

City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Committee
Monday, June 22, 2020, 7:00 PM
Zoom
Minutes

Present:

Task Force Members: Co-Chair Andrea Dargin, Co-Chair Stacie Whitesides, Joanne Waszczak, Rodrigo Blanco, Ashleigh Brown-Grier, LaToya Robinson

Council: Mayor Candace Hollingsworth, Council Member Dan Peabody (Ward 4)

Staff: City Administrator Tracey Nicholson, Staff Liaison Jan Guszynski

Guests: Brian Banks (Hyattsville resident, inspired by Mayor's plan and City resolution). David Marshall. Eric _last name_?

Members Absent: Desiree Luckey, Albert Ramirez

Meeting called to order – 7:08 PM by Co-Chair Whitesides

1. Roll call and introductions

Co-Chair Stacie Whitesides:

- Thanked everyone for joining
- Hopes that everyone has stayed engaged in community during the COVID-19 pause
- Race and Equity Co-Chairs have been in communication
- Challenges with structure of Equity Plan and breaking out the pieces of it
- Agenda: Equity Plan for City of Hyattsville
- Race and Equity Task Force 202 Equity Plan Roadmap:
 - Get back on track to and keep us accountable for finalizing plan in 2020
 - Display sections of the plan, indicator to show status (committee review, staff/council approval, update equity plan)
 - Want the vetting/review to produce a solid plan

Co-Chair Andre Dargin

- At last meeting, we were facing issues with plan approval
- We will use abbreviated form of Robert's Rules of Order
 - Please say your last name if you would like to speak
 - Raise hand or enter chat if you want to talk

2. Approval of March 9, 2020 minutes

SW moves to approve minutes, RB seconds motion, all approved

- **Edit to include Rodrigo Blanco and LaToya Robinson as attendee**
- **Edit to correct Ashleigh Brown-Grier**

3. Questions

RB: Will we discuss a revised timeline?

AD: Committee will decide when package will be delivered and back-solve from there. Originally tried to back-solve from due date for City budget.

SW: Can we have a non-public meeting to hash out the timeline, deep dive into research, etc.? What would be the process for that?

JG: There is a protocol set forth by the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Closed sessions would need to comply with that protocol. Steps to take to announce closed and open portions of meeting.

AD: Is that similar to executive session?

JG: Will find out and will share documents from the training she took.

AD: We would benefit from an intense working session.

JG: Tracey Douglas indicated to Jan during the meeting that closed sessions are not protocol for committee meetings

Post meeting the City Clerk reported: Small groups can meet outside of public committee meetings to work on specific items of the equity plan. These groups must be Less than a quorum (majority) of the current membership number. As a best practice, whatever work occurs in the groups should be summarized/presented during a regular meeting.

Mayor Hollingsworth:

- Would like to hear any specific questions from the Committee about what the Committee needs to know.
- Last year around Juneteenth, City started conversation about yearlong activities to help City reckon with racism through programs and policies, with a focus on systems that undermine equity in the community.
- Staff member who was providing support left the City for a new job. Without that link on the staff side and with the Leonard Shand incident, the City turned to how to address community concerns. It is hard to do cerebral work when faced with a tangible incident like that one.
- Now there is a national uprising.
- City is acknowledging history and future, and binding the Council to take action and set it as a priority for us.
- I published a personal story and 35 policy agenda items that help support an agenda for Black futures in Hyattsville. I will use it as my personal roadmap. It is also to help community members see costs and priorities.

AD:

- How can we be supportive?

Mayor:

- Mayor looked through the Draft Equity Plan a few weeks ago. We were looking through rose colored glasses and was not as forceful as it could be. Need to be clear, take a second look at the draft plan, do a gut check, look at the priorities. Also do a gut check on urgency of items. Remember that the plan is not focused *only* on the Black community – it is also focused another communities as well as ability, sexual orientation, gender expression – but I would like the Committee to look closely at how the plan affects the Black community in particular. These are side by side goals.

AD:

- This is helpful. We need to acknowledge where we were trying to soften the blow and instead be critical as we were charged as a Committee.

SW:

- I've been doing research about how other communities are approaching their equity plans. Idea to roll out the plan as a one-year or two-year plan. Then measure our stretch goals. That could

help us narrow down/hone in on our goals. Identify two or three stretch goals for each section to keep us on track.

DP:

- Want to thank the Mayor for her leadership in this area. See that this motion could be focusing in terms of how this Committee interacts with the Council. The sentence could be a mission for this Committee.
- When council returns after summer break, housing and policing will be on the agenda.
- This Committee could be in a true advisory role
- In draft plan, recommendation for Chief Equity Officer. That is the kind of recommendation that Council is seeking. How do we hold ourselves accountable? How do we hold ourselves closer to the resolution?
- Glad we are meeting again.
- This committee is very well positioned.

LR:

- When we have an equity plan, what is our measuring tool?
- Be open for critique, not in a hounding way, but to ensure that what we are saying is what we are doing.

CH:

- Tracey Douglas has been starting the work of incorporating that responsibility into the City' work prior to the point when we have a full time CEQO.
- Chief Equity Officers are great. However, CEQOs often have to *pull* the organization along when the organization is not there yet.
- We will all have to wrestle with accountability. From the Council side, we need to identify what goal(s) our proposals support. we need to do better than saying that a proposal meets a diversity goal. We will also need to do that in a larger context.
- We will need this Committee to provide ideas for measuring, giving ideas for how to follow through. Is there a civic role? How will the *community* hold the Council accountable?

Question: Role of committee in relation to police and public safety advisory committee:

CH:

- Council Member Dan Schaible has formed a Council subgroup to think through questions the City has received from the community. They are considering how the City will address and respond to the questions.
- The work of the subgroup will most likely intersect with the work of the Race and Equity Committee and the Police and Public Safety (PPS) Committee. The subgroup will ask you for feedback about their proposals.
- PPS Committee still doesn't have enough members. That makes it challenging to do the joint work I envisioned for the two Committees following the Shand incident.

TN:

- Two community members are interested in joining the PPS Committee.
- Green sheet will mention the opportunity to join the PPS and Race and Equity Committees.
- Hopefully new members will be in place by the time Council reconvenes.
- Our mapping project has been delayed a bit. Our new Communications Manager has been inundated with COVID-19 work but she is going to work on that.
- CEQO: This will take a long term commitment to make change happen. Need to get the right person in that position. Looking for level of authority, ability to look through everything we do, make sure we move deliberately. Not an end state but a continuous process.

Any feedback from Committee members on the resolution from Committee members? None heard

5. Public comment

Mr. Brian Banks

- Thank you for your leadership and for the momentum. Encouraging to see that this Committee and the Resolution exist. Draft equity plan seems like a good step forward.
- Any opportunity to link the five areas in the Resolution with the equity plan to make sure it mirrors language?
 - Specifically: housing policing education health

Mr. Marshall

- Clarification: Closed meetings does not apply to Committees but rather to Council. However, there is the opportunity for the Committee to break into subgroups to work on specific sections of the Equity Plan.

SW

- Smaller groups requested to get a deep dive/brain dump meeting to discuss how to get organized, identify need for additional research.

AD:

- Data is listed as notes – need intensive working sessions to work through this

SW:

- We received a question: Can we email the roadmap?
- Stacie asked Jan: Could we add the roadmap to the City's website? To the Committee meeting materials that are posted in advance of the meeting?
- Jan thinks it would be better to email it.

JW:

- Please refresh us about how we can work in subgroups to draft sections of the plan.

TN:

- Working in small groups is fine. We will get back to you with the actual number of members who can be engaged in the subgroups.

Brian Banks:

- Community members would be interested in working with the Committee. How could they get involved?

AD:

- We can get folks involved when we have more definition.
- We do have one opening on the Committee.

JG:

- Anyone interested in joining can find the application on the City's website.

Next steps

JG:

- Our monthly meeting is 4th Tuesday of each month.
- Next meeting is July 28, 2020 at 7pm.

AD:

- Agenda items for next meeting?
- Community policing
- Reimagine or change names of buckets/sections to align with Council priorities
- Project planning

JW:

- Does the city propose to reallocate funding from police to other priorities? I have seen community concerns in the news and on social media and email re: the proportion of funding that Hyattsville devotes to police in comparison to the proportion of funding that nearby communities devote to police.

DP:

- I am on the subgroup comprised of Council Members who are considering questions. Please email me if you have ideas. We are at the beginning of the discussion.

Adjourning meeting:

- RB motion, AG second, all approved
- 8:26pm