

**City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Task Force
December 29, 2020, 6:45 PM
Zoom
Minutes**

Present:

Task Force Members:

- Co-chair Stacie Whitesides
- Rodrigo Blanco
- LaToya Robinson
- Joanne Waszczak
- Monica Sharma
- Ashleigh Brown-Grier

Council:

- Councilmember Daniel Peabody

Staff

- City Administrator Tracey Douglas
- Staff Liaison Jan Guszynski

Guests:

- Chuck Perry
- Marshall
- Rosezella Canty-Letsome

City Employees:

- Hyattsville Police Department Media Relations/Mental Health Programs Manager
Adrienne Augustus

Members Absent:

- Co-chair Andrea Dargin
- Malcolm Clarke

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM by co-chair Whitesides

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Review and Approval of Minutes (August 25, 2020, September 29, 2020, and November 24, 2020)

- JG recommends roll call of task force members on the reading of the minutes, and attempt to get November minutes approved. Emphasizes importance of getting them to the city clerk prior to year end
- RB moves to approve November minutes, ABG seconds, all in favor

2. City of Hyattsville Administrative Announcements/Debriefs

- Introduction of Adrienne Augustus – Media Relations/Mental Health Programs Manager at City of Hyattsville Police Department

Started in the position in September. Approached the HPD with the intent of supporting the department with mental health foundation she founded, and based on her media relations experience, thought she'd be a good fit for an open media relations position. No clear manner in which information is collected about calls that are related to mental health. Hoping to develop mental health crisis response program, and currently working to identify how large a need there is for mental health response program, while also balancing funding requirements as well. Also aiming to institute mental health programs for police officers. Also helping to promote better relations between the public and the police department.

SW: When mental health wellness courses are offered to those who are in position to respond to calls, are they more likely to respond to those calls positively?

- No specific research on that topic, but in general when people are mentally well, they are better able to respond to challenges. Dispatchers are most likely to experience work related trauma due to receiving most of the calls and lack of closure. Mental health translates in most regards

MM: Will any of the mental health training received by the police be made available to the public? Thoughts on civilian complaint review board

- Cost associated with mental health training. Mental health first aid is available to officers for free and is available to the public. Most of the training opportunities are available only to law enforcement, and not the public.
- Topic of civilian complaint review board is outside of the scope of Adrienne's role as media relations manager

JW: How would HPD manage another emergency mental health issue where person has mental health issues and poses a danger to others or themselves, considering difficulties in deploying mental health professionals to developing situation?

- Crisis Intervention Team International is organization that provides crisis training to officers. While there is no access to county provided crisis team, hope is to have 2 officers per shift (for total of 8 officers) who are trained in managing crises or paired with practitioners who can then go out to crises. Specific officers have not yet been identified, but goal is to spend first 6 months of 2021 identifying officers who are best suited to take on these roles

MS: Want to get take on what circumstances would be appropriate for mental health professionals to go out in lieu of officers rather than in tandem and then how they would be deployed

- Depends on situation but hoping to develop CAHOOTS-style program where if situation presents danger to community members, officers can be deployed. Currently there is a crisis response team supporting Prince George's County that is not operative 24 hours a day, and there exists a gap that can be filled. Hope is to have CIT trained officers who can respond at the scene, and then potentially more mental health practitioners, but is likely a way down the road due to funding restrictions.

JW: Is it possible to forge mutual aid agreement with the county to ensure that mental health practitioners live nearby and can arrive on the scene ASAP?

- Hope is that because work has already started with HPD, we can be upfront and loud with the county to be site of any pilot that the county is implementing. The only hesitation in developing mutual aid agreement is around who has the contract, who handles the paperwork and the timesharing details. People are looking for arrangements that are more manageable and allow for the city to have the resources it needs but can also be supported

by the county. Cannot, with limited resources, transport individuals experiencing crises to appropriate mental health treatment facilities, and support them after discharge from facilities

Adrienne included her email in the chat (aagustus@hyattsville.org).

3. Race and Equity Plan – Ms. LaToya Robinson

Postponed until next meeting due to absence of Co-Chair Dargin

- Cochair Dargin requested that we not tease out the definition of Race and Equity as they relate to the committee in her absence
- Will include these two items at the top of the agenda for the January meeting

LR: Do we [Race and Equity Task Force] have a mission?

- SW: We know why the committee was started, but we are working towards outlining what the mission looks like and how we move forward
- LR: We will be unpacking what the mission is and the definition during the next meeting
- JW: We have a glossary with resources

4. Race and Equity Plan – Ms. LaToya Robinson/Committee (postponed until next committee meeting)

5. Committee Debriefs

SW: **Magruder Park Renaming Committee** received a copy of all the names submitted by Hyattsville residents, which were then grouped into like names, and a count of those names provided was available as well. We want to present council with a few options, and there were mentions of indigenous peoples that were in Hyattsville, and we wanted to research to see if we wanted to include those in the presentation to council.

- Next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2021 at 7PM
- JG: Will send out guidance to renaming committee members on how to use time wisely in the final session with the intent of coming up with list of names to present to council. We are only making recommendations via residents who have submitted names, but we may also present names we have come up with as a committee.
- JW: Looking for committee members who can provide more information on the word “Anaquash” and information about indigenous tribes in the area.
 - o JG: Will reach out to a resource she has and provide that contact information to the renaming committee.

SW: **Mural Project Update** is included as a placeholder

- JG: Decided to reengage with principals over at Green Owl and inform them that we wanted to wait until after the final renaming committee session. Will send a message to Green Owl to let them know of the final meeting date and to follow up with city administrator Tracey Douglass on the current vision for the mural.
 - o Originally discussed Centennial Park being a venue, as well as Magruder, but also considered other high traffic areas in other city parks.

- Want to put in place process for submission of artists, since this committee was originally intended to have input into that process and will play a role in selecting the artist and the location of the mural.
- A videographer may also join some of these meetings to document the mural process and interview some committee members
- SW: Are we driving this process
 - Understanding is that we are working in tandem with Green Owl, while being driven by city administration.
- Marshall: What is Green Owl?
 - Green Owl is a design firm located on Route 1, across from the colored buildings with the hearts near to Polka Dot Park. Green Owl founders were responsible for installation of those murals. Building across the street are slated for demolition and redevelopment, and that is the reason they approached the city about other opportunities

SW: Wanted to discuss a potential meeting with the PPSCA

- JG: Have cochairs been able to make contact with the new chair about a joint meeting?
 - No, not yet, but Stacie will follow up and make sure that is done before the January meeting. Will include Adrienne Augustus and Councilmember Dan Peabody before formalizing that meeting.
 - They may to establish a regular course of operations prior to setting up a joint meeting, so propose a session in February or March
- JW: Did we want to discuss before next park renaming session whether we want to advocate for any specific names that could further the vision we are setting out in the equity plan? For example, should we advocate for a name that acknowledges Black lives, indigenous peoples, or the community commitment to diversity?
 - RB: Names surfaced in the last meeting revolved around themes we were considering in relation to race and equity. The way we've approached it thus far is good. If we have one or two examples that align more than others, we could suggest that as a committee, "while we are submitting this entire list of names, this subset better represents the work of the Race & Equity Task Force" or something along those lines.
 - RB: How many names did we want to submit to the council?
 - SW: Is not clear if we came up with an actual number that we wanted to submit, or if we were going to review the list until we came up with a selection of a few names.
 - JG: We settled on a number to present to City Council but will recirculate the minutes to refresh everyone's number.
 - MS: suggested having a number to ensure that we weren't submitting the entire list as a suggestion, but committee agreed that we could revisit that once we looked at the list again and identified any names we felt strongly should be added to our short list. Agree with Rodrigo that most of the names align with the values of the committee advanced by Jo, but we can evaluate if any additional names match up with the values we want to advance.
 - JG: Will identify for both committee when this presentation can be added to the City Council's agenda and will require time after the meeting on the

6th to solidify the presentation. There may also be other opportunities for discussion if there are any items that need to be further vetted.

6. Open Discussion

RCL: Wanted to come to the meeting to see what was going on and what committee was doing, and is a citizen of Hyattsville. No questions.

7. Adjourn Meeting

SW: Items for the agenda of the February meeting

- Race & Equity Plan review (consists of a review of the housing section and teasing out some definitions)
- Update on the Magruder Park Renaming initiative
- Cochairs to follow up with the Police and Public Safety Committee to make introductions and see when a joint discussion might be feasible.
- JW: Information on the mural might also belong on the agenda for next meeting.

SW: Minutes for August 25 and September 29 will need to be approved by Thursday

JW: Do we need to read the housing section before or after the next meeting?

- LR: Is it possible to have a discussion on the presented material after the presentation?
 - SW: After presentation, we will have an open discussion on the housing and will disseminate to the group for review with comments requested within a certain timeframe.

RB moves to adjourn, JW seconds. Motion passed unanimously, and adjourned at 8:24PM.