather public opinion and not to educate, but the questions that are asked and how they're asked offer subtle and not so subtle messages - there is no way to ask people about anything without some sort of bias built into the wording and the topics and also potentially limiting any in-depth answers about lived experiences.

There seems to be a history of the City not looking beyond a few familiar firms and places to distribute information about their RFPs and I encourage the City, perhaps with the help of SEJC, to create guidance on where to post these RFPs, to make sure the firms that respond are as diverse and committed to racial equity as possible. As a City that begins every email I receive with the words: "We're here for you," I think it's critical that this is really true. It's difficult to accept that commitment when the council and lead staff, such as the City Manager, continue to be positions held primarily by people who are White. To be "here for you" means you want to represent, listen to and support everyone in the community. The racial equity survey is an important part of Albany living up to this commitment and all care must be taken to make sure it's done correctly. Please take your time so this is possible.

In addition, I think the sub-committee for this survey should include Council member Gary and not two White men.

Thank you for your attention.