

**City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Task Force
June 22, 2021, 7:00 PM
Zoom
Minutes**

Present

Task Force Members:

- Chair Andrea Dargin
- Joanne Waszczak
- Malcolm Clarke
- LaToya Robinson
- Rodrigo Blanco

Council:

- Councilmember Daniel Peabody

Staff

- Staff Liaison Jan Guszynski

Guests:

- Bette Dickerson
- Krystin Balzarini
- Jennifer Gafford
- Marshall Marshall
- Shawna Alexander

Members Absent:

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

1. Welcome and Call to Order

5 Committee members present

- Jennifer Gafford present as guest

Acknowledgment of Meeting Guests

Review and Approval of Minutes

- May 25, 2021
- Moved by JW, seconded by RB
 - o Amendment to correct David Marshall's name in the main minutes
- Approved unanimously

2. Administrative Announcements/Debriefs

Black Artists Mural Project Update

JG: an update dating to about a week ago when the city approached ATHA about how to document or preserve the existing centennial park mural.

- Discovered through the community development corporation executive director (Stu Eisenberg) that a step had been overlooked in mural project. CDC owns the mural structure, and in talking with Stu, he contacted the building owners who had yet to receive an update from Green Owl or the city in a number of months and wanted to have a status call. Decided to pause on Centennial Park mural, and Green Owl is aware of this. Two partners who were missing from the meeting and will provide input by July 9. New plan for the mural has been sent to the partners and the next step will be that JG will work with the CDC to draw up an agreement outlining the scope of their participation.
- Will host a more publicized call for artists to participate, and JG will work as project lead to coordinate the project
- Next item for the committee will be to think about the second mural project in the David C. Driskell Community Park

Equity Officer Position

JG: Position description has been drafted and sent to city administrator Douglas for input. Will share with counterpart at City of Takoma Park

- City has budgeted for a shared equity officer with the City of Takoma Park
- Officer will interface with the Race and Equity Task Force and will lead the refinement of the draft equity plan as well as the presentation to city council and enacting some of the recommendations included in the plan

JW: Where are we going to put out the RFP

- JG: Will not be an RFP, but rather a job posting. In attending Council of Government meetings, several resources were provided for where to post job opening. Will also welcome input from committee members on where to post the opening. Position could likely be done remotely.
- JW: This week attended conference for bicycle and pedestrian issues, and discussed diversity, equity and inclusion work, and how it was important to add accessibility or belonging.
 - o JG: Will ask if the committee can take a look at the posting before it is published
- RB: Does Takoma Park have equivalent body to the Race and Equity Task Force?
 - o JG: Does not know, but will find out. A quick Google search revealed that they do.

3. Transportation Section Equity Plan Discussion

JW: Transportation section

- Hyattsville is a transit hub in some ways
 - o Multiple Metro stations, several bus routes, bikeshare, rideshare
 - o City is working to improve biking and walking
 - o City recently completed Transportation Study
- However, there are gaps
 - o City has limited influence on Metro's land use decisions
 - o Many residents cannot afford to live near Metro stations
 - o Bus service is infrequent and unreliable
- Several infrastructure improvements have been made: walkways, bikeways, signals, bump outs

- Queens Chapel improvements
 - City received funds to complete one mile gap in Trolley Trail
 - Planning improvements to Jefferson Street
 - Metro platform improvements are expected to be completed in September
- Transit oriented development is also occurring
 - Development near West Hyattsville station
 - Amazon will fund affordable housing near West Hyattsville station
- Current Gaps
 - Hyattsville residents cannot afford to live in new apartments near West Hyattsville
 - Many Hyattsville roads are unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers
- Call-A-Bus is returning after being suspended during the pandemic
 - Useful for supporting vaccination efforts in the community, since they will take you to the vaccination location in Hyattsville
- Recommendations from 2019
 - Short range recs include free UM shuttle passes to PGCC students, and promoting My Hyattsville app for residents to report problems with infrastructure
 - Mid-range includes collecting Hyattsville residents' and business owners' bus/rail needs, as well as joining with cities on Route 1 and E-W highway corridors to advocate to Metro, TheBus, MTA for transit needs
 - Long range hope for competition of bus and transit network
- Additional recommendations
 - Short range is to work with Amazon and Metro to define affordable as very low- and low-income affordable housing at the West Hyattsville stations
 - Mid-range would include engaging Hyattsville residents in new projects like Trolley Trail and Jefferson Street improvements, as well as soliciting input for what residents' needs are prior to finalizing plan
 - Long Range is to set equity-oriented vision for what "world within walking distance" means to City Councilmembers, residents, and employers
- Job Assets and Gaps
 - Assets
 - Over 22% of employed residents work in Hyattsville as of Apr 2019
 - Workforce development courses are available at PGCC PG Plaza location
 - Gaps
 - City workforce did not reflect demographics of residents
 - Workforce development lacks sufficient partnerships
 - 1/3 Hyattsville households cannot afford to live in Hyattsville (more than 1/3 of income spent on housing)
 - 2021 assets
 - Workforce is more reflective of resident demographics
 - Local businesses innovated strategies to survive during the pandemic
 - Clean and Safe Ambassador Team launched in West Hyattsville
 - City publishing job opening for position to support Council's equity plan
 - New library opening on Adelphi and new Kaiser Perm facility coming to W. Hyattsville metro station to bring new jobs
 - 2021 gaps

- Pandemic may have disproportionately impacted disadvantaged residents
- Has changed jobs and commuting patterns
 - Should find out information about essential workers who are transit-dependent
 - Teleworkers (FT and PT)
 - Percentage of HVL employees who cannot afford to live in HVL
- 2019 recommendations
 - Short range included hosting small business workshops; Partner with PGCC to better serve HVL students; Diversify city staff via recruitment strategies
 - Midrange included Hire Hyattsville job portal and prioritized HCPD police explorer program
 - Long-range to attract employers with higher paying jobs
- 2021 recs
 - Short range to protect city jobs through leveraging COVID funds to support impacted HVL businesses
 - Mid-range includes establishing telework center for HVL residents to allow networking with each other; work with developers to attract employers to new facilities
 - No current long-range recommendations

LR: Overlap with housing and community engagement. Are there discounts for Hyattsville residents who want to take classes at PGCC in Hyattsville, or are they only able to take classes there? What is the proposed partnership between PGCC and Hyattsville?

- JW: Speaker from 2 years ago mentioned that campus in Hyattsville offers specific programs for job training and retraining. Is also very Metro-accessible, whereas other campuses are less accessible. Section in equity plan goes in depth about importance in transit accessibility. Should explore whether better transit connection has been created to other campuses when equity officer has been onboarded.
- Primarily focused on ability of residents to access the campus, as well as opportunities to teach at the campus. Delegate Washington has proposed to make community college free for people and we could interview him for clarity on that
- Also discussed that City could make certain spaces available to host classes that are not available at PGCC location

DP: Council enacted right of first refusal on Hamilton apartments because existing apartments near the West Hyattsville metro have a higher degree of affordability than the new apartments. Wondering if that information can be included as existing housing stock. Also, wondering how the city can maintain or increase affordability of housing around transit hubs

- JW: Could be added as additional asset that council approved right of first refusal that helps support transit-oriented development. As a mid and long-range strategy, council could figure out how to approve more affordable housing near transit areas (transit centers, bus lines, etc.)
- DP: Is useful tool for preserving affordable housing stock. However, county action is required to develop affordable housing. Given that transit districts are desirable for development, any tools available to preserve affordability would be important to include in the plan

RB: It's good to include the benefit provided by creating the opportunity to work outside of the home presented by something by the telework center in the transit plan.

- JW: Most telework/coworking centers, like WeWork, are private. Would consider partnering with existing coworking locations

4. Open Discussion/Community Comments

Marshall: 1) How many vacancies are there currently on the Race and Equity Task Force? 2) When will there be a presentation or update on the policing section

- JG: Currently there are three vacancies. Jennifer Gafford has met all the requirements and we are waiting on council to make the final appointment. Two current applicants in the pool, and next person has been invited to all events required to join the committee.
- AD: Planning to handle each section sequentially. Next section for discussion will be aging and disability. Depending on progress with bringing on an equity officer, there will be more holistic discussion of the plan as a whole rather than doing deep dives into each section. Will likely talk about issues that touch on each section rather than highlighting individual sections, since we are hoping to revise and discuss the entire plan
 - o JW: Policing section was discussed in September

KB: Will soon be a new resident of Hyattsville. Is a sign language interpreter and would be willing to help make the meeting accessible for deaf and hard of hearing persons

BD: Thank you for your service

5. Adjourn Meeting

Review Agenda for next meeting

- Will be discussing the aging and disability section with Rodrigo as the lead
- Discussion of equity tool as potential resource going forward
- Status of Centennial Park Mural Project
- Progress on David C. Driskell Park mural project
- Progress on David C. Driskell Community Park ribbon cutting ceremony
- Committee reconvening with Parks and Recreation committee for virtual programming in the fall

RB moves to adjourn, LR seconds

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM