

City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Task Force
June 27, 2023
Zoom
Minutes

PRESENT

Task Force Members:

- Co-Chair Alicia Sanchez Gill Freemyn (AF)
- Co-Chair Jennifer Gafford (JG)
- Committee Member Danielle Amador (DA)

Staff:

- Race & Equity Officer Shakira Louimarre (SL)
- Community and Economic Development Coordinator, Dorothy Estrada (DE)

Guest

- Chuck Perry (CP)

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

7:00 pm - 7:05 pm – Roll Call – Co-Chair Gafford

**7:05 pm - 7:10 pm – Acknowledgement of Guests and Other Announcements – Co-chair
Freemyn**

AF: Thank you, Chair Gafford. So I know that we have an a public resident, Mr. Chuck Perry from ward three. Maybe I can turn it over to you Liaison Louimarre to introduce our other guests.

SL: This evening, we'll also be expecting Ms. Dory Estrada, who's the Community and Economic Development Coordinator with the city to just provide input and thoughts.

She will be here for discussion for the job section. And director Sandra Shepard was invited last month when we were supposed to do this, but she just was not able to make it today. She shared her apologies, but I will surely share this with her for her feedback as well.

7:10 pm – 8:30 pm - Community Engagement and Jobs Section Updates –

DA: Yeah, so I'm, excited to share the community engagement section. We had a really productive meeting with Sandra a few weeks back, and then just revisited the original recommendations that were presented to the council. Last year, I believe, or some time ago, we just revisited. And so during the discussion today, we'll be just walking you all through the why, community engagement matters for racial equity, talking about gaps and challenges and assets the city faces in terms of community engagement, and then we'll end with next steps in terms of recommendations for city council. So, we do have case studies, resources, and references here, folks want to look at that.

Community Engagement slides linked here:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LgAaTlwxj5sJ2z0dLQyVM5938WQ_VCitCxiqrvwULg/edit?usp=sharing

DA: One way communication is asking the public for input. Then there's multi way communication, which is more of a dialogue that's interaction between city and constituents that can take the form of Townhall meetings, dialogue with different community groups, engagement, equitable, design, and implementation. There's a lot of coordination and collaboration between, administrators, and communications department in the city .

We will be going over assets and gaps in terms of broader topics . In terms of assets, there is low-tech communications, which would be hard copies of printouts, word of mouth, etc. and

then there are high tech or digital methods. We're seeing more of this high tech, which includes Facebook, YouTube, Twitter listserv's.

Some partnerships that the city is already taking part in include Prince Georges county, the food bank united Methodist Church of Hyattsville . The city is aware that collective impact requires strong partnerships.

SL : At least anecdotally there are at times lower rates of civic and community engagement among BIPOC residents. The data is not so strong because the City is not consistent in collecting disaggregated data ,so it's hard to get real numbers on that.

One Gap is that many of the wraparound services come from Prince George's County, Prince Georges County school system, so a lot of needs that residence. So they aren't actually services by the City. There are also budgetary and staff capacity constraints to expanding services at scale

DA: There is a lot of programming that takes place throughout the year to engage BIPOC and immigrant residents. Some examples are listed here and then there's also the committees stipend pilot program, which is meant to increase diversity and equity in committee membership.

In terms of gaps, they are English speakers in Spanish speakers to make outreach truly equitable. The city should also pay attention to other Indo-European languages, and French, Arabic and Maric that are spoken in Hyattsville by a significant portion of the population. It's also important to engage the deaf community.

There's an opportunity to use tools and software to really understand by location, the ways people are accessing the cities resources. This can help to address issues of capacity and budget to make sure that the city is putting resources where they are most needed and most used.

The committee has spoken about the community ambassadors' model before. This update includes the recommendation that the city should develop a pilot program, recruiting a diverse, inter-generational body residence to do community engagement an out beach thinking about examples of what other communities have done that could include using AmeriCorps Senior programs, as well as a vaccine equity program grant provided by the Federal government.

The next recommendation is to align the city with the Office of Human Rights for Prince George's County Language Access Compliance Program. This program could serve as a guideline that the city can aspire to in terms of equitable language access, which is essential to community engagement.

Then there's cultural competence and trauma informed training. The city does offer cultural, competence, trainings, but there is room for more.

SL: Some examples of other communities which have implemented some of these recommendations, include a good example of using GIS data to meet resident needs from the city of Alexandria equity index mapping tool, as well as the Sacramento community ambassadors, and Evanston, Illinois community ambassadors program. These are two examples of midsize cities, a little bit bigger than ours that have successfully implemented this they provide a framework, additionally, the city of Philadelphia has a really good set of guidelines for designing trauma inform services, and why that is so important to community engagement and city services in general.

AF: this was super helpful. I learned a lot so thanks Daniel and Shakira for putting this together. I do have some questions, so my first question is about the conversation around the digital divide. I know that COVID-19 has exacerbated that divide but I also know that there were lots of programs at the height of the pandemic to make sure students had access to Internet in their homes, that doesn't apply to every child or every person and every household so there's

probably still a gap, but I'm wondering if you all know anything about the gap that has been filled in light of some of the program that came out during Covid? It's possible we don't have the data but I'm curious.

SL: I don't have access to that data right now. However, this will come up during the jobs presentation as well with the cities ARPA spending plan proposals. There's a proposal to do a study on providing public Wi-Fi within the city of Hyattsville. I imagine that out of that study will get some of the answers specifically in Hyattsville about what you're asking.

AF: my second question and then I'll make space for other folks. I had a question about some of the data collection around civic engagement, and I was wondering if you had anything beyond the anecdotal data?

SL: In terms of the data collection around civic engagement I'm not sure I asked the right questions of our city clerk, I won't say that it doesn't exist at all I would like to move from this presentation conversation to go back to our city clerk to ask more specific questions around who holds that data and disaggregated numbers.

Jenn: I asked a follow-up to your point in the chat box. Do you have any data about the immigrant services coalition and who was holding that work?

SL: in terms of the immigrant services coalition, that was an initiative, I believe under either former mayor, Hollingsworth, or former Mayor Ward working with the Community Services Department. I don't have much data around it, but I believe it was an informal coalition of not for profits and interfaith groups that were addressing the needs of this community in Hyattsville. I don't think it was an official city program that had its own budget line. I can ask to find out more.

DA: I think if we may be refined the data collection piece and bring it to Council one of the things that we will recognize is that there may not be a person that is responsible for program, evaluation, or data analysis. I think it may be an overarching recommendation from the equity task force if we're going to make progress on equity, we need to measure it and see how our programs are making progress on that, maybe not specific to this area but as an overarching recommendation

JOBS Section presentation slides linked here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dIEgHEDDiiDzlTupg9r7vxVRRXf0yHH7hYUtdGotdRI/edit?usp=sharing>

JG: Access to jobs, fair wages, and opportunity for wealth building is important for all people. The historical context of racial disenfranchisement in the US has created significant barriers to wealth and prosperity outcomes for historically marginalized groups. A Racial Equity Lens is important and we will be using the GARE framework. For the previous plan that Shakira took the GARE framework, and added to it.

SL: The Region United Plan designates equity emphasis areas. The original planning concepts adopted in 2021 by the COG Board of Directors to elevate equity and informal growth in investment decisions as of 2022 there are 3 EEA's of 364 in the region located in Hyattsville

JG: to address these gaps, we talked about the need for more data collection and the desegregation of that data which is needed to assess the current landscape of minority and woman business enterprises in Hyattsville.

We talked about enhanced focus in city programming, connecting residents to job development training and a need for more youth, employment, initiatives, and stronger partnerships with the University of Maryland and Prince Georges community college, which could develop a pipeline of local talent /

in terms of next steps, one of our recommendations is that the city of Hyattsville, Human Resources Department, adopt a racial equity strategy, which supports increasing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and its hiring promotion and retention practices and policies also expanding data collection and business, licensing and city sponsored programs to include REGGI data to support equity. Additionally, implementation of the small business retention strategy so this would attract employers offering higher paying jobs to provide service jobs.

DE: In terms of long-term strategies for the overall life economic health of the region, It's good to focus on the BRE plan. The Maryland department of housing and community development also has a similar-ish mapping tool to the Equity Emphasis Areas. For example opportunity zones .Being in the zones also means that the city is able to access, save money in terms of programs that we would otherwise be able to if we didn't qualify, and it's also wonderful that our small business owners can benefit from that because they are in a an opportunity zone.

AF: I just had a couple of questions and I see that Danielle also has questions are listed in the chat box.

DE: In terms of the data around how many businesses in the city of Hyattsville are women owned or person of color owned I'm sorry to say that we do not collect that data .

I think we can amend that process and so that the cycle of business licenses comes due at the end of June I think maybe not this round, but within the next year I think that having identification would be extremely helpful for us, and I think that I would need to do a bit of digging, I think that we could try to dive into the data from the SBA for example. I think that having identification would be extremely helpful for us, and I think that we could try to dive into the data from last year for example.

DA: how are we preventing Landlords from raising rents as a result of Facade Improvement programs ?

DE: The impact of the commercial facade improvements being know, t I think you're referring to the Queens Chapel Town Center project in 2019, which was a full façade, and that that because those buildings in Queens Chapel town center are owned by like one single entity, rather than multiples that makes it complicated. But what I can share with you the long and short of it is there is usually the preference and end in the application review that the funds are going to an individual management or a landlord. I can't speak for what were the keys for that funding he in 2019 for the project, I wasn't with the city. But you're were right it is it is something that should be very much baked into the evaluation process to make sure that these unintended consequences don't occur.

8:30 pm – 8:35 pm – Next Steps for Equity Plan Updates

SL: Next month's section update will be Affordable Housing presented by Alicia

8:35 pm – Adjourn Meeting

AF moves to adjourn; JG seconds.