

**City of Hyattsville  
Race & Equity Task Force  
Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024: 7:00 pm-8:30 pm**

**Participants:**

Task Force Members:

- Co-Chair Alicia Freemyn (AF)
- Co-Chair Daniel Amador (DA)
- Record Keeper Secretary Jocelyn Medallo (JM)
- Member Jennifer Gafford (JG)
- Member Idara Akpan (IA)
- Member Nykia Clemonts (NC)
- Member Ana Valdez (AV)

Staff:

- Race & Equity Officer Shakira Louimarre (SL)
- Council Member Michelle Lee

Community Members

- Chuck Ward 3
- Idara Akpan
- Nykia Clemonts

**7:00 pm - Welcome & Call to Order** – Co-chair Freemyn

**7:00 pm - 7:05 pm – Roll Call** – Co-chair Amador

**7:05 pm - 7:08 pm – Acknowledgement of Guests**– Co-chair Freemyn

**7:22 pm – 7:48 pm – Community Cultural Conversation Proposal for Collaboration –**

Presented by Julia Gaspar-Bates, Kelly Burrello, Anne-Claire Frank-Seisay

- Kelly Burello: Introduced a series of community cultural conversations in HVL and surrounding towns to have a casual safe environment where we can all build community with each other – around culture, understanding, respect. We have presented topics to the City of HVL which included: cross-differences, exploring the different diasporas around the world, people come in for panels to hear their stories and facilitate dialogue where we could find common ground. We are hoping that in the next session, which at the moment is for May 30<sup>th</sup>, collaborate with the RETF. We wanted to hear and listen from the RETF’s initiatives are to align and have RETF co-facilitate that meeting with us.
- Anne-Claire Seisay: We had our first dialogue a month ago with immigrant speakers.

- Julia Gaspar-Bates: Six years ago, I organized the first round of series and that stopped for a while and we decided to resuscitate it this year. We have an incredibly rich, diversity and cohesive community, and yet we have differences. I am an inter-culturalist by profession and I look for ways to bring people together for cultural dialogue.
- SL: The City is a member of GARE and part of that framework is normalizing conversations around race, aspects of identity, and these community cultural conversations, particularly because they are resident initiated and resident-led, are able to create a safe, informal space. The first community conversation was a success, not only did residents have an opportunity to hear stories with various experiences of immigration but also put together suggestions for the City to make integration to HVL better. With this upcoming May session, RETF can take the lead with what type of content could be offered to the community. The City would help facilitate the space; the RETF could provide expertise, people to speak, etc.
- AF: RETF was created by residents a few years ago and we were created to develop policies and procedures that support the City's goals to further best practices related to equity across not just race but with race as the center of many different issues around equity. Primarily we have focused on city-wide policy. A lot of work has been around policies and procedures that advance equity measures. That has looked like holding listening sessions with residents, showing up to do tabling, drafting a city-wide equity plan which led to the hiring of Shakira. There are ebbs and flows in our work which often means we are often asked to be tapped into other task force city work (e.g., offering equity expertise to the redistricting committee).
- DA: Given that we are submitting this report and speak to City Council, given the charter we operate under what can we do after we provided the recommendations that are being considered? Maybe there is something here about sharing more about the community in an intimate forum. Maybe we can have a conversation about a deep dive, informal conversation about the report – what have we missed?
- SL: What is the oversight of the policies for the long-term once we develop these policies and procedures?
- Anne-Claire Seisay: Are there certain types of stories you would like the community to hear or are there voices that we don't hear enough that we don't want to hear?
- AF: I would love to hear from your perspective is there something thematic – June is Pride for example. Is there some through-line that you want to see or strategic way to build out a plan?
- Julia Gaspar-Bates: We submitted a proposal to the city with 15 proposals and thinking through highlighting a certain group that matches monthly themes. The idea is to have some in a workshop format and sometimes having panelists, sometimes showing a film and all would have some of a dialogue. Last time, we did one on affordable housing – sometimes we had as many as 60 people coming. We are trying to do more outreach,

translation services, so we can make it as inclusive as possible for all community members.

- Kelly Burello: We can share the list of topics we shared. We just wanted to get a sense of your direction and where you are going with this? If you were in the room with us and we were to facilitate a cultural dialogue that the RETF wanted to highlight, what would that be and what would be our respective roles? We want to be as collaborative with you as possible.
- DA: It seems we are in agreement and you have a topic in mind for May 30.
- SL: You can have no more than 2 members of RETF to discuss this further and report back to the next RETF meeting.
- Julia Gaspar-Bates: We can co-create the questions and pool resources on speakers.
- Kelly Burello: How does this topic ring with your work? How would the messaging of whatever it is we do – how to frame it in the context of the RETF and what you do in the City? You don't have to make a decision about that now, but it is critical.
- AF: For me it's about centering the margins of the margins. Race still impacts all shared identities – gender, gender presentation, disability. But we can think about the framing down the line.
- DA: Are there any volunteers on the RETF that might want to connect with the team on next steps?
- AV: I volunteer.
- DA: I volunteer as well.

**7:48 pm - 7:50 pm – Acknowledgement of New Committee Members – Secretary Medallo**

**7:50 pm - 7:55 pm – Adoption January and February Meeting Minutes – Secretary Medallo**

- AF motions to adopt January and February meeting minutes; DA seconds; all in agreement. January and February minutes are approved.

**7:55 pm – 8:25 pm – Equity Plan Updates Work Session – Liaison Louimarre**

- Review important milestones
- Form consensus on dates and deadlines beginning with Council presentation date
  - Move out from April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline
  - We need to prioritize the written document and we can work on the presentation.
- Confirm the assignment of presentation responsibilities and process for providing feedback

- Council Member Joanne Waszczak reached out with data that took place on access to people with disabilities section.
- Equity Plan Document:
  - Content-wise, the draft plan needs work on introduction and works cited, but otherwise is written
  - Data-check for accuracy
  - SL will need to share the completed document in advance of the deadline for submission to the Clerk's Office.
- **Decision Points**
  - Upcoming RETF meeting dates: option of scheduling an ad hoc meeting.
  - PowerPoint presentation completion suggested deadline: Friday, April 19
    - Redistribution of drafting/presenting assignments
    - SL will share the PowerPoint template by Friday March 29
- DA: Background on budget – the idea is to share recommendations with Council well in advance of next budget in case there are items that are budget-contingent or in case there are discretionary funds.
- **DEADLINES:**
  - Final review of the written document by **April 7<sup>th</sup>**.
    - Nykia and Idara will data check. Jocelyn will volunteer for questions.
  - All in agreement for a target date of **May 20<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting**.
  - We will need to share with the written document (presentation optional) with **City Administration by April 19<sup>th</sup>**. SL will also try to get professional editing for the document.
  - Presentation and written document must go to the Council by **May 10<sup>th</sup>**.
  - PowerPoint presentation doesn't necessarily be completed by **April 19<sup>th</sup>**, so we can take a look at our calendars to see if that date is realistic for all. Hard deadline is **April 23<sup>th</sup> RETF meeting**.
  - SL will send a follow up to this meeting by this Friday.

**8:25 pm – 8:30 pm – Adjourn Meeting – Co-chair Amador**

- Review of items on next week's agenda
  - Ana and DA will have an update with a discussion on cultural conversations
  - For later, talking about what role we want to play in those cultural conversations, starting with Pride
  - The focus of next month's meeting will be prepping for the presentation
- JM moves to adjourn; AF seconds; all in favor.