

**City of Hyattsville**  
**Race & Equity Task Force Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**7:00 pm-8:30 pm**

**PRESENT**

**Task Force Members:**

- Co-Chair Jennifer Gafford (JG)
- Record Keeper Secretary Jocelyn Medallo (JM)
- Member Daniel Amador (DA)

**Staff:**

- Race & Equity Officer Shakira Louimarre (SL)

**Council Member:**

- Council Member Edoardo Haba

**Community Members:**

- Diedre Gray, Aunties Home
- Arianna Ross, Story Tapestries
- Mavet Rosas, Story Tapestries
- Kellie Butsak, Story Tapestries
- Chuck, Ward 3
- Marshall

**7:04 pm - Welcome & Call to Order – Co-chair Gafford**

**7:04 pm - 7:05 pm – Roll Call – Co-chair Gafford**

**7:05 pm - 7:09 pm – Acknowledgement of Guests– Co-chair Freemyn**

- Arianna Ross, Story Tapestries
- Mavet Rosas, Story Tapestries
- Kellie Butsak, Story Tapestries
- Diedre Gray, Aunties Home
- Chuck, Ward 3
- Marshall, Community Member

**7:09 pm - 7:10 pm – Adoption of November Ad-Hoc Meeting Minutes- Co-chair Gafford**

- JM moves; DA seconds.

**7:10 pm -7:35 pm –Aunties Home Presentation and Discussion–** Co-chair Freemyn and Liaison Louimarre

- Aunties Home is a trans-led organization founded to provide housing for LGBTQ families as a whole. We come from three different perspectives = faith, figures and finances. We have faith that the community will respond and hear what we are going to share to offer resources and solutions. Data – you need numbers and data. Finances – how HVL or other entities connected will distribute your money. In PG County, we believe that there are folks that want to make a difference for the trans community to make things better. Casa Ruby – in the summer of 2022 they closed their doors. They provided housing options as well as community engagement and access to services and employment for trans youth. Since their closing, there has been a significant gap.
- Current community partners: Heart to Hand; SLK Health Services Corporation; Maryland Safe Harbor; Damien Ministries; Metropolitan Community Church DC; Community Church Washington DC; Rainbow History Project.
- Data highlights:
  - In Maryland, 94,000 residents identify as transgender or nonbinary.
  - 20% of trans residents have experienced homelessness.
  - \$75,214 Maryland
  - \$40,643 PG County median income
  - 33% report a household income under \$25,000
  - 31% of trans and nonbinary Marylanders report difficulty with housing payments
  - Of the 94,000, 13% of that number are transgender and nonbinary and do not have health insurance

- 20% of transgender individuals do not have secure housing and are inextricably linked to increased rates of poor health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, substance use, suicidality, HIV
- 7.12% of trans persons with a history of homelessness also have HIV
- In a survey done by the Trevor Project, 14% of LGBTQ youth in Maryland attempted suicide in the past year
  - Including 17% of transgender and nonbinary youth
- 68% of LGBTQ youth in Maryland reported experiencing symptoms
- Finances – We are hoping to create the space here where we can connect. We are one of the few organizations in PG County and Howard County doing this work. We are looking to meet with decision-makers and difference-makers. It will take an entire community to ensure that the improvements of experiences of trans and nonbinary folks can get better specifically in PG County.
  - We know that the needs are housing, employment, job skills, education, medical healthcare, mental healthcare, spiritual and safety.
  - For safety, we have started conversations with police in different jurisdictions to form units. We have looked at different models of housing, emergency housing, tiny homes. Property management companies who may have a few rooms or units to partner with us; vehicle donations so we can meet people where they are; private property owners that have lands they would be willing to donate; counselors and therapists; and donors and sponsors.

- Based on previous conversations, we want to increase awareness of Auntie's Homes and to identify opportunities to partner with City of Hyattsville and where those spaces may be. Our primary focus is fundraising.
- DA: Thinking of the Equity Report, there are opportunities for housing. We have talked about how many of those priorities are set by the County. We have identified that there needs to be more advocacy opportunities for HVL to the County.

**7:36 pm – Approval of 2024 RETF Meeting Calendar and December 2023 Ad hoc Meeting**

- Liaison Louimarre

- During the last meeting, we threw out the date December 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm for the December ad hoc meeting.
  - JG moves to approve that date; DA seconds.
- Review 2024 Meeting Dates
  - Change November 26<sup>th</sup> date to November 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Change December 24<sup>th</sup> date to December 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Keep August date for now but revisit August break in July 2024
- JM moves to adopt the calendar with the changes; JG seconds.

**7:37 pm – 8:15 pm Equity Plan Updates Work Session - Liaison Louimarre**

- On 19<sup>th</sup> December, we can practice for Council presentation scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup> and decide on outreach. Propose that during this meeting we review all the recommendations and review the timelines, match it up with desired result and zero in on examples of community indicators and truncate what we will include in our report (which are largely policy).

- CM Haba: This is an opportunity for Committee to put forward all their recommendations. The Council can decide to adopt recommendation in entirety or adopt partially or set aside.
  - Group review Housing section – Further advance rent regulations.
    - SL: We will leave in the minimum and fair leases and we will review the time range.
    - DA: Add section on Council advocating for affordable housing.
    - JM: Toolkit of principles of equitable development when making decisions
      - CM Haba: It depends but you don't want to come out with what is more lenient than what the region is advocating for. That should be our baseline. If there are ways to improve it and go beyond, then we can be at the forefront. When it comes to incentives, the County has more power and authority compared to the City because they have zoning authority. They can tie certain development into zoning so that each development mandates a certain number of affordable units. But at the City level, we have passed policies or tax breaks to developers. But ultimately, the biggest player is the County and will have the impact.
  - Next steps: December ad hoc meeting could be used to finish reviewing this review of recommendations.

**8:16 pm -8:37 pm –Story Tapestries Presentation and Discussion– Liaison Louimarre**

- Please see slides for full presentation ([link](#))

- Arianna Ross, CEO of Story Tapestries. We have been in existence for 13 years and we hope to partner with the HVL at a deeper level. We use the arts as a powerful tool as. We are an arts service organization. We partner with counties and cities to meet your goals and objectives as a city. We use a racial equity facilitator. For example, we have supported Montgomery County's as a facilitator in their listening session – we used a visual artist, storyteller and poet to express to the county what they want to happen. We do a lot of work with PG County Schools.
- Programs can include: listening sessions, facilitated conversations, ART created by and for the community; community events; family engagement.
- Example: Amplify US!: Racial Equity Facilitator with an Artist. We brought in a facilitator and artist together and workshop participants leave equipped to amplify their voices and advocate for themselves and their communities within both the personal and work environment.
- What can we do as a community to make our Black and Brown children feel safe and included?

#### **8:38pm - Community and Guest Comments**

- Chuck: Could the committee provide a list of mortgage programs available now of ACTIVE programs? Does the committee have any empirical data to support the effectiveness of any ACTIVE programs? A lot of programs become inactive based on funds availability.

#### **8:39 pm – Adjourn Meeting – Co-Chair Gafford**

- Next meeting is working session
- DA moves to adjourn; JM seconds.

