



Leesburg Diversity Commission Regular Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 • 7:00 p.m.
Lower Level Conference Room 1
Leesburg Town Hall • 25 West Market Street

Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - Minutes of March 10, 2021 Meeting
- Petitioners
- Commissioner Comments
- Staff Reports
- Chair Comments
- Council Member Comments
- New Business
 - Diversity Consortium
- Old Business
 - Flower & Garden Festival/We Are Leesburg Video
 - Commission Name Change
- Adjournment

In addition to the in-person meeting location, this meeting will be held electronically pursuant to and in compliance with the Amended Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Governance During the State of Emergency Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, adopted by the Leesburg Town Council on January 12, 2021. Members of the public who wish to participate or to provide comments during any public comment portion of the meeting may do so by Webex or phone.

Join by Webex:

<https://leesburg.webex.com/leesburg/j.php?MTID=mb84349e092ad0d98f4cf6c835056759c>

Join by Phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access Number: 133 817 9074

**Leesburg Diversity Commission
March 10, 2021
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

- Location:** Leesburg Town Hall, Lower Level Conference Room 1
- Commissioners Present:** Devon Carter (via Webex), Dana Kunzelman (via Webex), Vanessa Maddow (via Webex), Jasmin Martinez-Harris, Linda McCray, Jean-Joseph Poisson (via Webex), Mary Randolph
- Commissioners Absent:** None
- Others Present:** Vice Mayor Fernando “Marty” Martinez (via Webex)
Betsy Arnett, Public Information Officer
Officer Michael Drogin, Leesburg Police (via Webex)
- Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.
- Approval of Agenda:**
- Chair McCray added an item of new business (subcommittee assignments). The amended agenda was approved.
- Approval of Minutes**
- The minutes of the February 2, 2021 regular meeting and the February 21, 2021 work session were approved unanimously as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Martinez-Harris, seconded by Vice Chair Poisson.
- Petitioners**
- None
- New Business**
- **COVID Impacts on Minority Communities**
Dr. Elain Perry and Magaly Fagan, with the Loudoun County Health Department, gave the commission a brief overview of the current COVID situation in Loudoun. Although they have limited information because most demographic information is self-reported, they confirmed that COVID is affecting the minority community disproportionately among total cases and hospitalizations. Deaths tend to be related more to age than to other demographic factors. Ms. Fagan, who is the county’s care coordinator for COVID, talked about the SafetyNet program which was launched in October 2020, to provide financial and other assistance to families affected by the pandemic. Rent is the biggest

need, complicated by the fact that many of those affected do not have formal leases and pay their rent in cash. According to Dr. Perry, the most assistance they need right now is in getting the word out about the twice-weekly testing events.

- **Subcommittee Assignments**

Chair McCray made the following subcommittee assignments:

- Marketing – Dana Kunzelman and Jasmin Martinez-Harris
- Social Media – Vanessa Maddox, Devon Carter, and Dana Kunzelman
- Arts & Diversity – Jasmin Martinez-Harris and Devon Carter

- **Proposed Commission Name Change and Charter Changes**

- **Name Change:** One of the recommendations from the February 21st work session was to propose to the Town Council that the commission’s name be changed to “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission”. After some discussion, on a motion by Vice Chair Poisson, seconded by Commissioner Martinez-Harris, the item was tabled to the April meeting.
- **Charter Change:** After discussion, the commission voted to forward the following proposed Town Code changes to the Town Council.

Sec. 2-233. - Leesburg Diversity Commission.

- (a) *Established.* The Leesburg Diversity Commission is hereby created and established.
- (b) *Duties.* The Leesburg Diversity Commission's mission is to help foster diversity and inclusion within the community at large.
- (c) *Additional powers and duties.* The following shall be additional powers and duties of the Leesburg Diversity Commission:
 - (1) To ~~make recommendations to the town council that potentially~~ enhance the Town of Leesburg government's ability to communicate with and to deliver services more effectively to minority residents and business owners within the town;
 - (2) To work with the Leesburg Economic Development Commission and town staff on a regular outreach effort to the minority business community in order to increase awareness of town services, and to understand potential opportunities to do business with the town;

- (3) To ~~make recommendations to the town council that provide the Town of Leesburg with the opportunity to~~ enhance and celebrate the town's diverse community;
- (4) The duties of the Commission shall not include discussion of any individual employment action or information or the investigation, examination or analysis of hiring practices by town staff.

- **Proposed Outreach Efforts**

- **HOA Outreach:** Chair McCray thanked Commissioner Carter for his work putting together the list of HOAs. She will be adding it to her larger outreach list and sharing the combined list with the full commission.
- **Flower & Garden Festival:** Commissioner Martinez-Harris said that the commission is waiting on confirmation from Parks & Recreation about a booth. She is putting together seed starter kits as a giveaway and hopes to have at least 100 kits. For the kits, she got zinnia seeds donated and asked that commissioners save their cardboard egg cartons. She suggested #weareleesburg as a tagline and commissioners agreed.
- **Social Media:** The commission discussed requesting permission from Town Council to set up Diversity Commission social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Old Business

- **“We Are Leesburg” Video**

Commissioner Martinez-Harris reported that she and Chair McCray had met with the chair and vice chair of the Commission on Public Art to discuss possible collaborative efforts. One of the first projects COPA will be helping with is the We Are Leesburg videos, capturing people at the Flower & Garden Festival. COPA has arranged a professional videographer to donate his time to the project. The previously received videos will be incorporated into the final video.

Staff Reports

- Ms. Arnett advised that she will send guidelines for subcommittee meetings to ensure that commissioners stay within the requirements of the open public meetings act.
- Officer Drogin advised that Chief Brown had intended to attend but was called away at the last minute. The chief sends his apologies and plans to attend an upcoming meeting.

Council Member Comments

- None

Commissioner Comments

- **Commissioner Carter** noted the April is Arab-American Heritage Month, Autism Awareness Month, and National Volunteer Month, all offering good opportunities for social media posts and volunteer opportunities.
- **Commissioner Maddox** asked to confirm the dates for the Flower & Garden Festival and whether commissioners were expected to be there. (Answer: It is April 17 and 18. Commissioners are encouraged to help with the booth, but not required.)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 7 p.m.

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Joint Diversity and Public Art Commission Sub-Committee
Meeting notes

Friday, March 26, 2021 4pm
Virtual meeting

Attending: Linda McCray (Chair, Diversity), Elizabeth Ransom (Co-Chair, Public Art), Minu Beijan (COPA), Jasmin Martinez-Harris (Diversity), Dana Kunzelman (Diversity)

Call to order

We started the meeting at 4:00pm. Elizabeth made a motion to do the meeting virtually, and Jasmin seconded it and all voted aye. 5-0

The participants introduced themselves.

1. “We Are Leesburg” videos at Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival

Background: the Diversity Commission has launched a project to celebrate the diversity of Leesburg residents by creating a “We Are Leesburg” video. They have encouraged residents to record video selfies of themselves and/or their family members saying “I am Leesburg” or “We are Leesburg” and submit the videos for inclusion in a compilation video, but are seeking more videos. A local videographer has offered to volunteer his services.

Linda described progress on getting a booth at the forthcoming Leesburg Flower and Garden Show. The booth is going to be in parking lot, but she doesn’t know the location yet. Linda said they have a table, but need a backdrop and a pop up- canopy to cover the video backdrop and people being filmed. (Separately, the photographer may need a canopy if it’s raining.) Elizabeth offered to check on whether COPA or FOLPA have one that can be used on that day. Linda spoke with the Town Attorney, who provided language for a video permission form participants will have to sign. The attorney said the videographer needs to stay in parking lot. In the past, the Flower and Garden Show got 6k per day, but CDC guidelines might affect how many can enter.

Jasmin described her ideas to decorate the backdrop made with a room divider (fabric?) onto which she will pin dried flowers and the event hashtag, which would be #WeAreLeesburg (Side note: the hashtag is currently being used by Leesburg Elementary School, so Linda will get in touch with [Principal Shawn Lacey](#) to find out if he minds if we use it for this campaign). Jasmin is also preparing plant pots with a tag saying “We Are Leesburg” on it. Dana described the Pictogram she’s making that will feature statistics about diversity in Leesburg, including socio-economic, racial, ethnic, language, age, disability, etc. The Pictogram will feature statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (2015-2019), which provides annual demographic data including educational attainment, foreign-born population, language spoken at home, household income, and housing characteristics.

Minu suggested that the booth include a reference to spring celebrations, perhaps through pictures. Jasmin said she could bring her Polaroid Digital picture frame loaded with images to represent diversity. Linda's vision for the event is to do the videographer for four hours each day, although we need to consult with the videographer. He would need to set up his camera at an adequate distance to meet CDC guidelines on preventing spread of the coronavirus. We discussed the length for the clips, which ranged from 5 seconds to two minutes. Elizabeth will set up a call with the videographer to discuss the scope of work and any limitations he might have.

Dana mentioned 4Charms, a local décor company which creates displays of balloons and backdrops and is going to reach out to see if they can help with the backdrop.

Linda said that so far, they only have three videos including one with Carmen Felder and Vanessa Maddox. Some people in the videos have masks on. Jasmin mentioned that we need to decide if we want people to remove their masks to do the videos, given CDC restrictions. Minu said some people might like to wear costumes.

Elizabeth wondered if we will be able to capture the full diversity of Leesburg at the Garden show. Leesburg is home to many immigrant communities who may or may not attend the show. How about advertising it through social media? Will there be a way for people can submit online, even if they aren't there? Linda said Staff Liaison Betsy Arnett received videos via email and she's not sure about what format they were in. Elizabeth suggested taking the categories and making sure we have a strategy to get videos of everyone in them. We might, for example, ask Carmen Felder, who has a wide social network, to spread the word about this opportunity. We can advertise in popular social media groups. Linda said that once we lock down details about the event, we can advertise more widely and ask for help from other people including influencers like Carmen.

We brainstormed about other groups, like ARC of Loudoun, which might help gather videos of people in the disability community. Jasmin said she knows of a guy who wrote a letter about disability that went viral and she might be able to get in touch with him.

Linda would like to share an announcement on social media a week before the show. She would like to recruit town leadership, the Town Council, the Mayor, etc. Elizabeth said it would be good to include NAACP leadership, Pastor Michelle. Linda said schools might be interested in participating.

2. Arts Walk

Jasmin said there was an ArtsWalk in her hometown that was very artsy. Teens loved it, and it included booths with artists selling clothing, pins, earrings, etc. The street was shut off to allow pedestrian circulation. She thinks having our own social media would be amazing.

She'd like to have people apply for a spot so that the event would attract high quality artists. She wondered if the event should include a cover charge to limit entry and feature performers, musicians. Elizabeth mentioned that a group called WLAST has done something like this in the past and it might be worth checking with them. Jasmin would like to use a hashtag, run raffles, include breweries, and maybe offer gift cards from local businesses. Elizabeth described the Scavenger Hunt that COPA has been trying to design. Jasmin said the ArtWalk could raise money for Scavenger Hunt gifts. Elizabeth said that Thomas Balch library would like to join in. Kareem McCollough from COPA might like to join the next meeting about this since he's also working on the scavenger hunt concept.

Adjournment: We agreed to adjourn at 5:03pm.